



Max Anderson  
Councilmember District 3

CONSENT CALENDAR  
April 7, 2015

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Max Anderson

Subject: Refer \$125,000 to the FY 2015-2016 to Provide Housing Support Stipends for Transition Age Youth, Ages 18-25

RECOMMENDATION:

Refer \$125,000 in funding for Fiscal Year 2015-2016 to provide housing support stipends for transition age youth, ages 18-25. This funding will be used to help youth move into independent, stable housing.

BACKGROUND:

In the upcoming year, the City of Berkeley will be focusing its housing resource services on providing streamlined and effective supports for individuals experiencing literal homelessness.

YEAH! (Youth Engagement Advocacy Housing) and Youth Spirit Artworks (YSA) commend and support these important community goals, and look forward to working together with other local partners towards these efforts.

YEAH! and YSA also note that there are a significant number of transition age youth in our community experiencing homelessness who are couch-surfing and staying intermittently with friends or family, and who are in need of community supports to gain stable housing. These youth are part of our communities - the vast majorities of youth who are couch-surfing were raised in Berkeley, grew up in our school systems, and are experiencing the impacts of poverty, rising housing costs, gentrification, and youth unemployment that are plaguing our community. Many of these youth are attempting to complete community colleges and to work within this city.

A fundamental challenge facing young people experiencing homelessness is the lack of affordable housing available for youth. Rent prices within the City of Berkeley prohibit youth from gaining housing, even if they are employed in a minimum wage job or enrolled in school.

Young people with minimal rental history or minimal employment experience face challenges securing housing in a competitive market. The creative options that youth develop to secure housing, such as looking to move into a small apartment with a number of peers to make it affordable for each person, are options that are often discouraged or prohibited by landlords.

The addition of designated affordable housing for youth is fundamental to addressing the key youth needs in our community, as pointed out in both the City of Berkeley General Plan and South Berkeley Area Plan. There are currently only 43 units in Berkeley designated for transition age youth. We recognize that, at present, funds are not immediately available to create more affordable housing units in our community for youth. We believe that, despite this, concrete action is immediately needed to add housing support for youth struggling to make ends meet. Providing youth with subsidies to secure housing and off-set initial rent expenditures is an effective solution to helping youth get out of homelessness.

YEAH! and YSA are seeking:

- \$75,000 in housing support stipends for transition age youth enrolled in programs at YEAH! and YSA, to be used directly on security deposits and rent
- \$30,000 for YEAH! Staffing costs, which include wages, taxes and benefits for a 0.5 FTE case manager who will provide services on-site at both YEAH! and YSA to benefit youth in both programs
- \$15,000 for a van, to be operated by YSA and used by the YEAH! case manager for transporting youth to and from housing search and housing retention visits
- \$5,000 for program costs, including gas, office supplies, and rental application and credit check fees for participants
- **Total proposal = \$125,000**

YSA and YEAH! are uniquely qualified to carry out these services. YSA is a youth-driven jobs training non-profit that empowers and transforms the lives of over 150 homeless and low income young people each year through the arts. YSA has been providing jobs and job training to youth for over 7 years. YEAH! supports young adults who are experiencing homelessness on their pathways to adulthood, providing youth with clinical case management, shelter, and support services that are rooted in principles of harm reduction, youth development, and social justice. YEAH! has over 12 years of experience helping young people move out of homelessness and into stable housing.

Providing youth with housing support stipends has exponential positive impacts for our community. When youth are in stable housing, their health and wellness improves. Involvement with the criminal justice system decreases. Their capacity to gain or maintain employment improves. As we support our young people in moving into adulthood with stability, we benefit our community as a whole.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:  
\$125,000

CONTACT PERSON:

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District 3

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