



Councilmember Ben Bartlett
City of Berkeley, District 3

CONSENT CALENDAR
October 31, 2017

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmembers Ben Bartlett, Sophie Hahn, and Kate Harrison
Subject: Homeless Youth Policy

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager, the Homelessness Commission, and the Labor Commission to develop a Homeless Youth Policy for the City of Berkeley. The policy should explore the following items:

- Designating a percentage of the homelessness budget to be spent on youth-specific homelessness initiatives.
- Designing an organized and comprehensive youth housing and services system that includes identifying appropriate program models and developing a youth-inclusive coordinated entry process.
- Identifying City-owned parcels for the development of housing appropriate for homeless and emancipated youth.
- Identifying opportunities for homeless and emancipated youth to develop job skills including learning the trades (for example, by being involved with the construction of homeless facilities and housing as well as administration) or other skills such as case management, counseling, and technology (including coding and graphic design).
- Developing partnerships with local businesses for workforce development and job training opportunities targeted at homeless youth.
- Coordination with the Berkeley Unified School District to identify homeless youth and connect them to services.
- Collaborating with the Berkeley United School District to offer laundry facilities on-site for homeless families with children.
- Collaboration with law enforcement, diversion programs, probation officers, and after care programs to identify and engage homeless youth. (A significant number of at-risk youth are involved with the criminal justice system. Collaboration with different programs in this area can help identify at-risk youth early and support better outcomes.)
- Developing a youth-specific mobile outreach team to identify, engage, and provide support to homeless youth as well as connect them to services.
- Educating community members and businesses to be part of the solution, for example, through opening up rooms or volunteering backyards for tiny homes.

- Requesting the City Manager to return with budget recommendations relevant to the allocation of Housing Trust Fund and other monies to provide seed money for housing and other programmatic items mentioned above.

BACKGROUND

According to the East Oakland Community Project, an estimated 16,000 people experience homelessness in Alameda County, and children comprise 28% of the county's homeless population.

Youth experience homelessness for a number of reasons including abuse, family conflict, sexual identity, pregnancy, or family poverty. Youth may have become disconnected from family, school or work. They may be struggling with mental health and substance abuse disorders.

Young people transitioning out of foster care are extremely vulnerable to homelessness. Without a family support network, typically foster youth turn 18 and have nowhere to go and nobody to turn to for help. Studies repeatedly show that more than one in three foster youth experience homelessness.

Youth who experience homelessness are especially vulnerable to criminal victimization, sexual exploitation, labor and sex trafficking or traumatic stress.

As a community, we must create systems of support for our homeless or precariously housed youth.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staff time.

CONTACT PERSON

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