



Hamilton County Safe and Supported Community Plan

to Prevent Homelessness for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Youth

Executive Summary

Hamilton County, Ohio is one of two communities in the country selected to participate in the *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning (LGBTQ) Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative*, led by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). LGBTQ youth are dramatically overrepresented in the homeless youth population, yet there are far too few systems and services designed to meet their needs. This initiative consists of developing and implementing a plan for LGBTQ youth homelessness prevention and intervention. The goals are to learn more about (1) preventing homelessness for LGBTQ youth and (2) intervening early to prevent chronic homelessness among LGBTQ youth.

The initiative's objectives are to:

- 1. Facilitate greater local collaboration between stakeholders working with youth.**
Hamilton County, Ohio will develop and implement a community strategy to prevent homelessness among LGBTQ youth who are at-risk or who are experiencing episodic (i.e., non-chronic) homelessness.
- 2. Inform national strategies for preventing homelessness among LGBTQ youth.**
Hamilton County, Ohio will identify promising practices and strategies for addressing implementation challenges to inform future federal program guidance and policy.

From the beginning, a strong coalition of cross-sector advocates and youth has driven the development of the community plan. Safe and Supported brings together stakeholders and organizations from various systems including child welfare, juvenile justice, education and the runaway and homeless youth system, at both the local and national level to break down silos and increase collaboration.

Aligned with the USICH Framework to End Homelessness, the plan focuses on improving outcomes for LGBTQ youth in four core areas:

1. Stable Housing
2. Education and Employment
3. Social and Emotional Well-Being
4. Permanent Connections

Using information from our community needs assessment, our plan will prevent LGBTQ youth homelessness by:

- Recognizing the unique circumstances LGBTQ youth face (including identity-based family rejection);
- Utilizing interventions that address specific risk factors;
- Ensuring that programs are safe, inclusive and affirming of LGBTQ identities;
- Improving relationships and increasing the level of collaboration between state and local youth serving organizations; and,
- Improving outcomes in the four core areas.

The Hamilton County Safe and Supported Community Plan has eight key goals:

- (1) **Facilitate greater community awareness** of issues contributing to LGBTQ youth homelessness and the Initiative's efforts to address these issues.
- (2) **Facilitate greater local collaboration** among stakeholders including youth, community members, youth serving agencies and staff of youth-chosen spaces.
- (3) **Improve data quality** on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- (4) **Use risk and protective factors for screening and assessment** of youth at risk of or experiencing episodic homelessness.
- (5) **Improve the quality of interventions** to reduce risks and build protective factors that can prevent LGBTQ youth homelessness.
- (6) **Support positive outcomes for LGBTQ youth** in the areas of stable housing, education/employment, permanent connections, and well-being.
- (7) **Obtain new funding and in-kind resources** to support plan implementation.
- (8) **Evaluate the initiative** including its progress and outcomes.

