



**HOUSING SUPPORTS FOR YOUTH AGING OUT  
SEPTEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>**

**REQUEST FOR URGENT ASSISTANCE**

***"DON'T LET AGING OUT DURING COVID-19 BECOME THE  
SUPER HIGHWAY TO HOMELESSNESS"***

**Background:**

The factors influencing youth homelessness are increasingly pronounced and complex with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Youth are facing unprecedented challenges to securing safe and secure housing, which makes the prioritization of youth aging out a key priority to prevent an influx of homelessness in BC.

The BC Coalition to End Youth Homelessness (BCCEYH) released two reports on COVID-19 to the provincial government that highlighted the risk of homelessness for youth aging out during the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> This report resulted in collaboration with government and the sector to develop a housing plan to address youth homelessness, with an urgent priority on the elevated numbers of youth set to age out at the end of September, 2020. The Coalition is in the early stages of developing this action plan.

**Urgent need to identify appropriate housing for larger cohort aging out:**

A key pathway into youth homelessness is aging out of the foster-care system at age nineteen. In fact, it is referred to as the “super highway” to homelessness. Youth aging out face poverty, trauma, discrimination, and a lack of housing or support resources to meet their developmental needs in order to prevent homelessness. Many young people do not have the privilege of family and need a community of support to bridge their transition to adulthood while fostering interdependence.

During COVID-19, emergency measures have been in place by MCFD to ‘pause’ the aging-out process for youth in care across BC. This allows youth to remain in their current placement. Transition planning has been challenging, with youth in some cases receiving short notice that these emergency measures have been extended until September 30<sup>th</sup>.

As a result of this six-month ‘pause’, the sector is anticipating a significantly larger cohort of youth aging out across BC at the end of the September. The actual numbers of youth are not yet known, but there will be potentially hundreds of young people facing homelessness as a result of their placements coming to an end during COVID-19. This is an emergency and this request to identify housing options for this cohort is a real opportunity to make sure these youth do not fall through the cracks and risk ending up homeless.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2017, the BC Coalition to End Youth Homelessness (BCCEYH) was founded with the purpose of leading the development of a provincial plan to end youth homelessness in BC. The BCCEYH is a coalition of over 40 organizations across the province that seeks to magnify the voices of youth with lived expertise by developing reports on various provincial ministries’ roles and priorities related to youth homelessness.

## **The Solution:**

This project's goal is to ensure youth aging out of care do not end up homeless on September 30<sup>th</sup>. The Coalition is calling for urgent action to match as many youth as possible with appropriate housing options. Where these options cannot be found, we will work with the Province to request an extension of care for youths aging out until appropriate housing can be secured.

To support coordination, MCFD has been requested to provide the exact numbers of youth who will be coming out of care in communities across the Province, after the 'pause' of 6 months. The status of transition planning and the numbers of youth who require a housing response such as a rental subsidy or program housing will be identified through collaboration with government, youth serving organizations, and reaching youth directly through an awareness campaign.

The BC Coalition to End Youth Homelessness is asking that BC Housing and the social housing sector work together to identify existing housing supports such as supportive housing spaces, units, subsidies, etc. that are available on October 1<sup>st</sup> in their community that can be contributed to youth aging out. For example, one organization may dedicate 3 rental subsidies and a supportive housing unit that they already have available for October 1<sup>st</sup>. The objective is to create an inventory of housing supports that this cohort can receive priority access to meet their needs.

Youth aging out of care will be matched to the appropriate housing intervention that meets their distinct needs. This will ensure each young person aging out has a solid housing plan by housing providers identifying priority housing to help youth during this emergency.

## **The Urgent Ask:**

We are requesting youth serving organizations, non-profit housing providers, and landlords to provide urgent support and identify existing housing options they have available for October 1<sup>st</sup> that they can contribute for this cohort aging out. We are also asking that you identify housing options in the following months, November and December as we believe that finding homes for the cohort that is aging out of care will take more than one month. This will create an inventory of housing in different communities that can be matched to youth. Housing options that are needed include:

- Rental subsidies to support market housing
- Rental subsidies & community support to secure/sustain housing

- Supportive housing with 24/7 staffing
- Housing that supports mental health/substance use
- Transitional/program housing with light staffing support
- Women and children's housing
- Youth specific housing (up to age 30)
- Community Living housing
- Market housing units

**If you can help, please contact:**

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