

PART 3 **Foyer Essentials**

ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK



IT

It is well known that effective program models cannot be delivered unless there are adequate resources, a positive policy and funding environment, appropriate staffing, and a commitment to evaluation. These are all key considerations when establishing a Foyer. In this section, you will learn about key features of an effective organizational framework for Foyers, including:

- Funding
- System of care
- Mix of residents
- Sub-populations
- Staffing
- Evaluation



Appropriate and Consistent Funding

Ongoing, dedicated funding is a common challenge in the homelessness sector, and it will no doubt be a significant one if you are establishing a Foyer. The development of a successful Foyer must be backed by a clear, secure funding commitment that is flexible in order to enable the delivery of high quality services that support youth. This means young people can be supported for multiple years, with a consideration of aftercare.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- 1) In your community, is there a policy and funding framework that supports longer-term residency for young people? How can this be negotiated?
- 2) How will aftercare be funded?
- 3) Capital costs, as well as operational and maintenance fees related to the particular housing model chosen will need to be considered (see Foyer Essentials Part 2: Accommodation, for more).

Embedding the Foyer within a 'system of care'

The Foyer should not be considered simply another program within the homelessness sector. In fact, it should be seen as an *alternative* to homelessness, which is best achieved by ensuring that the Foyer is properly nestled within a broader 'system of care'. In many communities, the response to youth homelessness is fragmented and uncoordinated, and loosely connected to mainstream services. The responsibility for youth homelessness thus rests with a small and poorly funded sector.

A system of care approach works in a different way, in that there is a stronger emphasis on coordination and integration of services, linking the work of the homelessness sector to mainstream providers, and ensuring that young people are tracked and supported as they move through the system, so that they do not 'fall through the cracks'. In order to meet the complex needs of young people who have experienced homelessness (or significantly, who are leaving care), such a model should involve inter-institutional collaboration between the Foyer provider, other street youth serving agencies, as well as the mainstream services supported by provincial and municipal governments, including schools and school boards, child protection services, the transitional housing provider, mental health services and corrections, for instance.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- 1) As educational engagement and attainment is central to the Foyer, how will you work with local schools and boards? This can be challenging, and success depends on buy-in, support and leadership by educators, schools and communities.
- 2) Physical and mental health supports need to be built in to the community, rather than as 'in house' programs (though staff support is essential). How will this work? Are there community health resources to collaborate with?
- 3) Positive relationships and partnerships with corrections officials, child protection services and other agencies serving marginalized (and homeless) youth will be essential for intake and ongoing support.
- 4) What resources in the community can be called upon for aftercare support?



Consideration of the Mix of Residents

The question of the mix of residents is important to consider, and will have an impact on the model of accommodation you choose. The UK Foyer model suggests that a mixture of low, medium and high needs residents provides a peer community where those with lower needs who are working and/or finishing school serve as leaders and models for those with higher needs. In New York however, funding streams for high-needs youth are more widely available, and the majority of their residents are young people who have aged out of foster care and are at risk of homelessness, as well as those who have experienced street homelessness.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- 1) As educational engagement and attainment is central to the Foyer, how will you work with local schools and boards? This can be challenging, and success depends on buy-in, support and leadership by educators, schools and communities.
- 2) Physical and mental health supports need to be built in to the community, rather than as 'in house' programs (though staff support is essential). How will this work? Are there community health resources to collaborate with?
- 3) Positive relationships and partnerships with corrections officials, child protection services and other agencies serving marginalized (and homeless) youth will be essential for intake and ongoing support.
- 4) What resources in the community can be called upon for aftercare support?

Foyers for Sub-Populations

Given what we know about the diversity of the homeless youth population, it is worth considering how the needs of sub-populations, such as minority youth, newcomers, LGBTQ youth, young mothers, and even couples, can be accommodated. While *all* Foyers should actively implement and support anti-discrimination practices, it may be that the needs of sub-populations, such as LGBTQ and Aboriginal youth, are best met with targeted Foyers that incorporate more specialized services and supports.

At the same time, it is acknowledged that targeted Foyers cannot easily address the underlying prejudices that lead to marginalization. Nevertheless, in developing culturally sensitive programmes and supports, ensuring the ongoing self-esteem and safety of young people involved is paramount, and so conscious and strategic efforts will need to be made to avoid the further marginalization of these populations.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- 1) Can the needs of marginalized sub-populations be met through your Foyer? How do these needs impact on how you think about different models of accommodation and support? Because we know that some sub-populations experience discrimination and safety concerns both prior to, and once they become homeless, how will these issues be accommodated in a congregate living context?
- 2) Does it make most sense to target your Foyer (or some units) to sub-populations?
- 3) Can you accommodate young mothers and couples? What would this mean in terms of space (bedrooms, common areas), and proximity to other services and supports?
- 4) How will you support the needs of clients who do not qualify, or for whom you do not have adequate space?

WHILE ALL FOYERS SHOULD ACTIVELY IMPLEMENT AND SUPPORT ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PRACTICES, IT MAY BE THAT THE NEEDS OF SUB-POPULATIONS, SUCH AS LGBTQ AND ABORIGINAL YOUTH, ARE BEST MET WITH TARGETED FOYERS THAT INCORPORATE MORE SPECIALIZED SERVICES AND SUPPORTS.

Staffing

It goes without saying that you need adequate staff to effectively deliver a program. The staffing model should fit the needs of the program, and this will of course differ based on the size of the Foyer program, and whether accommodation is provided through a dedicated facility or scattered site model. The staffing model we present here is from the Chelsea Foyer in New York:

- Program Director: Responsible for the development, planning, administration and supervision of the Foyer
- Program Coordinator: Supervision of staff and life skills program. Responsible for safety, security and maintenance of Foyer program space
- Social Work/Aftercare Supervisor: Responsible for facilitating and supervising intake and aftercare services
- Case Managers (3): Responsible for counseling, case management, referrals and advocacy services for residents
- Resource Case Manager: Responsible for coordination of mentoring services, as well as housing resource development
- Independent Living Counselors (5): Responsible for preparing residents to live independently
- Administrative Assistant: Responsible for office management, documentation, reporting and data collection/entry
- Nurse – 8 hours a week. Requirement of SILP and RHY funding

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- 1) What will be your staffing needs? If you focus on sub-populations, how will this impact on your staffing model?
- 2) What might be the professional development needs and supports for staff?
- 3) How will you ensure that staff remain faithful / dedicated to the principles of the Foyer?

Outcomes-based Evaluation Built into Case Management

In order to get the best information on the progress of youth moving through the Foyer, it is important to integrate systems of monitoring into case management so that it is not seen as an additional task. For disadvantaged youth, decreases in the risk factors or increases in the protective factors that contribute to homelessness and unemployment are outcomes in themselves. An effective model for a client-based system of outcomes evaluation is the “Outcomes

Star”, which integrates data collection into the day-to-day work of case managers. The Outcomes Star is a client-based case management and evaluation system incorporating a Stages of Change approach. Originally developed by St. Mungo’s in the UK, the Outcomes Star has been adapted by many communities in Canada. The Outcomes Star provides a means of measuring a number of variables that relate to the risk and protective factors for homelessness including:

- Self-care and living skills
- Social networks and relationships
- Physical health
- Meaningful use of time
- Managing money and personal administration
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Emotional and mental health
- Managing tenancy and accommodation

READ MORE

TOOLKITS

- #1 What is a Foyer?
- #2 The Foyer and Transitions to Adulthood
- #3 The Philosophy and Principles of the Foyer
- #4 Foyer Essentials Part 1: The Program
- #5 Foyer Essentials Part 2: Accommodation
- #7 Foyer Case Studies
- #8 Resources from the Foyer Federation (UK)



READ THE FULL REPORT