

What is a Foyer?

In adapting the Foyer model to your community, the best place to begin is with a brief overview of what a Foyer is.

In this section, you will learn:

- *A brief history of the Foyer;*
- *What a Foyer is and why it is deemed an effective model of accommodation and support for homeless youth; and*
- *How the Foyer fits in with other housing options for young people.*



THEFOYER

is a well-established model of transitional housing for youth that has been growing in popularity around the world over the past two decades. The term Foyer was coined in France, where a network of “*Foyers pour jeunes travailleurs*” (hostels for young workers) was created to support a large number of young people who, in search of work, moved to towns and cities following World War II. In the early 1990s, the British government introduced the Foyer model in response to high youth unemployment, and the model’s success led to replication throughout the country. The growth and development of the Foyer model in the UK has been supported by the Foyer Federation, which has created a range of resources including guides for those developing foyers, staff support, a quality assurance scheme and accreditation program. Today, Foyers have been adapted and implemented in Europe, Australia and the US to include not only housing and links to employment, but also access to education, training, life skills development and on-going case management support.



The Chelsea Foyer, New York City, NY



Focus E15 Foyer London (UK)



Aberdeen Foyer music
www.aberdeenfoyer.com/music.html

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For resources from the
Foyer Federation, see
Toolkit #8.
.....

When thinking about Foyers, a key question to consider is whether this form of accommodation and supports really makes sense for youth. While transitional housing models have largely fallen out of favour in the wake of the success of Housing First, it is argued that when properly configured, the Foyer effectively addresses the needs of adolescents and young adults, and therefore should be considered as one of the key housing options for young people who are homeless. While there is not a huge body of research on the effectiveness of homelessness interventions in general, there have been a number of evaluations of Foyers in the UK and Australia, which demonstrate positive outcomes. These evaluations show that through the Foyer model, young people enhance their education, social relationships and engagement, and have better employment and housing outcomes. In addition, the Foyer model has been adapted in large communities and small, in both urban and rural areas. This is a housing and support model for young people that works!

What makes the Foyer model unique is not just the client-driven approach to case management, life skills support and programming, but the emphasis on an assets-based approach to youth development. This philosophical orientation to the Foyer is important, because often our response to youth homelessness does not really take the developmental needs of this age group into account.

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For more about the Foyer
philosophy, see **Toolkit #3.**
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By responding to youth homelessness largely through emergency shelters and day programs, are we really meeting the needs of young people, or merely providing a crisis response that was developed with adults in mind? And in helping young people move on in their lives, the focus should be successful transitions to adulthood, not merely independence and an exit from the system.

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For more on adolescent
development, see **Toolkit #2.**
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What makes the Foyer so good?

The Foyer is an effective response to youth homelessness because the philosophy, structure and activities of this model of accommodation – if properly implemented – acknowledge and support healthy youth development.

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For essential program elements, see **Toolkits #4, 5 and 6**
.....

ONE KEY FEATURE is the heavy emphasis on education, in recognition that this will pay longer-term dividends for the individual, their families and society as a whole. Other important features include not only development of life skills (for independence), but also an effort to help young people engage in meaningful relationships and activities. Finally, the fact that most Foyers allow young people to stay for extended periods of time is a key feature, and an acknowledgement that for any young person – housed or not – the transition to adulthood takes time. The Foyer model we propose actually extends the length of stay, based on the

assets, needs and development of the young person in question.

This final point is important. The key elements of the Foyer that we propose are based on the evolution of the model, and the variable ways it has been adapted in communities large and small to date. The real possibilities for community adaptation emerge when one considers how the model may be modified based on advancements in our thinking about housing and support developed in Canada and elsewhere, including Housing First, dispersed housing models with mobile supports, and the notion of convertible leases.

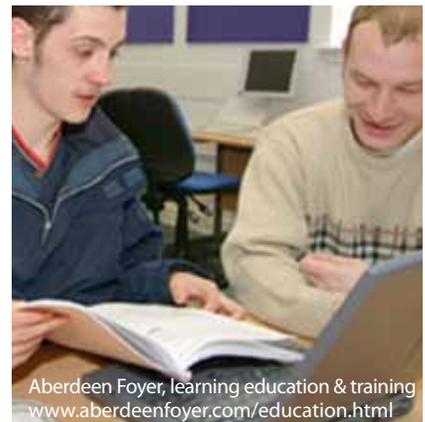
Options for Accommodation and Support Where does the Foyer fit in?

Young people are not a homogeneous group. There are important differences based on age, maturity, development, resilience and levels of independence. These differences are further complicated by the experiences of sexism, racism and homophobia that many young people endure.

are without the support of parents or guardians typically includes emergency shelters, transitional housing, group homes, supported housing and independent living, depending on the community in question. Many other models are hybrids of the above options.

The uniqueness of individual adolescents' experiences of homelessness suggests we need to carefully consider the kinds of accommodation and support that are appropriate for this population. The range of accommodation options for young people in Canada who

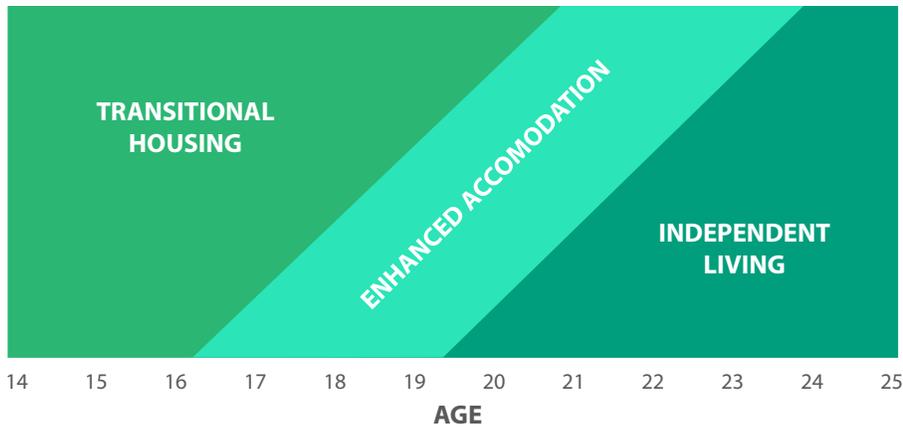
The challenge for service providers and policy makers is in considering exactly what kind of housing and supports are effective, and appropriate given the diverse circumstances and needs of young people. Do younger teens need different solutions than older teens? Do those who are multiply marginalized by



Aberdeen Foyer, learning education & training
www.aberdeenfoyer.com/education.html

sexism, racism and homophobia need targeted solutions? In other words, what works and for whom? Given the dynamic relationship between adolescence and homelessness, it is worth considering whether there continues to be a role for transitional or interim housing and / or supports.

Diagram 1 **Housing Options for Homeless Youth**



An effective response to youth homelessness should give young people choices and options based on their age, maturity, experience and need. The diagram below establishes a range of options for accommodation and supports for young people who are – or are at risk of becoming – homeless. This model is not conceived as a continuum – for instance, it is not necessary for young people to pass through the various stages on the road to independence. Rather it is designed in recognition that different young people will need different solutions, and that needs may shift and change over time.

THE FIRST HOUSING OPTION identified is **transitional housing**, which “is meant to provide a safe, supportive environment where residents can overcome trauma, begin to address the issues that led to homelessness or kept them homeless, and begin to rebuild their support network”. It should be considered part of a range of housing options for youth, but should be configured to more directly address the needs of the developing adolescent and young adult. This is what makes the Foyer a strong model. Because the experience of adolescence is inherently transitional, this form of housing

may be most appropriate for many young people who require the longer-term supports we generally consider necessary in helping them transition to adulthood, while building life skills that enhance their capacity to become economically self-sufficient and socially integrated community members.

There are a range of transitional housing models characterized by differences in size, scale, program and length of residency. Fixed site, congregate living environments with intensive supports may be important for some youth (and in particular, younger teens), who will benefit from the companionship, and a higher level of day-to-day support. This is where the Foyer best fits.

A SECOND OPTION – enhanced accommodation – moves towards a less institutionalized environment by offering smaller settings and in some cases uses dispersed housing in the community or a scattered site approach. This means that young people experience greater independence by living alone or in small groups, and still have access to supports that are portable. The key advantage here is that young people are supported in their transition from homelessness in a way that reduces stigma and offers



more opportunities to integrate into the community, provides greater control over tenure, and is an alternative to an institutional living environment. At the same time, residents are not yet fully responsible for their leases, or required to earn sufficient income to live in these more independent settings. In the case of young people leaving care (group homes) or juvenile detention, in particular, and who may react negatively to a more institutional environment, this may be a more suitable option. In both Australia and the United Kingdom, there have been successful adaptations of the Foyer model to include dispersed housing with portable supports.

THE THIRD OPTION is **independent living**, where young people move into housing of their own. This is the Housing First option. The successful Infinity Project in Calgary confirms that some young people will require intensive case management (which may be longer lasting, depending on need), while others will need minimal supports

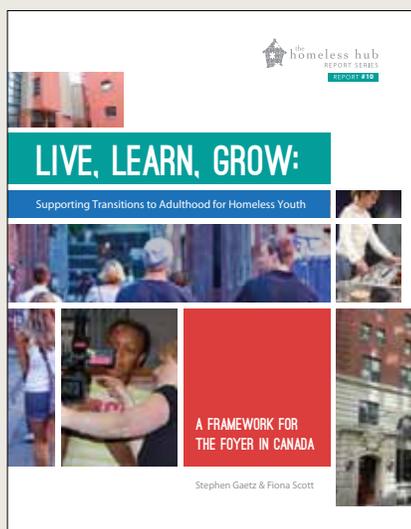
(which may be in the community and not part of their housing) and eventually progress to full independence. This is the end goal of any transitional housing model.

The three categories should not be considered entirely independent and discrete, and it is worth pointing out that some transitional housing models (including some Foyers) are able to bridge all these options. As the diagram suggests, the age at which young people can live independently is variable. That is, depending on their age, needs and level of independence, young people leaving homelessness (or institutional care) may need different housing options. This approach creates a pathway from higher levels of supports to independent living. Young individuals with little independent living experience may prefer a housing option where they are not responsible for the lease, but in time, as they obtain greater independence, the lease is transferred to their name. In this context, and

depending on their need, some level of supports may continue.

So, while transitional models of housing and support such as the Foyer should definitely be part of the range of housing options for homeless youth, there are some recommended modifications that should be considered when adapting the model. For instance, rather than limit the length of residency (most transitional housing models for youth in Canada limit stays to one year, and in some cases 18 months), the Foyer should be more flexible and ideally not be time limited. Length of stay should be based on the age at which a young person enters a program, their needs, assets and level of independence. Finally, successful Foyers should be tightly integrated into other supports, as part of a 'system of care'. As we will see, a modified and enhanced version of the Foyer may offer Canadian communities a way of rethinking transitional housing and supports for homeless and at-risk youth.

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TOOLKITS

- #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
- #6 Foyer Essentials Part 3: Organizational Framework
- #7 Foyer Case Studies
- #8 Resources from the Foyer Federation (UK)

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Foyers and Transitions to Adulthood



IN ADAPTING

the Foyer to your community, it is

important to recognize the degree to which this approach to accommodation and support is built on an understanding of the needs of the developing adolescent and young adult. Fidelity to this orientation means that the work of the Foyer is not simply to help young people become independent and self-sufficient, but to help them successfully transition to adulthood.

The purpose of this toolkit is to draw on our knowledge of youth homelessness in order to enhance our thinking around the types of accommodations and supports that best suit young people's needs.

In this section, you will learn:

- *Key features of adolescent development;*
- *Factors that impact on young people's ability to obtain and maintain housing;*
- *Challenges faced by young people leaving care; and*
- *Transitions to adulthood and the role of the Foyer.*

Does age matter?

Do we really need specialized services for young people who become homeless? One of the key arguments in support of the Foyer is the necessity of recognizing the needs of adolescents and young adults as unique and worthy of attention. The causes of youth homelessness are different from the causes of adult homelessness, and as such the solutions should be distinct, as well. So, in thinking about appropriate models of accommodation and support for young people, we really need to understand the challenges associated with the transition to adulthood and how these impact on the experience of homelessness.

While the pathways to homelessness are varied and unique, one thing that unites all young people in this situation is their attempt to secure housing at a very young age, with minimal or no family support, limited resources and very little experience with independent living. These challenges become more complicated the younger one is, and if one faces discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender, or because of racism, problems become compounded. Here, we outline several challenges that young people face:

STRUCTURAL BARRIERS LIMIT ACCESS TO HOUSING: SUPPLY, INCOME, EDUCATION AND DISCRIMINATION

Perhaps the key factor that makes solving homelessness a challenge – regardless of a person's age – is the lack of affordable housing in Canada. In the almost two decades since Canada cancelled its National Housing Strategy, the affordable housing supply has not expanded, the cost of housing has increased, and at the same time, for most Canadians, incomes have stagnated or declined.

These problems become even more acute the younger you are, as one's youth can lead to discrimination. In a tight housing market, for instance "many private landlords (believe) that street-involved youth are a risky investment, assuming that young tenants will fail to pay rent, damage property, and leave without notice"¹. Add to this homeless youth's poverty and inexperience, and it is clear that these youth are at a competitive disadvantage when trying to rent an apartment.

Even if a young person is in a community where there is some rental housing

available, youth generally do not have access to full-time, well paying jobs that would provide them with the necessary income to *pay* for housing. The fact that homeless and marginalized youth often fail to complete high school means that they are not competitive in the labour market. Typically, the only type of employment available to youth these days is low paying, part-time and dead end work. This explains why so many housed youth continue to live at home well beyond their teen years, often punctuated by periods of independent living followed by moves back to the parental home.

PERHAPS THE KEY FACTOR THAT MAKES SOLVING HOMELESSNESS A CHALLENGE – REGARDLESS OF A PERSON'S AGE – IS THE LACK OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN CANADA.

LACK OF INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE

One of the major causes of youth homelessness is the unsuccessful transition of young people from institutional care to independent living. Research consistently tells us that a high percentage of young people who become homeless have had some involvement with **child protection services**, including foster care, group home placements or youth custodial centres². The underlying problem is that many young people who leave care fail to make a smooth transition to adulthood and independent living because of underdeveloped life skills, inadequate education, and lack of supports and resources (including income) that we know most young people rely on when moving into adulthood. Some voluntarily leave care because of bad experiences in the system. Other youth 'age out'* of the foster care system and are left to fend for themselves, not having been adequately prepared for independent living at such a young age. Difficult transitions from care often result in negative outcomes such as homelessness, unemployment, lack of educational engagement and achievement, involvement with the justice system, lack of skills and potentially, a life of poverty.

Young people who experience **mental health problems**, and are discharged from mental health inpatient care without adequate housing are also at increased risk of homelessness. We do know that the onset of some mental health issues, such as schizophrenia, typically begin when people are young, and often as teens. The problems are often worse

for homeless youth, as mental health issues can be both a cause of, and a consequence of youth homelessness. Furthermore, poor systems planning sometimes results in the discharge of young people from health care facilities directly into homelessness. Once on the streets, accessing appropriate care and support can be that much more difficult due to young people's lack of family support, financial support and the knowledge required to navigate systems. As a result, the mental health of homeless youth can deteriorate.

Leaving corrections facilities or – for younger teens – **juvenile detention centres** can also present challenges for young people seeking employment and housing. We know from extensive research that young people who are homeless are, on average, more criminally involved than housed youth³, and we also know that many of those leaving custody are discharged directly into homelessness, without adequate planning and support⁴. When faced with this situation, there is the risk that youth will reoffend and / or experience enduring homelessness⁵.

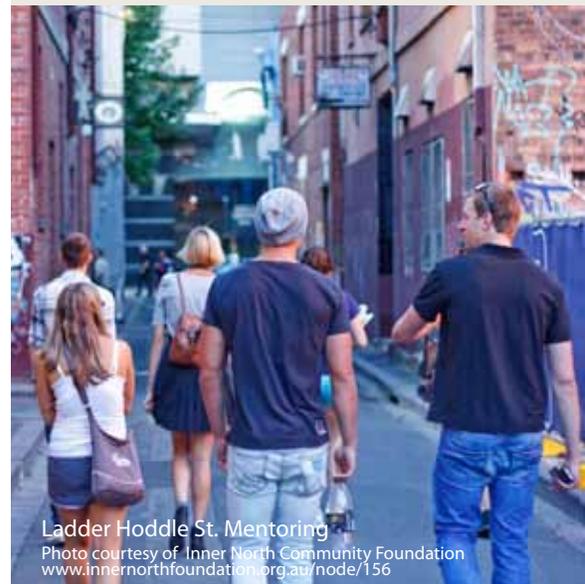
Young people leaving institutional care – whether child protection, corrections or health care – are in need of transitional supports if we wish to increase their life chances and reduce the risk of homelessness. Youth exiting these systems often exhibit high needs in other areas, including addictions, mental health and education, for instance.

* Child Protection legislation is a provincial responsibility, and there are significant jurisdictional differences meaning that the actual age at which the State remains responsible for young people in care varies from province to province. In Ontario, for instance, young people 'age out' at 18, but can also voluntarily withdraw from care at the age of 16.



Step by Step Crimea Road building (UK)
www.stepbystep.org.uk/news-info/prel/UKHousingAwards2012.htm

ONE OF THE MAJOR CAUSES OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IS THE UNSUCCESSFUL TRANSITION OF YOUNG PEOPLE FROM INSTITUTIONAL CARE TO INDEPENDENT LIVING.



Ladder Huddle St. Mentoring
Photo courtesy of Inner North Community Foundation
www.innernorthfoundation.org.au/node/156



BBC Connect and Create program
www.foyer.net/level3.asp?level3id=188

CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

The defining feature of young people who are homeless is in fact their youthful age. Age matters for many reasons, not least of which is their continued development as adolescents. And there are big differences between a young person who is 16 and homeless, and one who is 24. These differences can be further complicated by gender, sexual orientation and ethno-racial background.

Theories of adolescent development often describe the transition from childhood to adulthood, even in relatively stable environments, as one that can be challenging and potentially problematic⁶. Whether referring to physical, cognitive or social maturation⁷, the developmental tasks associated with “becoming” an adult are many, and are distributed across a range of social, psychological and biological domains. As part of this process, young people assume greater responsibilities in the areas of education, income, accommodation, social relations, health and mobility. Adolescence can also be thought of as a series of “firsts”, often associated with adulthood: a first kiss, first relationship, first sexual experience, first job, getting a drivers licence, making doctors’ appointments, experimentation with substances, etc. There is no set process for these explorations, and different young people will encounter these firsts in different ways, sequences and according to specific cultural and contextual conditions. All of these developments are overlaid with cultural and legal proscriptions that allow

certain kinds of autonomous decision making and actions to occur, and on what timelines. Typically these changes, which incrementally prepare youth for independent living, are supported by adult supervision and guidance both within and outside the home. Accompanying this is a commitment to education as a central institutional support.

While there is considerable evidence that most teens actually move through adolescence without significant emotional, social or behavioural challenges, can we confidently say this about homeless youth? Unfortunately, young people who become homeless are typically shut out of the normal process of adolescent development that so many of us hold as essential for a healthy transition to adulthood. Many lack trusting relationships and experiences with adults; between 60-70% come from homes where they were victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse⁸. Youth who become homeless leave home without the necessary skills and experience, without financial support and importantly, without their home of origin to fall back on if things go wrong. It is also true that homelessness often simultaneously

forecloses the opportunity to participate in the institutions that frame what many would deem to be a successful transition to adulthood, including education, getting a part time job while living at home, and recreational activities.

Homelessness often thrusts young people into adult roles at an accelerated rate, and the expectation is that they seek housing, pursue employment or training (education is usually off the table), and learn quickly to make good decisions. How, and whether a given young person who experiences homelessness is really able to make that quick transition to living independently is open to debate. One of the key factors that distinguishes youth homelessness



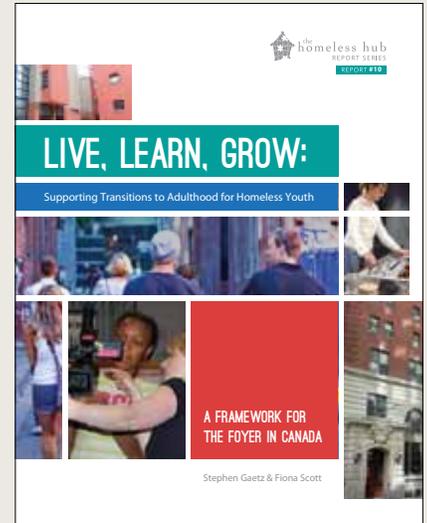
The Fraserburgh Herald. Thursday 9 February 2012 12:26
www.fraserburgherald.co.uk/news/stevenson-centre-to-tackle-homelessness-byed-1-2107140

from adult homelessness is that most young people leave home with *no prior experience* of obtaining and running a household. Few will know what it means to sign a lease, deal with a landlord, pay rent and make the right purchases to maintain their home. Allowing friends to move in, having parties that may get out of control, and an inability to properly maintain their apartment may lead to tensions with landlords.

ONE OF THE KEY FACTORS THAT DISTINGUISHES YOUTH HOMELESSNESS FROM ADULT HOMELESSNESS IS THAT MOST YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVE HOME WITH NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE OF OBTAINING AND RUNNING A HOUSEHOLD.



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TOOLKITS

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- #8 Resources from the Foyer
Federation (UK)

So, age does matter . . .

. . . and the younger one is, the more adolescent challenges complicate one's transition to independence. We know that many young people become homeless during their mid-teens or even earlier. In a recent study in Toronto⁹, over 60% of young people in the sample (250 youth) had left home before they were 18. The consequences of leaving home at such a young age are many, and have a direct impact on an individual's ability to obtain and maintain housing. The first thing to note is that our laws and institutions are organized in such a way that an individual's rights and privileges are clearly determined by their age. For instance, in some provinces, young people under the age of 18 may have greater difficulty accessing benefits (such as social assistance) if they cannot establish their independence from their parents. Some provinces have also established a lower minimum wage for those under the age of 18[†].

Finally, there is compelling evidence of the longer-term consequences that result from leaving home at a younger age, including higher rates of criminal victimization and trauma and longer periods of homelessness¹⁰.

In sum, for young people who become homeless, the challenge of moving from childhood to adulthood is not only truncated, but qualitatively different than is the case for most teenagers. A clear distinction needs to be made between youth homelessness and adult homelessness. This suggests that we need to also consider different solutions to youth homelessness.

And in thinking of housing options for youth, we must necessarily consider their youthful age, lack of experience, poverty and discrimination, and for some, experiences with child protection services or involvement with the law. Young people who become homeless, then, require programming, resources, supports and perhaps most significantly, a service model that allows them the time to grow and learn – and make mistakes – that are typically deemed necessary for housed adolescents who are making the transition to adulthood. Obtaining safe and affordable housing when you are young is not easy in the best of circumstances. It is particularly difficult for young people who are homeless.

† It is worth pointing out that there are significant differences between provinces in terms of age of majority, and eligibility (and access) to youth and adult programming.

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The Philosophy and Principles of the Foyer



THEFOYER,

as an example of transitional housing for youth, has been applied in a broad range of contexts, and much has been learned through adaptation and evaluation. What makes the model effective is its focus on accommodation combined with programming that is situated in an understanding of the needs of the developing adolescent. As such, housing and income, education and training, and providing appropriate supports are all platforms to help young people transition to adulthood and independent living in a safe and planned way.

In developing any successful program, the plan and approach to service delivery must reflect the underlying philosophical orientation of the model.



In this section, you will learn:

- *The philosophy and principles of the Foyer; and*
- *Why fidelity to the model matters.*

ALL EFFECTIVE PROGRAMMING FOR HOMELESS YOUTH MUST BE BUILT ON A CLEAR PHILOSOPHY AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES.

A rule-bound, institutional environment that provides short-term support in the rush to have young people become independent and self-sufficient is an unsuccessful model. Adaptation of the Foyer to your community should be done with consideration of the following:

Fidelity to the Model

The effectiveness of replicating any initiative depends on program fidelity, or the degree to which the program is delivered as intended. This does not mean strict and unwavering adherence to each program detail, as successful adaptation inevitably requires an assessment of the applicability of program elements to the local context. Rather, it means understanding and incorporating the philosophy and key program principles of the Foyer, in order to ensure that adaptation reflects the essential program philosophy.

The Canadian Homelessness Research Network suggests the following as core principles¹ of the Foyer:

- A focus on helping disadvantaged young people who are homeless or in housing need - including young people leaving care - to achieve the transition from dependence to independence;
- A developmentally-appropriate environment to build competence and a feeling of achievement;
- A holistic approach to meeting the young person's needs based on an understanding of adolescent development;
- A formal plan and agreement between the Foyer and young person as to how the Foyer's facilities and local community resources will be used in making the transition to adulthood;
- A supported transition that is not time limited, in which young people can practice independent living;
- An investment in education, training, life skills and meaningful engagement in order to improve long-term life chances;
- The provision of a community of peers and caring adults with emphasis on peer mentoring;
- The provision of necessary and appropriate aftercare to ensure successful transitions to adulthood and independent living.

Supporting Adolescent Development

There is a wide body of research that shows successful physical, psychological, emotional and social transitions from childhood to adulthood require strong adult support (including mentoring), opportunities to experiment and explore (and to make mistakes), learning to nurture healthy adult relationships (including sexual relationships), the gradual learning of skills and competencies relating to living independently and obtaining a job, etc. Unfortunately, when young people become homeless or are in crisis, many of these assumptions about adolescent development are abandoned in the rush to make them self-sufficient. We

need to ensure that support for healthy adolescent development is at the centre of any support system for those leaving care.

Transitional housing models that limit stays to one year, are highly institutional and rule-bound in their approach, and which do not offer aftercare, are not likely to be effective, as they are not at all designed around the needs of the developing adolescent. So, to effectively implement the Foyer model in Canada, there must be a policy framework and funding in place that allows for transitional housing and supports that last longer than one year.

Facilitating Youth Engagement

The Foyer should support and nurture youth engagement with other people (youth and adults), their community, and importantly, with meaningful and fulfilling activities. Young people should have a say in program design, be engaged as part of quality assurance, and most importantly, play a major role in determining their own pathways out of homelessness. A client-centered

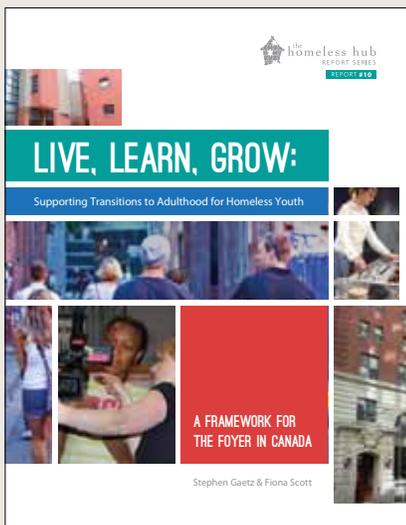
approach to case management should be part of the Foyer's operations. While all of this may seem obvious or go without saying, it is worth remembering that many services for young people fail when there is an overemphasis on control, curfews and restrictions. While all young people (as well as adults) need limits, setting up a young person to fail will not help them move forward with their lives.

The Primacy of Education

We need to put education at the centre of our response to youth homelessness, and this is one of the key strengths of the Foyer model. Across Canada, it is well understood that education should be a central priority for youth, and as a society we do what we can to help young people stay engaged with school as long as possible. Without adequate educational qualifications, employment opportunities for youth can be limited. If they do find jobs, a lack of education will likely lead to low-paying, part time, dead-end jobs^{1,2}. In order to lift youth out of homelessness, they must be given the opportunities, tools and resources to access education that they often lack as a result of their experience with poverty.

Educating Canada's youth is crucial, and for homeless youth, enhancing educational opportunities can produce longer-term, sustainable outcomes and reduce the risk of a return to homelessness. Unfortunately, few programs for homeless youth place educational support as a central focus of their work, in spite of what we know about the social and economic outcomes of early school leaving.

READ MORE



[READ THE FULL REPORT](#)

TOOLKITS

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

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PART 1 Foyer Essentials
THE PROGRAM





lot has been learned through the development of Foyers around the world. The review of research and evaluation literature on Foyers in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom reveals the need for comprehensive programming and support which is, ideally, best provided through a combination of in-house resources, and services provided through partnership. The best solutions to homelessness involve integrated service models (systems of care) that facilitate engagement and connections with sector-based and mainstream service providers. So, in considering program options, one needs to think carefully about who is providing the service, and how the Foyer engages other service providers.

In this first of three sections on “Foyer Essentials” (the other sections focus on ‘accommodation’ and ‘organizational framework’), a summary of key features of an active and effective Foyer program are outlined, with follow up questions and comments for consideration. In this section, you will learn more about the following program components, which are considered essential in establishing a new Foyer:

- Intake
- Long-term residency
- Client-Centred Case Management
- Action Plans for Personal Development
- Life Skills
- Nurturing Environments that Support Positive Relationships
- Work, Training and the Importance of Education
- Mental Health
- The Arts
- Program Fees
- Aftercare

Intake Process

A carefully considered intake process is required to determine the eligibility of youth applying to the program. Several factors should be taken into account including the youth’s social, psychological, medical and criminal histories, in order to determine their suitability for a program such as a Foyer. While the youth should demonstrate a commitment to engaging in work, education and/or training, it is recognized that many homeless (and at risk) youth may be suffering from trauma or be sufficiently disengaged from education to require additional support to help them achieve these outcomes. In order to support homelessness prevention, a Foyer’s intake process should also facilitate referrals from child protection services and corrections (juvenile detention) to ensure that young people fleeing care have access.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- 1) What mix of clients do you want in the Foyer, and how will your intake process address this?
This means establishing clear eligibility criteria.
- 2) What practices will be put in place to ensure the Foyer does not engage in ‘creaming’ (i.e. focus on the easiest to serve clients)?
- 3) What is the intake process?
How do people get identified?
Are there referrals and if so, how does that work?
- 4) What other potentially more suitable options for accommodation and support are available, and does the young person have choices?



Southern Youth and Family Services (Australia) www.syfs.org.au

of a 20 year old), it is argued here that young people should be offered the opportunity to stay in a Foyer beyond two years, based on their needs, readiness for independent living, and their financial stability. Young people still enrolled in school may not have the financial security to live independently, for instance.

Longer Term Residency

Many transitional housing providers limit the stay to one year, and this is often determined by funding frameworks. This limitation in terms of length of stay is particularly challenging for young people in the throes of adolescent development.

One of the main attractions of the Foyer is the secure accommodation it provides and the extended opportunity to learn adult skills and responsibilities in preparation for independent living.

Stable housing enables young people to concentrate on their education and training needs, and this facilitates a smoother transition to adulthood. Most traditional Foyers have a two-year residency limit, and research suggests that many young people leave before the two years are up.

However, because the developmental needs of young people vary (for instance, the needs of a 16 year old may be significantly different than those

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- 1) Are there local funding mechanisms in place to support longer term residencies?
- 2) Longer term residencies invariably mean fewer young people can access the services. Is this a sustainable model?
- 3) Will young people who leave the Foyer be able to return if things do not work out? What can be done to support young people in such circumstances?

Client-Centered Case Management

Young people who experience homelessness have typically faced many challenges, and may have had experiences that failed to instill in them trust in authority figures. Youth will all have different strengths and challenges, and any approach to case management must be flexible and responsive to a young person's needs and abilities. In an evaluation of the British Foyers, the authors noted "many required quite intensive support; and a flexible, client-centered approach was essential"¹. A Positive Youth Development framework should also be implemented; that is, one that is an assets-based approach, rather than one that merely focuses on risk and deficits.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- 1) In what ways does your organization support (or not) client-driven, case management?
- 2) What kinds of boundaries will your organization place on client choice?
- 3) Can you integrate a Harm Reduction approach, and if so, what will this look like?
- 4) What will be your 'Plan B' for youth who do not thrive in the Foyer?

ONE OF THE MAIN ATTRactions OF THE FOYER IS THE SECURE ACCOMMODATION IT PROVIDES AND THE EXTENDED OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN ADULT SKILLS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN PREPARATION FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING.

Action Plans for Personal Development

Foyers utilize a client-driven model of planning and goal setting. Action plans, developed with support from a case manager, outline an individual's goals, as well as the activities, resources and supports that will help them achieve those goals. Such plans should be "youth-driven and flexible, accommodating incremental progress and age-appropriate change in plans"². The focus of the plan is on the individual's goals regarding education and training, career, housing, health and wellbeing, and other personal goals defined by the individual. When a young person enters the Foyer, they usually develop a plan for the first 30 days, and this gets reviewed and renewed regularly through discussion with the case manager. Action plans can be supported by data management and evaluation systems such as the Outcomes Star*.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- 1) The Foyer Federation has a range of toolkits and resources to support personal development. [MyNav](#) is an online platform bringing together new media technology and informal learning opportunities to deliver a personalized package of support to young people.
- 2) Resources for the Outcomes Star can be found on the Homeless Hub: [Program Evaluation Topics: The Outcomes Star](#)



Miller Live'n'learn campus
C/o Wendy Malycha, St. John's
Youth Services, Adelaide, Australia.
Powerpoint: ANGLICARE WA
YOUTH HOMELESSNESS FORUM
PRESENTATION
Foyers – International learning and
relevance to Australia.

Life Skills

Connected to the action plan is a focus on life skills. All Foyers offer life skills development, in some cases provided in-house and in other cases by external providers. The [Live N Learn](#) Foyer (Australia) provides a good example. They offer a range of activities and workshops on budgeting, life skills, fire safety, health, nutrition, cooking, repairs and maintenance, skin and hygiene, environmental awareness, community contacts and First Aid. They also have three ongoing programs:

- [Live 'n' Learn as an Individual](#) – covering self-esteem and positive affirmation, healthy living and emotional wellbeing, family and relationships and includes a women's group.
- [Live 'n' Learn in the Community](#) – a recreational program including game and movie nights, judo and Sunday lunch.
- [Live 'n' Learn at Work](#) - an optional course aimed at younger residents (under 19). This course runs for seven weeks and covers activities such as resume writing, mock interviews, literacy, numeracy and IT skills, career guidance, and study support. Young people also have compulsory individual meetings and

monthly campus meetings. Training opportunities also provide links between young people and potential employers (such as hospitals, councils, etc.).

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- 1) The Foyer Federation has a range of toolkits and resources to support life skills development, including:

[Foyer Health Toolkit](#) – Enhancing health of young people in Foyers

[Lifetracks](#) – Providing supports for young people to make informed choices about learning, training and work.

[Connect Yourself](#) - A program that aims to enable young people to connect themselves to opportunities that identify, develop and promote their talents and achieve their future goals.

[Feeling Good](#) – A program to support the development of resilience in young people in Foyers in the United Kingdom

[Teenage Parents](#) - The identification of good practice in enhanced housing support for teenage parents.

* 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. For a comprehensive list of resources, see the Outcomes Star topic on the Homeless Hub.



Nurturing Environment That Supports Positive Relationships

The social and physical environment of the Foyer is crucial to facilitating youth engagement. Youth need to feel that they are welcome, comfortable and belong. Young people should be given the opportunity to develop and nurture meaningful relationships not only with staff (adults), but also with other young people, in a supportive environment. A case management approach that includes developing anger management and conflict resolution skills, plus the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships and work through the challenges that such relationships bring, will foster the development of resilience and increase the likelihood that young people will develop positive relationships as adults.

The nature of the relationship between staff and residents must be nurturing and support the development of positive relationships. Foyer staff need to engage and relate to the youth; they need to be committed and responsible adults who believe in the integrated and holistic approach and who understand the reasons behind youths' struggles. Staff need to be positive role models for youth and enable and empower young people to achieve their full

potential. Staff / client relations must be nurtured so as not to replicate the rule-bound model of many group homes. Instead, the existence of rules, roles and expectations must be balanced with opportunities for young people to explore, become independent, make mistakes and achieve success. This is a model based on adolescent development rather than institutional care.

Young people should be supported in developing positive relations with other young people, not only within the Foyer, but also in the communities in which they live. Finally, there should be support for family reconnection. For some young people the goal may be to support their return home. For other young people this goal may not be desirable or even possible. In either case, the intent is to help young people stay connected with their communities, and assist them in developing and nurturing positive relationships with family members (parents, siblings, relatives, etc.) and learn to manage conflict. All of this is important, as family can potentially be an important resource to be leveraged as young people move into adulthood and become more independent³.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- 1) For young people who have exited child protection, corrections or mental health in-patient care, how will a safe and supportive social environment be attained?
- 2) What steps will be put in place to ensure that the Foyer does not become a rule-bound institution that contributes to young people's marginalization?
- 3) What qualifications, training and professional development and staff support do you envision will be necessary to ensure a safe and caring environment?
- 4) What would incorporating a family reconnection orientation require?
- 4) How will your organization's philosophy, policy and practices ensure that young people are safe and supported, and that there are anti-discriminatory practices in place (to combat homophobia and racism, for instance)?

Work, Training and the Importance of Education

As an expectation of residence, youth should be encouraged to be involved in training or employed, and/or be offered support to continue education in a field of their choice. While participation in education should be a top priority, it is recognized that some young people may be disengaged from education, or may not be ready for the changes that are required to move forward. As suggested above, this may represent a challenge in working with some young people, so a flexible system that supports reluctant young people in moving towards this goal is important. This is also consistent with a youth development approach, as we would not recommend any young person in Canada (whether or not they have a history of homelessness) lose their housing because of their failure to participate in such activities.

Foyers should also facilitate opportunities for participation in employment training. By providing youth with support in essential work skills, like resume writing and interviewing, as well as links to employers, youth will be better

prepared for work. However, we know from research that training alone is not sufficient to help marginalized and homeless youth move forward, because their predicament is not simply a consequence of their lack of skills or motivation.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- 1) Working with schools and school boards can be challenging, and there may be some level of resistance. Does your organization have an existing relationship with local schools, and if not, how will you approach this?
- 2) What can your organization offer the schools in return, such as workshops for students and teachers?
- 3) What kinds of links with existing training programs can you put in place?
- 4) What will be your approach to working with young people who are disengaged from education, work or training?
- 5) The Foyer Foundation has a key document called [Working Assets](#) - Working Assets is about improving young people's employability outcomes by using a positive approach that develops their skills, assets and talents for the world of work.



Mental Health Supports

Mental health issues are common among people experiencing homelessness and unemployment. Mental health challenges can impact a young person's ability to work and live independently; therefore services must be in place to help young people deal with existing mental health issues. Activities that promote positive mental health are also important.

How mental health supports are accessed is an important question. While staff should be knowledgeable about mental health issues, recognize symptoms, and facilitate access to support, it is not necessarily the best approach to rely on 'in house' supports. The Chelsea Foyer (New York), which reported that 21% of participants had a diagnosed mental illness, chose to have

no medical or mental health services other than a part-time nurse whose salary was supported through funding streams that require this service. This was intentional; they felt that mental health services were widely available in the community, and to deliver mental health services themselves would make the Foyer too much like many of the residents' previous experiences in care.



They concluded that “young people with serious mental health challenges are not effectively served by the relatively unstructured Foyer environment”⁴.

A key challenge of implementing a Foyer then is how to integrate necessary and appropriate mental health supports through a ‘systems of care’ approach that embeds the Foyer in a network of mainstream and targeted services.

The Arts – For Living Life

Recent research describes the benefits of the arts for engaging youth, as well as improvements in cognitive function as a result of participating in arts-based learning and initiatives⁵. The arts are a creative and engaging way of enabling people to express themselves, which is crucial for mental health and cognitive development. Many young people have had traumatic experiences that affect their ability to learn, and to connect with others. The arts provide an opportunity for young people to tell their stories through music, painting, poetry, photography, dance, etc., and can be a source of stress-relief in an otherwise stressful life. The arts bring people together and provide an opportunity to connect through mutual interest.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- 1) What kinds of mental health supports are available for youth in your community, and how will you access them?
- 2) How will you nurture mental health through your program’s philosophy and service delivery model?
- 3) How will you ensure that young people receive the proper assessments for mental health and learning disabilities? There is often a cost for testing and this should be planned as a budget item.
- 4) What will be the training needs of your staff, and how will this be accomplished?
- 5) How will you consider your program’s philosophy and service delivery model as a means of supporting a non-discriminatory and stigmatizing environment?

A KEY CHALLENGE OF IMPLEMENTING A FOYER IS HOW TO INTEGRATE NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS THROUGH A ‘SYSTEMS OF CARE’ APPROACH THAT EMBEDS THE FOYER IN A NETWORK OF MAINSTREAM AND TARGETED SERVICES.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- 1) How can this kind of programming be offered through creative partnerships with local organizations?
- 2) The Foyer Federation’s Open Talent programming supports arts based youth engagement.
- 3) Though not part of existing Foyers, two interesting arts-based programs for homeless youth provide excellent models of how to engage young people in the arts:
 - Sketch (Toronto)
 - Roaddawgz (San Francisco)



Open Talent – Yeovil Foyer, Somerset UK. SWEET SOUNDS: The Foyer band, brothers Simon and David Gaylard, perform at the launch of the Open Talent campaign at the Foyer in Yeovil.

Photo: Jennie Banks, Western Gazette, North Dorset
www.thisissomerset.co.uk/Students-thrilled-look-vibrant-gypsy-culture/story-16522898-detail/story.html

Program Fees: A Model That Does Not Penalize

Having young people work and pay a small fee to be part of the Foyer is seen as necessary to build young people's capacity to live independently. However, in order to be sustainable, the program fee charged to residents needs to be affordable and geared to income. In the UK, young people who work pay higher program fees than those on public assistance. In some cases, the program fee was more than the youth could reasonably afford and some youth were going into debt. This forced some youth to leave their jobs and rely on public assistance. The funding model must be geared towards helping young people become self-sustaining.

At the New York Foyer, residents pay a program fee roughly equivalent to 30% of their income. The money is deposited into an account that residents can use at the end of their stay to contribute to a rent deposit. This is a significant advantage for residents – not only do they get the practice of paying 'rent', but they are in a much better position to secure housing when they leave the Foyer.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- 1) It is recommended that the model followed in New York be adopted.
- 2) What other forms of financial literacy training and support for residents might you provide?



Aftercare

Although the Foyer approach addresses many youth needs, once youth leave the Foyer to live independently, they may still require some level of ongoing support. Plans to engage youth in aftercare should be a part of the discharge planning process. The transient nature of the population means that contact phone numbers often change, and it is important to collect all contact information from youth before they leave. The New York Foyer has employed innovative ways of maintaining contact with youth including via social media sites like Facebook, and by developing a partnership with a local college that provides an intern to coordinate aftercare contact, in the absence of funding to support an aftercare staff person. The level of contact required depends on the needs of the youth, and should be decided in collaboration with

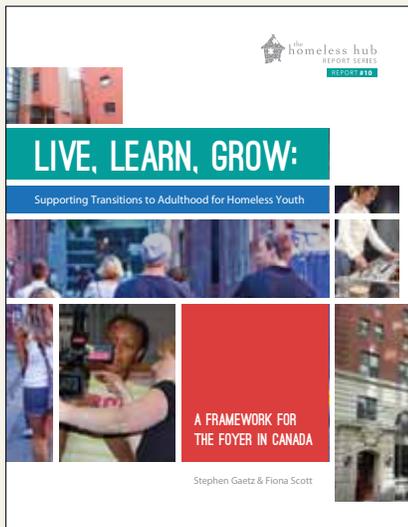
youth and staff as part of the discharge planning process. Youth need to be engaged not only in follow up conversations with staff, but also with events and activities that continue to support them in building relationships and networks. Program staff should be in contact with former participants within a reasonable time frame post discharge in order to maintain a relationship.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- 1) What funding needs to be in place to ensure aftercare is provided?
- 2) For high needs clients, in what ways can aftercare supports be transferred to other providers?
- 3) What strategies need to be in place to ensure no one is discharged into homelessness?

THE FUNDING MODEL MUST BE GEARED TOWARDS HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE BECOME SELF-SUSTAINING.

READ MORE



READ THE FULL REPORT

TOOLKITS

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

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FOYER TOOLKIT #5

PART 2 Foyer Essentials

ACCOMMODATION



ONE

of the key considerations in establishing a Foyer is deciding what kind of accommodation will be provided: a fixed site with multiple rooms and a common area: a dispersed housing model with individual apartments, or small clusters of rooms with shared space? There are many options, and these carry different considerations in terms of capital and operating expenses. In addition, the built form of the Foyer has implications for the delivery of services and supports.

The good news is that in developing a new Foyer, one has the unique opportunity to build on what has clearly been demonstrated to be an effective model, and to adapt what has been more broadly learned about the full range of housing options for youth. There is no single type of facility associated with the Foyer; they come in all shapes and sizes.

But accommodation is about much more than shape and size. The *quality* of accommodation is also really important to consider. Often, there is an attitude on the part of funders and the public that ‘beggars can’t be choosers’, and that young people who are homeless should be satisfied with the bare minimum of accommodation. This goes against a core belief that underlies the Foyer model and more progressive approaches to youth development. The Foyer should be more than a bare bones shelter; it should be a safe and a decent place to live.

“Go smaller, fight for the money, make them nice places to be. Don’t make them austere. Don’t have a bare mattress. Make it look nice. Invest in living space, good quality furniture, nice flooring, everything that makes it nice. These poor kids are coming from horrible places often, so make it nice for them.”
(Narelle Clay, Chairperson, Homelessness Australia¹).

In this section, we will review a range of potential options for accommodation that respect the principles of the Foyer.



What forms of housing are most appropriate?

International research identifies that there is much flexibility in terms of the physical form that Foyers can take. In fact, the Foyer can be adapted to incorporate different forms of housing, including a dedicated youth housing facility on one hand, or dispersed housing (potentially including scattered site approaches) on the other. There are benefits to both models, and in thinking about establishing a Foyer, they should not be considered mutually exclusive.

Dedicated youth housing facility

Dedicated facilities, also known as ‘stand-alone’ or congregate living environments (though not to be confused with congregate shelter environments, where many people sleep in the same room) may be more appropriate for youth who are younger, less independent, have higher needs for support and / or need help with social interaction. Dedicated facilities have the advantage of centralizing staff and program resources, easily accessible program space, and the ability to nurture and support community building. For high needs clients where security and access to around the clock supports is important, this may be a preferable option.

Reports on the implementation of Foyers in Australia concluded that “good design is essential for the building to be attractive, practical, secure, and cost and environmentally efficient to operate” and that successful Foyer buildings include “well-planned offices for support staff, training rooms and space for tenant partners”². Innovative Canadian transitional housing projects for youth, such as Eva’s Phoenix in Toronto and the Lilly Building run by Choices for Youth in St. John’s demonstrate how to combine innovative living accommodations with common spaces, services and training space in renovated settings. Jeff Karabanow, a leading Canadian scholar on youth homelessness, suggests that transitions out of homelessness may be facilitated by having such housing facilities at a distance from mainstream youth services as this may make it easier for street involved youth to disconnect from the lifestyle.³

Blended model: Hub and Spoke

Some interesting innovations have resulted from blending the two models of accommodation. A blended model might include a main or central dedicated facility with multiple residential units, communal space, and administrative space. Residents who are young, inexperienced or have higher needs would be better suited for this centralized facility. At the same time, this central facility could be augmented with a number of dispersed units, allowing older youth who are more independent or who are averse to the more institutional context the opportunity to live in smaller units that are integrated into the community.



Dispersed Housing

Dispersed housing has been used in transitional housing models as an alternative to the dedicated youth housing facility, and is seen as more advantageous for young people who are older and / or who are able to live more independently. Dispersed and scattered site housing⁴ provides a great deal of flexibility in terms of differentiated accommodation, more so than fixed site models. Single room or multiple room apartments can be used, as well as houses.

While dispersed housing models have become common, particularly in the wake of the success of Housing First, there is no reason to believe that this approach cannot also work with Foyers. In fact, the Foyer model has been adapted to include dispersed accommodation in both the UK⁴ and Australia⁵.

There are many advantages to the dispersed Foyer model. First, because it is not associated with a single facility, it can feel less like a ‘program’ or an institutional setting for residents. This may be par-

ticularly attractive to young people leaving group homes or juvenile detention facilities. Second, support for sub-populations (young women, LGBTQ youth) can be more easily accommodated with a decentralized housing model. Third, the number of youth who can be accommodated is much more elastic, and is not limited by the number of rooms in a dedicated housing facility. Fourth, in the case of a scattered site approach, costs for capital, administration and maintenance may be reduced and shifted to the private sector, making the model more cost effective (though support costs may be higher because clients are dispersed).

Finally, and this is perhaps the key benefit, length of tenure becomes much more flexible. With a scattered site model that houses people in private market housing, lease conversion is then possible, making the transition to independent living much more fluid. Long-term tenancy is therefore possible through the Foyer and young people are supported to live independently in permanent housing.

One complicating feature of this approach, however, is that it means adapting the model to ensure that some of the key supports and program components, such as communal space, life skills, educational supports and the nurturing of positive relationships, are still implemented and supported in an effective manner.

* Dispersed housing is often distinguished from scattered site models because while in both cases the units are smaller (housing fewer residents in one place) and located over a wider area, the units are owned by the provider. Scattered site housing typically refers to units rented from the private sector, which can allow greater flexibility and lowers capital investment.



The importance of Communal Space

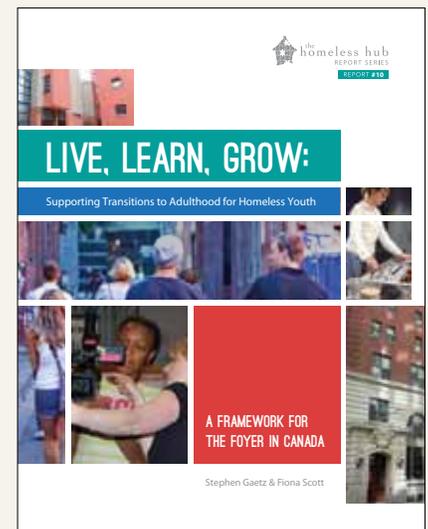
Whether the Foyer uses a dedicated housing facility or a scattered site approach, it is considered important for youth to have safe spaces to gather, talk, and engage in activities together. Without communal spaces,

youth can often feel isolated. By providing space, youth can gather to exchange information and experiences, get support from peers, and essentially learn effective ways of communicating.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:

- 1) What model best suits your target population? Based on age or other demographic factors, and the developmental assets of residents, what model makes sense?
- 2) How will an inclusive and safe environment be supported by the model you choose? How will the dignity, safety and security of women, LGBTQ and racial minority youth be respected within the housing model you choose? What is the range of ages that can be supported?
- 3) How will the model you choose assist with community engagement, building healthy social relationships, and involvement in education, training and / or employment?
- 4) A dedicated site model (and even dispersed site model where the organization owns the units) carries with it capital and operational cost considerations. How can these be met?
- 5) A dispersed model has its strengths. In going down that road, you will need to consider:
 - The need for a system of roving supports, and 24 hour on call care.
 - Is there adequate and affordable supply of rental housing to enable a 'scattered site' approach?
 - What are the challenges of recruiting, negotiating and supporting landlords?
 - What kind of plan do you need to have in place in case of eviction, so that young people do not return to homelessness?

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TOOLKITS

- #1 What is a Foyer?
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- #4 Foyer Essentials Part 1: The Program
- #6 Foyer Essentials
Part 3: Organizational Framework
- #7 Foyer Case Studies
- #8 Resources from the Foyer Federation (UK)

References

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- Smith, J. (2004) Dispersed Foyers: A Research Study. Foyer Federation
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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
- Sub-populations
- System of care
- Staffing
- Mix of residents
- 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

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READ THE FULL REPORT

Foyer Case Studies





Aberdeen Foyer SCOTLAND

Established in 1995, the Aberdeen Foyer in Scotland is an excellent example of a Foyer. Working across seven different sites, the Aberdeen Foyer provides supported tenancies for up to 80 formerly homeless and at risk young people (aged 16 – 25) at any given time. There are several features of this model that are worth considering. First, they engage in prevention work in the community, working in partnership with other mainstream services to provide young people and their families with extra support in order to minimize future crises that may lead to homelessness. Second, the Aberdeen Foyer provides a whole range of services and supports to engage young people with the goal of affecting real change in their lives. This includes arts-based programming, and a range of life-skills programming aimed at supporting personal, social and employable skills, and encouraging healthier lifestyles. The programs are either run directly by the Foyer, or in some cases through partnerships with other organizations.

In addition to supporting involvement in education, the Aberdeen Foyer offers a broad range of social enterprises that young people can participate in, including a Foyer Restaurant and Gallery, Foyer Graphics, Roadwise Driver Training, Foyer Works (property maintenance) and Foyer Catering Co.

TO FIND OUT MORE, download their Annual Reports (Aberdeen Foyer, 2006; 2010) or go to the Aberdeen Foyer Website.

www.aberdeenfoyer.com



Garden Court Foyer AUSTRALIA

The Garden Court Foyer in Wollongong (New South Wales) It represents an enhancement on the more conventional fixed site Foyer models in place in most communities (National Youth Commission, 2008). The main Foyer site has seven individual bachelor apartments for youth. Each unit has its own bathroom, kitchenette and living/bedroom area. Communal space includes a lounge, dining room, common kitchen, outdoor courtyard, as well as a training room and computer room.

What makes this Foyer unique is that it combines a central or main location with 'dispersed' units – properties away from the main facility that young people can live in. Youth in dispersed units still have access to the supports and facilities of the main site, as well as supports provided on an outreach basis. This is an interesting model because it demonstrates how the Foyer may be adapted to incorporate elements of 'scattered site' housing, Housing First and potentially convertible leases.

Foyer Plus AUSTRALIA

In Melbourne, Australia, they have implemented the “Foyer Plus” model. This project is highly innovative, and includes several separate facilities and programs. For instance, the length of stay is dependent upon the program, with some programs having a two-year maximum, and others three years or longer. Operated by Melbourne City Mission, they manage several models of “Foyer Plus” across metropolitan Melbourne.

- The Precinct model – located in North Fitzroy
- The High Density model - Lion Garden located in the CBD and Ladder Hoddle Street located in Collingwood.
- Neighbourhood model – dispersed transitional properties located in Inner South and North

Ladder Hoddle Street is an integrated support program for homeless youth, much like Step Ahead. Young people are provided with up to two years of housing, links to employment, education and training and mentoring services. One of the key features of Ladder is that young people who have left the program are provided with aftercare for up to six months to support in their transition to independence.

In the **Step Ahead Foyer** program, operated by Melbourne City Mission and Melbourne Affordable Housing, young people aged 16-24 are housed in fully furnished, self-contained units for up to three years. As with other Foyers, they receive ongoing intensive motivational casework and a structured program of learning (education and training).

There are two accommodation options: first, there is the eight-unit Lion Garden property, designed for younger clients with higher needs. There is also a dispersed housing option for an additional twelve to fourteen young people who are older and/or have lower needs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, download the Step Ahead’s program evaluation (Grace et al., 2011) or go to the Foyer Plus website:

www.melbournecitymission.org.au/What-We-Do/Our-Programs-Services/Homelessness-Services/Homelessness-Homeless-Support/Foyer-Plus



Chelsea Foyer NEW YORK

The Chelsea Foyer in New York (operated by Common Ground), was introduced in New York in 2004 to help address the growing problem of homelessness after foster care. The program development and practice model is supported by three core principles that assert the Foyer's commitment to providing:

- A supported transition in which young people can practice independent living;
- A developmentally-appropriate environment to build a sense of competence;
- A community of peers and caring adults with emphasis on peer mentoring.

It is different from most Foyer buildings in the UK in that it is a 40 unit independent residence that is part of the larger Common Ground's 207 unit permanent supportive housing complex for low-income and formerly homeless adults. As of 2009, the Chelsea Foyer had served 165 young people between the ages of 18 and 25. As in the UK, the maximum stay is two years. Residents of the Foyer are expected to at least have a part time job even if they are in school, and to engage in a variety of events and workshops. The Foyer offers daily activities and/or workshops related to housing (including money management, establishing good credit, running a household, communicating effectively with

landlords), work (including monthly career clubs where youth have opportunities to network with employers), and general health and wellbeing (including fitness programs, a men's forum, a women's forum, and cooking classes). For youth who are not working, employment workshops are mandatory.

Foyer residents contribute a program fee, determined by income, in lieu of rent, which is deposited into a savings account and returned to them when they successfully complete the program.

The Chelsea Foyer has a higher concentration of residents with high needs (mental health, addictions) than is typically the case in the UK. Staff have found that it is possible to have peer mentoring even within a high-needs community. Although the Chelsea Foyer has no dedicated aftercare service, participants are encouraged to keep in touch with program staff, and are invited to attend and participate in regular alumni events.

Foyer Websites

ABERDEEN FOYER, SCOTLAND UK

<http://www.aberdeenfoyer.com/>

FOCUS E15 FOYER (LONDON, UK)

<http://www.east-thames.co.uk/focus-e15>

THE CORK FOYER (CORK, IRELAND)

<http://www.corkfoyer.ie/>

RIVERSIDE CAMBRIDGE FOYER (CAMBRIDGE, UK)

<http://www.homelessuk.org/details.asp?id=HO1008392>

FOYER PLUS (MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA)

<http://www.melbournecitymission.org.au/What-We-Do/Our-Programs-Services/Homelessness-Services/Homelessness-Homeless-Support/Foyer-Plus>

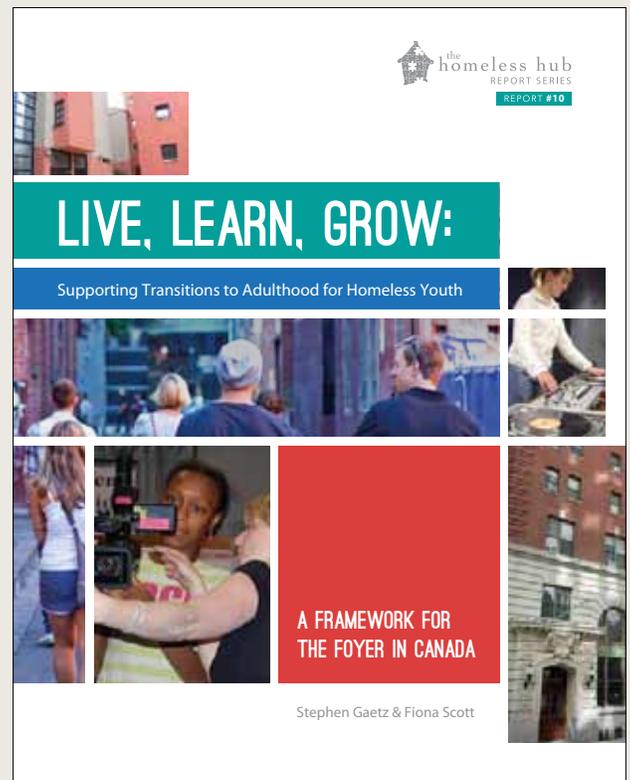
LIVE N LEARN FOYER (NSW, AUSTRALIA)

<http://www.livenlearn.com.au/about-us.html>

READ MORE

TOOLKITS

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Resources from the Foyer Federation



The Foyer Federation is a not-for-profit organization in the United Kingdom that supports Foyers in their work to transform the circumstances of young people who have faced barriers in their lives. Since 1992, they have worked with young people to create new approaches to developing the skills, opportunities and resources they need to thrive.

The Foyer Federation has developed a number of excellent resources to assist communities in developing Foyers and key programs. These include:

Accreditation and Quality Assurance

[FISH](#)

Foyer Quality Assurance Framework

[FOYER FEDERATION ACCREDITATION SCHEME](#)

Program

[OPEN TALENT](#)

Arts based youth engagement

[LIFETRACKS](#)

Providing supports for young people to make informed choices about learning, training and work.

[MYNAV](#)

MyNav is an online platform bringing together new media technology and informal learning opportunities to deliver a personalized package of support to young people.

[CONNECT YOURSELF](#)

A program that aims to enable young people to connect themselves to opportunities that identify, develop and promote their talents and achieve their future goals.

[WORKING ASSETS](#)

Working Assets is about improving young people's employability outcomes by using a positive approach that develops their skills, assets and talents for the world of work.

[FEELING GOOD](#)

A program to support the development of resilience in young people in Foyers in the United Kingdom.

[FOYER HEALTH TOOLKIT](#)

Enhancing health of young people in Foyers

[TEENAGE PARENTS](#)

The Identification of Good Practice in Enhanced Housing Support for Teenage Parents.



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TOOLKITS

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