

Skagit ACI Child Welfare Coordinating Protocol

This protocol serves to document the coordinating protocols between the Skagit County regional homeless crisis response system and the WA State child welfare system operated by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). The goal of the protocol is to ensure that youth and young adults (YYA) identified as experiencing homelessness within Skagit County by the child welfare system are accounted for on the Skagit County Youth By-Name List (YBNL). A foundational value of this protocol is putting as much power and choice in the hands of young people as possible given the systems and statutes in place.

Identification

YYA are identified as experiencing homelessness if they are staying in a place not meant for human habitation (street/sidewalk, abandoned building, car/van, etc.), in a temporary housing program for individuals experiencing homelessness (emergency shelter, transitional housing, host home, etc.), in a temporary placement with family/friends, fleeing domestic violence or are otherwise unsafely and unstably housed. Identification as homeless refers to a YYA's current overnight sleeping location which may be the result of either choice or circumstance.

Our local DCYF office maintains constant tracking of young people who are:

- Missing From Care: these young people are defined as experiencing homelessness or housing instability because they are not in the care of their primary caregiver and their whereabouts are likely unknown.
- Crisis Residential Center: runaway youth and youth in conflict with their families placed in short-term facilities to work with counselors to resolve immediate conflict.
- Exiting foster care or extended foster care with no safe, stable housing situation upon exit

Connection to Services

The following describes pathways for youth and young adults connected to the foster care system and experiencing homelessness in Skagit County onto our Youth By-Name-List (YBNL). Youth that are experiencing homelessness by definition of the Skagit County ACI who are not accessing services in any HMIS program should be enrolled in the 'ACI Project' in HMIS in order to be identified on the YBNL.

Missing From Care:

The Missing From Care (MFC) Coordinator for DCYF Region 3 receives notifications that a YYA is missing from care from DCYF social workers. The MFC Coordinator uses multiple strategies to locate YYA including, but not limited to:

- Connecting with the YYA's social worker, placement provider, last known contact, contracted Independent Living (IL) social worker;
- Using social media; and

- Going to spaces the YYA might be (drop-in centers, school [if attending], etc.) and networking with providers/staff there to locate the YYA or get the word out that they might be missing.

The MFC Coordinator can share information with providers who might be helping to find a particular YYA. This information does not include date of birth, but can share approximate age, description, and whether there is a Washington State Patrol report. The MFC Coordinator's aim is to build relationships with YYA to connect/reconnect them to needed services and re-engage with the system.

Once the MFC Locator connects with the YYA, the goal is to facilitate their return placement within DCYF; however, the MFC Locator will also facilitate connection to Oasis teen shelter, the Sedro-Woolley Rec Center, and/or the CRC/HOPE program as needed. If the YYA returns to DCYF placement, the MFC Coordinator completes a screen, Run Debrief, and Run Prevention Plan with the YAA and YYA team.

Independent/Transitional Living Programs:

The contracted Independent Living (IL) provider for Skagit County is YouthNet. DCYF will regularly refer all eligible young adults to YouthNet for IL services. Youth are eligible for the IL program if they are/were age 15 or older in an established dependency through DCYF or a tribal child welfare agency and in an out of home placement for at least 30 days after their 15th birthday. Once initial eligibility is determined, the youth will continue to be eligible until their 23rd birthday. Young people meet with Youthnet Case Managers on a monthly basis to address current needs and accomplish goals, including addressing housing needs.

If any IL eligible young adult is experiencing homelessness or housing instability, eligible young adults may be enrolled in the Independent Youth Housing Program (IYHP). This program is HMIS participating and would result in the young adult's inclusion on the YBNL. If the young adult is not eligible for IYHP or there is not an opening, IL staff will facilitate the young adult's connection to housing services through the BNL Referral Flier, which would result in the young adult's inclusion on the YBNL.

Key YouthNet staff will be invited to AWHWA [Homeless Prevention and Diversion Fund \(HPDF\)](#) certification training as they become available. These programs provide direct access to flexible funding to prevent young people from becoming homeless or quickly resolve barriers to housing outside of the homelessness system. Young people housed via these projects will be reflected on Skagit County's BNL.

Secret Harbor:

Secret Harbor offers residential facilities for young men referred by DCYF Case Managers. Youth aged 6-21 years, who have experienced significant trauma due to abuse or neglect, and have usually been in multiple unsuccessful placements are eligible for placement within their licensed group home facilities. While young people Secret Harbor serves may have been identified as at risk to experience homelessness through meetings with DCYF Case Managers, Secret Harbor staff will have access to the BNL Referral Flier to refer those in need to housing support services and include them on Skagit's YBNL.

Key Secret Harbor staff will be invited to AWHWA [Homeless Prevention and Diversion Fund \(HPDF\)](#) certification training as they become available. These programs provide direct access to flexible funding to prevent young people from becoming homeless or quickly resolve barriers to housing outside of the homelessness system. Young people housed via these projects will be reflected on Skagit County's BNL.

Upstream Homelessness Prevention:

Skagit County service providers will coordinate with DCYF Region 3's Missing from Care Coordinator, YouthNet's Independent Living Director, and the Vice President of Foster Programs for Secret Harbour to roll out a set of supportive materials for DCYF Social Workers on local housing resources. The intent of these materials will be to put knowledge and resources directly in young people's hands early on, in an accessible way, to ensure that if a crisis happens young people can access services they need.

These resources will include:

- A 1 pager about local services and how to access them with a QR code young people can scan to self-refer themselves to services.
- A short training geared towards DCYF staff on navigating Skagit's youth homelessness system upon request.

Social workers will use these resources to talk about the services available with young people before they experience a crisis, including when entering foster care, at 17.5 meetings or other regularly scheduled meetings.

Cross-System Collaboration Review

This protocol will be reviewed at least annually by the ACI team, DCYF, YouthNet, partners and young people with lived experience of the foster care system, focusing on identifying strategies for improving these collaborations and resolving barriers to full implementation. Further, DCYF and YouthNet will participate in ACI meetings as needed, as well as in quarterly Community Team Meetings to ensure challenges and opportunities are surfaced regularly. Skagit's Youth & Community Engagement Coordinator will work with Skagit's Mockingbird Society chapter to develop opportunities for young people to review these practices.

Skagit County YBNL Referral Flier



<https://bit.ly/skagityouth>

ARE YOU A YOUNG PERSON IN NEED OF HOUSING SUPPORT?

**SCAN THIS QR
CODE TO GET
CONNECTED TO
SUPPORT RIGHT
NOW!**

**Are you having trouble
finding safe and stable
housing?**

**Are you at risk of losing your
housing?**

Homelessness and housing services are available to young people age 12-24 across Skagit County, including young people that aren't or can't stay with their families. The QR code form will connect you with outreach workers from The Skagit Valley Family YMCA and Northwest Youth Services.

If you are a K-12 student, your McKinney-Vento Liaison can get you access to support to keep you stably housed and attending school.

Updated 1/16/2023



Skagit County Referral Flier Form

[QR code links to service form at NWYS](#)

This form is also available in Spanish

Today's Date : _____

Date of Birth* _____

Where are you staying? _____

Is it safe? ☐ YES ☐ NO

What county are you most often in?*

☐ Whatcom ☐ Skagit ☐ Island ☐ Whatcom/Skagit ☐
Skagit/Island

First and Last Name* _____ What pronouns do you use today? _____

Choose the identity most applicable

☐ Transgender ☐ Nonbinary ☐ Cisgender ☐ Other ☐ Prefer not to say

Please explain any communication or translation needs.

Phone or email address*

Alternative Contact (ex. Facebook or Instagram account, place/time to meet you, etc.)

Is it safe to say NWYS is calling?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Is it safe to leave a message?

☐ YES ☐ NO

What services are you interested in today? Check all that apply

- ☐ Basic needs (clothing, food, restrooms, resting space, laundry, showers)
- ☐ Housing support
- ☐ Move-in or rental assistance for your current rental
- ☐ Employment and/or education support
- ☐ LGBTQ+ identity support
- ☐ Mental health support
- ☐ Activities, making friends, peer support
- ☐ Legal advice

Is there anything else you would like to talk to a staff member about?

