

Key Recommendations

October 14, 2024

*The following Recommendations were created and prioritized by the Delegates of the 2024 Deschutes Civic Assembly on Youth Homelessness. The Assembly addressed the following question: **What should our priorities be for building community solutions to prevent and end youth homelessness?***

The Recommendations below were written by the Assembly after more than 30 hours of in-person information gathering and deliberation between Sept. 14 and Oct. 6. Recommendations that achieved supermajority (75%+) support from among all voting Delegates are included in this report. Recommendations with lower levels of support will be included in the project's later comprehensive report. In addition to their primary text, some Recommendations also include additional Rationales and Implementation Notes. With the exception of this explanatory text in italics, this report is composed exclusively of the words of Delegates themselves, with no additions, deletions, or edits by staff.

Official recipients of these Recommendations include the Central Oregon Youth Action Board, Deschutes County, the City of Bend, and the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council. Representatives of these entities have committed to receiving the results, thoroughly considering them, and issuing a public response. Additional governmental and nongovernmental bodies are expected to receive and consider the Assembly's Recommendations on an unofficial basis. This project was a partnership between the Central Oregon Youth Action Board, the Central Oregon Civic Action Project, the Laboratory for the American Conversation at OSU-Cascades, Healthy Democracy, DemocracyNext, and MIT's Center for Constructive Communication. It was funded by contributions from dozens of local individual donors and foundations – including the Ford Family Foundation, the Roundhouse Foundation, the Wade Family Foundation, and Brooks Resources – as well as by national foundations, including the Rockefeller Foundation, Omidyar Network, and Quadrivium.

Delegates were randomly selected from across Deschutes County, reflecting a microcosm of the county in terms of age, gender, race/ethnicity, geographic location of residence, political party, housing status, and educational attainment. A preliminary demographic profile of the Assembly has previously been released. Healthy Democracy will release a subsequent comprehensive report, which will include a final demographic profile of the Assembly, notes related to Delegate selection, in-room process details, and the rest of the Assembly's work: a prioritized list of Guiding Principles and all Proposed Recommendations that did not receive supermajority support. This comprehensive report, as well as all further communication related to the Assembly, will be posted at cocap.us.

Recommendations in this report were ordered first by their total score, based on:

- 2 points for "Strongly Agree"*
- 1 point for "Somewhat Agree"*
- 0 points for "Neutral / Don't Know"*
- -1 point for "Disagree"*

In the case of ties, Recommendations were then ordered by their level of agreement ("Strongly Agree" + "Somewhat Agree"), and then by the number of Delegates who marked "Strongly Agree." Note: Recommendation 22 did not achieve 75% agreement from the Assembly, despite receiving a higher total score than Recommendation 23; hence, Recommendation 22 is not included in this report.

Recommendation 1

95% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
16	5	1	0	37

Develop programs to help 18-year-olds transition out of the foster care system.

Teach life skills, inform of available resources, assist with finding housing, incorporate work/trade options.

Rationale:

Reduces likeliness of being homeless for 18+ age bracket.

Implementation Notes:

Recommendation 2

95% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
15	6	1	0	36

A central hub that would have the following:

- A recreation center that would be run by Bend Parks and Recreation.
- A safe space for at-risk teens.
- Designated space for programs and non-governmental organizations that would allow teens to access benefits at one central location.

Would increase availability of resources and foster awareness and involvement with the community. Bend Parks and Recreation has an extensive volunteer core that would be a valuable resource to tap into.

Rationale:

Implementation Notes:

Recommendation 3

91% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
16	4	2	0	36

Improve foster care system.

The foster care system needs to provide more resources for those exiting the foster care system to access housing, jobs training, and education.

Rationale:

- Youth literally run away from the system.
- There is not help with transitioning out of the system as they age out.
- There is currently no access to life skills training within the system.

Implementation Notes:

The lawsuit settlement from Wyatt B. vs. Kotek in Federal District Court is intended to improve the system.

Recommendation 4

91% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
15	5	2	0	35

Schools to follow up on students intentionally who are protected under the McKinney-Vento Act if student is not present in school for 10 days. Follow-up should be on a case-by-case basis.

Rationale:

A school district policy that automatically drops McKinney-Vento students after 10 days of unexcused absence, with no regard for the causes of the absences, the impact of homelessness, or interventions to support attendance, is a serious violation of the McKinney-Vento Act.

Implementation Notes:

1

Recommendation 5

86% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
16	3	3	0	35

Childcare support for families with young children to help break the cycle of poverty.

Creating a Co-Op and utilizing COCC, RPA, and high school students who are studying Early Childhood Education.

Rationale:

Parents can't go to work if they can't leave their small children somewhere safe.

Implementation Notes:

Engage community and community assets, contacting school Early Childhood Education Directors, churches, and city officials.

Recommendation 6

86% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
14	5	2	0	33

Allow overrule to the 10-day-drop rule.

Allow school staff to overrule the 10-day-drop rule on a case-by-case basis.

Rationale:

Implementation Notes:

Recommendation 7

86% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
14	5	2	1	32

Use social media advertisements and posters in public spaces to increase public awareness of available services and indicate who to contact for more information.

Rationale:

Public awareness is lacking.

Implementation Notes:

Recommendation 8

86% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
13	6	2	0	32

Expand public transit in Deschutes County.

Rationale:

Public transportation services help homeless youth.

Implementation Notes:

Recommendation 9

82% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
15	3	3	1	32

Provide permanent and dedicated funding to J Bar J.

The goal is to provide youth homeless services and prevention, including administrative, staff, and marketing funding.

Rationale:

J Bar J is a successful umbrella organization in our area.

Implementation Notes:

Recommendation 10

86% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
11	8	3	0	30

Allow Family Access Network advocates to give hotspots and/or internet access to families with students, and to provide funding for this.

Students can use the internet to do their homework and access services available through the internet.

Rationale:

Students will have equal access and be more likely to stay in school.

Implementation Notes:

Collaborate with internet providers.

Recommendation 11

82% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
13	5	4	1	30

Redefine the Oregon Department of Human Services objective of reunification of families with the goal of incorporating the voice of the youth affected.

Youth should be allowed to have input about their futures and that input should be prioritized.

Rationale:

Family reunification is not always in the best interest of the child.

Implementation Notes:

Recommendation 12

82% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
11	7	3	0	29

Create another civic assembly in the future, dedicated to the housing affordability crisis.

The housing affordability crisis is the core of not only youth homelessness, but a host of other issues in the community, and if not addressed, can render all other efforts moot.

Rationale:

Implementation Notes:

Recommendation 13

82% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
11	7	3	0	29

Vocational schools and/or programs

Currently there are very few, and they are hard to get into or they are designated specifically for adjudicated youth.

Rationale:

Many kids, especially if they are homeless, are not college bound. They need job skills that can transfer to strong wages to help them transition out of homelessness and maintain it.

Implementation Notes:

Recommendation 14

86% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
10	9	2	1	28

Provide education on homelessness and human trafficking, starting as early in the education process as school districts deem appropriate and feasible throughout Deschutes County.

Rationale:

Implementation Notes:

Recommendation 15

82% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
11	7	3	1	28

Provide specified training for adults who interact with unhoused youth to help with identification of youth in need.

This training would be focused on parents, school faculty, officers, Oregon Department of Human Services staff, and others.

Rationale:

This trains those who are most in contact with unhoused youth. This is a good way to educate the public.

Implementation Notes:

Recommendation 16

86% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
10	9	1	2	27

Prioritize funding for inpatient psychiatric care for minors.

Deschutes County to prioritize funding and seek healthcare partners, such as St. Charles and Mosaic Medical, to provide local access to inpatient psychiatric care for minors.

Rationale:

There is a lack of inpatient psychiatric care for minors in Central Oregon.

Implementation Notes:

Recommendation 17

82% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
10	8	3	1	27

Education requirements in school districts to include mandatory financial literacy and critical thinking education courses.

Options to partner in senior year with finance sector for credit options?

Rationale:

"Prepare the child for the road; not the road for the child." Lowering standards (Senate Bill 744) doesn't improve overall community health in short or long term. This is the preventative measure that helps support what we kept hearing from those who came through the foster care system. Young adults are not prepared and do not have the necessary life skills, especially if they are lacking the family support to provide these transitional buffers.

Implementation Notes:

Recommendation 18

77% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
10	7	4	1	26

Social media marketing reaching caregivers, letting them know they can access resources without jeopardizing their families.

Rationale:

Implementation Notes:

Recommendation 19

77% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
10	7	2	2	25

Give non-governmental organizations the ability to be flexible with how they spend their funds.

Flexibility in areas not directly related to housing, including personnel, nonpersonnel, and administration, with increased transparency.

Rationale:

Reducing restrictions on funding will allow organizations the freedom to spend funds as they deem to be effective.

Implementation Notes:

Recommendation 20

77% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
9	8	3	2	24

Reform local housing policy to serve local community members and foster sustainable growth for all.

Examples: taxes on second or additional properties, tax on non-owner-occupied properties, allow for the creation of tenants' unions, promote rent-to-own programs, restructure incentives to serve residents over developers.

Rationale:

Implementation Notes:

Recommendation 21

77% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
8	9	4	1	24

Direct Deschutes County and the Coordinated Homeless Response Office to dedicate funding to partner with J Bar J and other non-governmental organizations to educate the general public about youth homelessness and prevention.

Rationale:

Community awareness leads to more resources.

Implementation Notes:

Recommendation 23

77% Agree

<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neutral / Don't Know</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	Total Score
8	9	3	2	23

Create a government mechanism/process/service that would allow the homeless to quickly get government identification, and/or birth certificate, and/or social security card.

Rationale:

Access to identification and/or documentation has been cited as a major barrier to access government services and participate in society, especially for homeless youth.

Implementation Notes: