



The Safely Home Campaign is a social justice movement to keep young people safe and together with their families by building and supporting strong communities, returning young people from out-of-home placements with the support they need, ending racial inequity and improving community safety.

The Safety Home Campaign promotes the transformation of facility-based systems to community-based continuums of care so that investing in families and neighborhoods is the norm and relying on out-of-home placements the exception, not they other way around.

Initiated by Youth Advocate Programs (YAP), the Safety Home Campaign relies on partnerships with systems, policymakers, advocates and practitioners to achieve these six goals:

- 1 REDUCE OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS**
Change practices and incentives so that children and young people are not removed from their families and placed in foster care, group homes, residential treatment centers, youth prisons or detention centers or other types of congregate care.
- 2 REDIRECT DOLLARS**
Capture savings from reducing out-of-home placements and redirect them to community-based programs.
- 3 EXPAND COMMUNITY-BASED ALTERNATIVES**
Create a continuum of family-focused, neighborhood based, flexible, individualized services that include services for youth and families most at risk of separation.
- 4 REDUCE RACIAL AND ETHNIC DISPARITIES**
Implement culturally competent community-based programs for youth of color to achieve greater racial equity.
- 5 IMPROVE COMMUNITY SAFETY**
Redefine public safety as something characterized by safe places in the community that provide the opportunity for positive connection, growth, health and play.
- 6 INCREASE SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH**
Connect young people to the services supports and adults that help them improve their social and economic mobility and realize their goals.

Why the Safely Home Campaign?

On any given day in the United States, over 500,000 young people live away from home, separated from their families and communities. The majority of these young people have complex needs who, absent support, cannot get the services they need in their home environments. Systems often aim to help these young people by sending them away from their homes in an attempt to meet those needs. The statistics are sobering.



400K young people in the child welfare system are in out-of-home placements



4.6 million young are disconnected from school and work



51k young people are incarcerated on any given day



LGBTQ young people are at **elevated risk** of out-of-home placement



42% of the US population is young people of color but they make up **57%** of young people in foster care and **66%** of incarcerated young people



3-6 young people can be served in the community for the cost of one youth incarcerated

Likewise, the number of youth who currently live in unsafe communities is also too high.

Thousands of at-risk youth who do live at home live in unsafe communities, where gun violence turns whole neighborhoods into war zones. Many of the youth we want to bring safely home will return to these communities. Consequently, the Safely Home Campaign is also invested in making communities safer, so youth can return or remain, safely home.

- ▶ In 2010, nearly 4,000 young adults aged 10-24 were killed by gun violence.
- ▶ Young people of color are victims of violence at an alarmingly disproportionate rate. According to the Centers for Disease Control, “Among 10 to 24-year-olds, homicide is the leading cause of death for African Americans; the second leading cause of death for Hispanics; and the third leading cause of death for American Indians and Alaska Natives.”
- ▶ Youth homicides and injuries cause by violence result in annual loss of \$16 billion dollars in medical and lost work costs.



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How We Can Help the Youth at the Center of the Safely Home Campaign

In most communities, youth and young adults whose challenges put them at-risk of institutionalization receive assistance in one of two ways:

- ▶ they receive they receive help in one of many community-based programs designed to meet a certain, but limited, need, like substance abuse or anger management; or
- ▶ they are removed from their homes and placed in a congregate care or secure confinement facility.

This means that youth or families in need are placed in program slots with pre-designed and pre-set treatments or curricula. When their unique and complex needs are not met by these programs, youth are often sent to residential treatment centers or secure facilities as a last resort. Their needs may not be met here either, and if they do improve, they return to a home and community that has not improved with them. As a result, youth often regress because they lack the appropriate family and neighborhood supports and services.

The Safely Home Campaign proposes shifting the current approach away from fitting youth and young adults into existing services and towards individualizing services based on the needs of each high-risk youth and young adult in the system or at risk of system involvement. Many youth may respond best to untraditional services rather than to regimented out-of-home placements or specific community-based programs that mandate certain treatments.

This shift also enables communities to identify and close gaps within their current resources that, left unfilled, will leave the most vulnerable and marginalized young people to fend for themselves or face removal from their families and homes. With this approach, communities can design individual services for each unique youth in need, creating targeted, responsive solutions.

- ▶ Engage families to have Voice and Choice and value their expertise
- ▶ Support and develop public policies that incentivize keeping families together
- ▶ Redirect resources for out-of-home placements to intensive community programs
- ▶ Support government agencies and communities that want to build their capacities



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The Impact

Communities and systems that work to bring youth safely home have a greater impact than just improving youth outcomes.

The right service for the right youth can strengthen families, build community capacity to help other youth in need, and prevent damaging disconnection from family and community.



The impact of bringing youth safely home also can positively affect individuals, businesses, communities and governments in unique and important ways.

How Your Organization Can Help

Realizing the six goals of the Safely Home Campaign requires a community effort. We rely on government and organizational partners to accomplish these goals and lead the way to improving outcomes for our most vulnerable and marginalized youth.

Partners of the Safely Home Campaign agree with the Campaign goals and contribute to the Campaign's blog, education efforts, and help build support for the Campaign in other ways.

To join the safely home campaign and / or receive our newsletter, please sign up on-line at www.safelyhomecampaign.org or email us at safelyhome@yapinc.org.



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