



Reentry Planning During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Q&A

Q: Discharge is currently very challenging, particularly because some residential placements are not accepting new admissions during COVID-19. Any ideas for alternatives?

A: If you're hearing from a provider that they are not taking youth right now, ask them who might be. Consider using a list to find youth homelessness providers such as [Family and Youth Services Bureau](#) and [National Network for Youth](#). The first is a list of homeless/ runaway youth grantees and the second is the National Network for Youth member list. Additionally, some jurisdictions have had more success with foster care placements as opposed to group homes, while some are considering "flipping" locations to create additional group home spaces.

Q: Is there any data around reentry that is specifically disaggregated by race? Is there any data generally that would be helpful to have around reentry as we look at COVID-19 and also reentry broadly?

A: Youth Correction Leaders for Justice is tracking media reports of releases on their [page](#). When pushing for release, part of your ask should be release youth but also tell us who is being released, including racial and ethnic demographics. Also, coordinate with youth defenders because often they're in the best position to know who's being released.

Q: What can we be doing specifically around transition planning to make sure young people have connections? Some people are concerned about the potential for downtime while schools are closed, what are some alternatives that could be used?

A: There's a lot of online learning resources, such as the [Center for Educational Excellence in Alternative Settings](#), and community-based services that people can work with. Part of this is being very youth directed, so focusing on what the youth's interests are. This can be a good time to grow learning opportunities by doing things like reaching out to potential mentors in the field the youth is interested in.

Distance/ E-learning does not usually take as long as a regular school day, and while it's important to support school districts' educational plans, we need to reach out to youth to find out what they need and what their interests are in order to stay in place and be safe. Some options have been taking youth out in small, social distancing groups for things like bike rides, walks, etc. so they can constructively deal with their energy and be outside. Also, things like board games, art supplies, makeup, video games, etc. are helpful as extra activities for youth.

Q: How can communities help connect people to technology and resources they need during these times of social isolation?

A: Reach out to local community advocates in your area who may be able to assist in meeting youth and family needs. Apply for emergency grants to help youth and families obtain resources. The youth in shelter and housing programs may be able to get help with those things onsite already, but with other youth consider using emergency money to get things like phones and data plans so youth can stay connected.

Q: What are some ways to provide meals or help get resources to families?

Providing meals is very jurisdiction specific; start with schools and county lists to find out where food can be provided for youth. Some states have started implementing programs that provide money for groceries each month, such as Michigan's new Bridge Card's which are sent to families of children who receive free school meals. Also, consider reaching out to restaurants to see if they provide free meals for kids and starting online donation drives for things like gift cards to give to families are good ways to help families access food.