



**Council of the District of Columbia
Committee on the Judiciary
Performance Oversight Hearing
Pre-Hearing Questions and Answers**



Services for Committed Youth 1,2,3

1. Please describe any programs or services that the agency provided or funded in FY15 or FY16, to date, for youth that have not been committed. Please include a description of any youth engagement, community outreach, or crime reduction activities that were undertaken by the agency in FY15 or FY16, to date. For each program or activity, please provide:

- a. The nature of the program or activity;

***Pre-adjudicated youth/Family Reunification Homes:** The Family Reunification homes we utilize connect youth to positive activities and opportunities, such as volunteer civic activities, exposure to spiritual venues, and use of public agencies/services like the local library, health clinics, and other similar activities. Moreover, the HCA requires contractors to facilitate age-appropriate indoor and outdoor therapeutic recreational activities representative of the youth's interests and needs, as well as opportunities for independent living skill building (i.e. hygiene, using public transportation, money management, stress reduction, and job readiness skills). Critically, the HCA for Family Reunification homes requires that contractors coordinate with families to schedule family visits or phone interactions between youth and relatives, as well as involve family members in the planning and execution of services and activities for youth.*

Like other DYRS- contracted facilities (such as group homes and residential treatment centers), DYRS requires that each provider enter into the Human Care Agreement (HCA), which is a set of requirements and standards of care that all contractors must provide to youth placed in their facility. The HCA is a written agreement for the procurement of services, including but not limited to health, social, and educational, and it is written pursuant to the D.C. Official Code, Section 2-303.06a, which governs services provided directly to individuals who are disabled, disadvantaged, displaced, elderly, indigent, mentally, ill, physically ill, unemployed, or minors in the custody of the District of Columbia.

DYRS also serves male and female youths between the ages of 12 and 21 who have been remanded to temporary custody by the D.C. Superior Court. While these youth are not committed to DYRS and are often in the pre-adjudication phase, our agency is responsible for the contracting of Family Reunification Homes that provide supervision and care to youth in temporary custody.

***Youth Services Center:** The Youth Services Center is a secure residential facility for designed detained male and female youth awaiting adjudication*



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and/or disposition by the courts. The Youth Services Center has 24-hour supervision and comprehensive social services, including a variety of academic and experiential programs provided by District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). Youth attend school five hours per day, five days per week.

Other features of the Youth Services Center include:

- *Diagnostic assessments and placement services*
- *Mental, behavioral, and physical health care*
- *Educational services*
- *Security*

YSC also works with numerous community partners to provide the following services to our detained youth:

Vendor	Service
Holly Bass	Creative Writing, Dance & Art
Seeds of Tomorrow	Tutoring Services
Georgetown ASK	Tutoring Services
National Community Church (NCC)	Mentoring & Religious
Justice for Juniors	Mentoring
Fly Girls	Mentoring

b. The goals of the program or activity;

DYRS’s goal when serving any/all youth is consistent with the agency’s overall mission: to improve public safety and give court-involved youth the opportunity to become more productive citizens by building on the strengths of the youth and their families in the least restrictive, most homelike environment. This balanced approach to juvenile justice promotes the rehabilitation of court-involved youth toward reforming their behavior in the context of increased accountability, expanded personal competencies, positive youth development and enhanced community restoration. Family Reunification Homes allow young people to live in a home-like environment with structured and supervised care, which includes the provision of rehabilitative services and positive youth development activities.

c. The vendor that administered the program or activity, if applicable;

4 C’s 3rd Street



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4 C'S Douglas Street
Alternative Solutions for Youth 1620 1st Street NE
Alternative Solutions for Youth Shelter
Casa Ruby Shelter
Center City Community Corporation - Sankofa
Covenant House
Dupont III Shelter
Girls & Boys Town of DC 4801 Unit E
Kennedy Shelter
Metropolitan Educational Solutions - Two Family Reunification Program
REACH Shelter
Sasha Bruce Youth Work - Chloe House
Sasha Bruce Youthworks, Inc - REACH
Triangle Shelter
Umbrella Family Reunification 604 R Street N.W.
Umbrella Family Re-Unification Program 4308 E Street SE

- d. The cost per youth of the program or activity;
 - e. The total number of youth that took part in the program or activity; and
- Beginning in January 2016, DYRS began a project to revise data collection processes for shelter homes. As a result, the data prior to January 2016 is accurate in the aggregate and not by provider. Going forward, DYRS will be able to report this data by provider.*

Fiscal Year	Total Annual Cost	Total Enrollments	Unique Youth
FY 14		1200	699
FY 15	\$7,793,385	1156	594
FY 16 (as of 1/8)	\$1,617,668	338	244

- f. Any outcome data from the program or activity.



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The overarching goal of shelter homes is generally to reunite youth with their families. In the coming year, DYRS plans to more precisely determine how many youth are returning to their families from shelter homes.

2. Please describe the efforts that DYRS made in FY15 or FY16, to date, to assist youth with disabilities, including efforts made to ensure:

- a. Identification of disabilities during commitment;

DYRS collaborates closely with District of Columbia Public School (DCPS) and the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) to ensure all committed youth are appropriately identified for special education. If a social worker or other DYRS employee identifies that a committed youth may have a disability as a result of struggles in his/her educational setting or as a result of a recent medical diagnoses, DYRS will notify appropriate school staff to call for an eligibility meeting and request necessary testing to identify if the youth is eligible for special education services and/or a 504 plan. The school at the Youth Services Center is operated by DCPS and is fully equipped to identify students as eligible for special education and provide appropriate services. The school at New Beginnings Youth Development Center, Maya Angelou Academy, is operated by the See Forever Foundation and is fully accredited as a Charter School in Washington, DC to provide educational services, including special education services, to youth. This school is also fully equipped to provide testing to identify youth with disabilities and provide necessary services for these youth. Additionally all youth receive an assigned Youth Engagement Specialist, tutoring through Georgetown University Program and Mentoring while in the community through the use of DC YouthLink and the Achievement. There is a large emphasis placed on vocational training and educational supports in courses offered at the Achievement Center to include Interviewing Techniques, Work Force Development support, Customer Services Skills and Financial Literacy.

- b. Access to meaningful education during commitment;

Committed youth residing in the DC community are enrolled in their neighborhood DC Public School, or if a non-public school or charter school is their school of record, they will continue their education with such school. It is a top priority for all committed youth without a high school diploma or GED to be enrolled in school and DYRS Social Worker work closely with the



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parent/guardian to ensure youth are enrolled in school, and attending regularly. School attendance is a requirement of all youth's Community Placement Agreement. Social Workers monitor educational progress through report cards, school attendance and school behavior reports. They also constantly communicate with school staff and participate in school related meetings for youth. DYRS identified specific points of contact within DCPS for assistance with enrolling committed youth in school as well as for assistance with monitoring youth's special education progress. DYRS also has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the OSSE for all youth receiving rehabilitative services in an out of state residential treatment center. As part of this MOU, DCPS progress monitors are assigned to each youth identified as needing special education to ensure services in the Individual Education Program (IEP) are being implemented and adequate progress is being made. These progress monitors also assist with identifying an appropriate school placement for the youth upon return to the community based on the youth's needs and identified services and special education hours in the IEP. For committed youth who are detained at YSC and youth placed at NBYDC, youth receive education daily from accredited schools able to meet the needs of both regular and special education youth.

c. The implementation of existing IEPs, where applicable;

Committed youth residing in the DC community are enrolled in their neighborhood DC Public School, or if a non-public school or charter school is their school of record, they will continue their education with such school. These schools are required by law to implement a special education student's existing IEP. A committed youth's Social Worker ensures this IEP is being implemented through collaboration with the school, such as attending annual IEP meetings, reviewing student's schedule and report cards, and regular communication with youth, parent, and school staff to discuss progress. DYRS has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the OSSE for all youth receiving rehabilitative services in an out of state residential treatment center. As part of this MOU, DCPS Progress Monitors are assigned to each youth identified as needing special education to ensure services in the Individual Education Program (IEP) are being implemented and adequate progress is being made while in placement. These progress monitors also assist with identifying an appropriate school placement for the youth upon return to the community based on the youth's needs and identified services and special education hours in the IEP. A committed youth's Social Worker also collaborates with the Progress Monitor throughout this process and



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participates in all educational meetings for the youth and advocates on the youth's behalf. For committed youth detained at YSC and committed youth placed at NBYDC, youth receive education daily from accredited schools able to implement a youth's existing IEP. The school at YSC is operated by DCPS, and the school at NBYDC, Maya Angelou Academy, is operated by the See Forever Foundation and is an accredited Charter School in Washington, DC. These schools are required by law to implement existing IEPs. As part of the management of a youth's case, the social worker monitors the youth's educational progress and participation while in these facilities and participates in meetings related to the youth's education.

d. The accessibility of facilities;

The school at the Youth Services Center is operated by DCPS and is fully equipped to identify students as eligible for special education and provide appropriate services. The school at New Beginnings Youth Development Center, Maya Angelou Academy, is operated by the See Forever Foundation and is fully accredited as a Charter School in Washington, DC to provide educational services, including special education services, to all youth. This school is also fully equipped to provide testing to identify youth with disabilities and provide necessary services for these youth. These facilities meet all the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and can service youth with physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities. The facilities are wheelchair accessible for youth requiring such access. For youth requiring specialized services, such as an interpreter or One to One Aide, one is provided to the youth upon entry to the facility. For these specialized services identified in a youth's IEP, DCPS provides the service during school hours and DYRS provides the services, if needed, outside of school hours.

e. Equal access to rehabilitation programs;

All committed youth are provided equal access to rehabilitation programs, regardless of disability. Youth are given rehabilitation services in the setting that can best meet his/her needs, and this setting accommodates the youth's disability, if applicable. DYRS only enters into Human Care Agreements with Facilities that can meet the needs of our youth. If a youth with a specialized need outside of our current rehabilitation offerings becomes committed, DYRS will seek contracts with appropriate service and placement providers to ensure the needs of the youth are met.



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- f. The availability of staff trained specifically to support youth with disabilities;

The DYRS Training team conducts orientation training sessions on special education for all school staff particularly at NBYDC. For DYRS' other partners, the DYRS training team works with the education team / contracts to ensure appropriate / regular trainings are held and attended by school personnel. DYRS Youth Development Representative (YDR) staff at YSC and NBYDC is given extensive training prior to their interaction with any committed youth. A component of this training is best practices in working with youth with disabilities, including youth with emotional and cognitive disabilities. DYRS also has Educational Specialists in the Education and Workforce Development Department, and these staff are trained to understand best practices in education for youth with disabilities; and

- g. The safety and security of youth with disabilities.

All safety and security matters for all scholars including scholars with special needs are reviewed during a weekly School Improvement Team (SIT) meeting. Before enrolling, a review team (Principal, School Psychologist, Dean of Students, Assistant Principal, Guidance Counselor, Lead Special Education Case Manager) reviews the youths IEP and identifies significant concerns. Those concerns are shared with DYRS staff and a special meeting is convened to identify and implement strategies (intervention plans, trainings etc.) that will help that scholar with disability be successful. DYRS YDR staff at YSC and NBYDC are given extensive training in how to work with youth with disabilities and also trained in safe crisis management to keep all youth in facilities safe. Social Workers monitor the progress of committed youth closely, both while in residential and community placements. If a youth's safety or security comes into question, social workers are required to act swiftly to address and remedy this issue, which may require an emergency change in placement, a safety plan, advocacy with specific staff to better support the youth, or even parent education to help parents better understand their child's disability.

3. Please describe any actions taken by DYRS in FY15 or FY16, to date, to identify those youth in the custody of the agency that have experienced homelessness. Please also describe any additional services or supports that the agency provided to youth who have experienced homelessness.



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It is a priority for DYRS to ensure that all youth have stable housing both during and after commitment. DYRS identifies youth as homeless through the process of a home assessment. All youth residing in or visiting a home in the community for a day or weekend pass must have a home assessment completed by the youth's social worker. If a stable home cannot be identified, the youth will be recognized as homeless. A youth may also be identified as homeless based on disclosure by the parent/guardian or the youth. If a youth is identified as homeless, DYRS staff will engage the family to determine what support can be provided. DYRS has provided temporary rental assistance in the past to families to help them secure housing if rental payment is the only barrier to stable housing, however, the family must be able to provide proof of maintenance after the one time assistance is provided. DYRS Social Workers will also support the family with identifying housing resources and financial assistance resources within the community.

If a committed youth is homeless because a parent/guardian refuses to allow the youth to return home, CFSA is contacted if the youth is under 18 and DYRS will collaborate with CFSA in providing services and supports to the youth. If a youth is over 18 and homeless because the parent/guardian will not allow him to return home, the DYRS social worker examines the youth's entire family system as well as other supportive adults and explores if there are any potential family members or other supports that may be able to provide a stable home.

For youth 18 and over, the DYRS social worker will also explore independent living as a potential housing option for the youth, if appropriate. Social workers can establish specific goals with the youth and necessary steps to achieve such goals to demonstrate readiness for independent living. DYRS offers supervised independent living for youth who still need the support of staff to foster independent living skills and maturity. Additionally, for youth who demonstrate readiness (i.e. maturity, completed high school or GED, employed), there is also an independent living program that is unsupervised. This program allows youth to live in their own apartment in a traditional apartment community in Washington, DC, but youth are assigned a case manager who does regular check-ins and teaches transitional life skills. The goal of both independent living programs is to assist youth with obtaining their own apartment separate from the program. All committed youth in independent living continue to be supervised and monitored by their DYRS social worker and must abide by the requirements in their Community Placement Agreement.

Additionally, DYRS connects age appropriate youth who are identified as being homeless with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and community-based resources. Youth



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are connected to the Transition to Independence Program (TIP) through Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), as well as a workforce development programs through DC YouthLink, the DYRS Achievement Center, and Department of Employment Services (DOES) to assist the youth with building skills to live independently and establishing unsubsidized employment. These skills are critical to reduce homelessness. In an effort to assist the youth after commitment, DYRS social workers will also assist the youth with seeking housing programs outside of DYRS. These programs include non-DYRS independent living programs and transitional housing programs. DYRS will also help parents identify housing programs if assistance is needed. DYRS recognizes the stress homelessness poses to committed youth, therefore additional supports are provided to youth, such as mentoring and family support through DC YouthLink, and therapeutic services through Core Service Agencies.