



A national campaign that promotes investing in communities, not institutions or other residential placements.



The Safely Home Campaign

The Safely Home Campaign is a national movement to keep youth safe and together with their families by building and supporting strong communities, returning kids from out-of-home placements, keeping high-risk youth safely home with the support they need and improving community safety. The Safely Home Campaign promotes the belief that investing in communities should be the norm and relying on out-of-home placements the exception, not the other way around. Initiated by Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. (YAP), the Safely Home Campaign relies on partnerships with systems, policymakers, advocates and practitioners to achieve these seven goals:

- * **Educate & Inform:** Educate policy makers, advocates and the public about the effects and consequences of congregate care for youth, young adults and their families. Inform policymakers, advocates and the public of the value of keeping youth in their communities and effective strategies that work to support youth safely in their homes.
- * **Reduce Out-of-home Placements:** Change practices and incentives so that keeping youth with their families and in their communities is the norm and out-of-home placements the alternative.
- * **Redirect Dollars:** Capture savings from reducing out-of-home placements and redirect them to community-based programs.
- * **Expand Community-Based Alternatives:** Create continuums of family-focused, neighborhood based, flexible, individualized services for high-risk youth and families in every community.
- * **Reduce Overrepresentation of Youth of Color in Congregate Care:** Implement culturally competent community-based programs to bring minority youth back to a supportive community.
- * **Improve Community Safety:** Address underlying needs of high-risk youth and their families in an effort to strengthen families and communities.
- * **Increase Successful Outcomes for Youth:** Help high-risk youth achieve personal and social success while building safer communities.



Why the Safely Home Campaign?

On any given day in the United States over 500,000 youth live away from home, separated from their families and communities. They are the youth with the most complex needs who, absent support, cannot get the services they need in their home environments. Systems respond to helping these youth by sending them away from their homes in an attempt to meet those needs. The statistics are sobering.



400K youth in the child welfare system are in out-of-home placements.



42% of US population is youth of color, but they make up **57%** of youth in foster care and **66%** of incarcerated youth.



61K youth are incarcerated on any given day.



LGBTQ youth are at elevated risk of out-of-home placement.



6.7M youth are disconnected from school or work.



For every 1 youth in placement, **3-6** youth can be served safely and effectively in their home.



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, we are 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.
- Minority youth 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 caused by violence result in annual loss of \$16 billion dollars in medical and lost work costs.

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 help in one of many community-based programs designed to meet a certain 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
- Replace Out-of-Home Placements with Programs Equipped to Reach Young People
- Support Government Agencies and Communities that Want to Build Their Capacities

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 seven 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.



www.safelyhomecampaign.org

