

Funders Together

FOR HOUSING JUSTICE



Youth Homelessness Funder Strategy Circles

September 23, 2025

Attending: Kristine Peters (Orange County United Way), Sarah Yun (Whittier Trust), Daisy Vazquez (Porticus), James Crowder (Annie E. Casey Foundation), Christina Miller (Hilton Foundation), Vince Flowers (Whittier Trust), Cole Giannone (NYC Fund to End Youth & Family Homelessness), Shilpa Bavikatte (Crown Family Philanthropies), Becks Heyhoe-Khalil (Orange County United Way), Dalia Yedidia (Whittier Trust), Joe Womac (Specialty Family Foundation), Casey Trupin (Raikes Foundation)

Staff: Michael Durham, Jessica Venegas

Guests: NA

Regrets: Lara Tannenbaum

Agenda:

- I. Welcome, Introductions
- II. Announcements + Logistics
 - a. Tomorrow: youth organizing webinar
 - b. Foundations for Liberation
 - c. November: funder briefing
 - d. January: film screening
- III. Learning with Wise Friends: Orange County United Way's new youth homelessness prevention pilot
- IV. Peer updates
- V. Adjourn

Notes:

Michael initiated the meeting with introductions. Welcome newcomers Dalia Yedidia and Vince Flowers from Whittier Trust and Christina Miller from Hilton!

Michael plugged the [September 24th webinar](#) on Youth Organizing for Housing Justice, representing a new partnership with the Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing, in addition to our new community of practice, [Foundations for Liberation](#). He also announced that the next two regularly scheduled meetings will take different shapes, the November one being reconfigured as a funder briefing on youth homelessness hosted by the National Homelessness Law Center and the January edition featuring a [film screening](#) and discussion on young people impacted by housing insecurity and the child welfare system.

On behalf of Orange County United Way in California, Becks and Kristine set up discussion on their new youth homelessness prevention pilot by providing an overview of how they got into serving young people. Their foray into youth homelessness was running Welcome Home OC, their program that administered the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) vouchers. Following major success raising money and building momentum on housing foster youth quickly, they launched a broader Transition-Aged Youth (TAY) collaborative. They have housed 172 former foster youth with FYI and FUP vouchers and achieved a 91% housing retention rate after 12 months. Becks offered her thanks to Casey and Paula from Raikes and Daisy from Porticus for their wisdom and insight that informed all of this!

Detailing their overview with a [PowerPoint](#), the United to End Homelessness prevention pilot is called Whatever It Takes – Youth (WITY). Its central function is providing one-time flexible cash payments to stabilize a housing crisis. The goal is to avoid entry into the homelessness system, which means leveraging the resources young people already have in their own personal networks. Those already served by vouchers are not eligible. As they continue to refine what young people need to stay housed and how to measure the success of their intervention, they maintain a weekly learning circle with partner agencies, which has turned out to be deeply meaningful.

In discussion, we named the perennial issue of demonstrating that if not for the one-time cash payments, the next step would have been homelessness. While Orange County United Way's funder allows them leeway such that such demonstration has not yet been a problem, this ability to "prove" prevention affects the larger field. Moreover, it was noted, so much of what we call "prevention" is really diversion, serving people who are already precariously housed – we need these interventions alongside more upstream interpretations of prevention. We also discussed how payments were administered and how clients were assessed for eligibility, in addition to how to scale up and share the learnings from this pilot. And we named how crucial United Ways are and can be in coordinating disparate systems in any given community – a rationale to recruit more to Funders Together's other peer network, [United Ways Partnering to End Homelessness](#).

With time running short, we thanked Becks and Kristine for their insight and concluded at 3:00 ET.