APPENDIX I

Selected Bibliography of Articles on Needs of Homeless Youth
Appendix I: Selected Bibliography on Needs of Homeless Youth

Literature searches were conducted focused on the past five years using key search terms for each domain and the words “homeless youth”. Abstracts and full text articles were reviewed. A brief summary describing key findings and selected references are listed for each topic.

- Housing
- Education
- Employment
- Mental Health
- Substance Use
- Foster Care
- Criminal/Juvenile Justice
- Trauma & Experiences of Victimization
- Social Support and Social Network

Housing

Many articles focused on how housing is a need for homeless youth however in these housing programs other services should be provided such as positive development, self esteem, and coping skills training. Articles also stress the need for youth-friendly housing facilities that are more sensitive to homeless youths needs so youth will be more willing to use them.


Education

Much of the literature related to education focused on the McKinney-Vento Act. Most articles described the need for more elaboration on successful approaches to schools and service providers. Some noted that the act is vague causing different implementation across regions or even schools within districts. Articles also spoke about the lack of knowledge among homeless youth about their rights and what the term “homeless” means because many feel as though they are not homeless. Articles recommend that youth need
to learn how to advocate for themselves and future research should include the voices of actual homeless youth. Lastly, school climate is seen as a protective factor for homeless youth so interventions that include mentorships and support are seen to be effective.


**Employment**

Several articles talked about the relationship between employment and social networks. The use of interventions that promote relationships with non-street people are recommended as a route to homeless youth utilizing more employment-related services. The longer a youth is on the street the least likely they will be at trying to find a job so early intervention is crucial.
Foster Care

Youth that have aged out of foster care are disproportionately represented among homeless youth. Articles recommend that more services need to be focused on helping transition youth aging out of foster care. Timely planning should be made as well as coordinating transitional services so that youth aging out of foster care are not left without a place to go. There were also a number of articles that dealt with the availability of trauma informed services and getting more foster youth into screening, assessment, and treatment to help decrease future adverse effects.


**Criminal Justice**

Most studies looked at the interconnection between trauma, mental health, and substance abuse relating to criminal behavior in homeless youth. Criminal behavior is mainly associated with length of homelessness, history of juvenile detention and incarceration. The main types of crimes that were investigated focused on theft, selling drugs and prostitution. Interventions focused on intensive outreach services that included supports for mental health, substance abuse, trauma, and mentorship.


**Mental Health**

Several articles had different opinions on what the needs of homeless youth are that suffer from mental illness. The overall theme in many of these articles was for service providers to be trauma informed and understand the link between mental health and trauma. There were also a few articles that looked at the coping styles of homeless youth and these may be negative or positive when dealing with mental health issues. Interventions were created based upon various coping styles such as spiritual development and spiritual awareness. Coping research has also been evaluated with homeless youth and pets as a way to decrease depression in youth. However in order for homeless youth to keep their pets more housing institutions should be more lenient on the rules as many do not allow animals.


**Substance Abuse**

Articles discussed the intersection between victimization and substance abuse. More interventions and service providers need to be trauma informed. Positive social networks may be able to reduce substance abuse.


**Trauma & Victimization**

More trauma informed services is highly suggested for this population particularly trauma screening and assessment. Trauma is related to a variety of risk behaviors. More service providers need to understand how complex trauma is and the different levels it can have.
Development of coping strategies is also suggested as a way for youth to deal with past trauma.


**Social Support**

The majority of the articles centered on utilizing positive role models in homeless youths’ lives such as school based peers, family, and mentors. This is the age where most adolescents are involved romantically so interventions around self esteem, coping and building and maintain health relationships would be impactful to prevent intimate partner violence since most youth could receive support from a significant other. Also interventions that promote connections with non-street peers would be beneficial.

