

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE HARRIS COUNTY DUAL STATUS YOUTH INITIATIVE

Position Summary

The Executive Director will lead Harris County's Dual Status Youth Initiative, with the following responsibilities:

- Guide the initiative's strategy development and implementation
- Serve as the initiative's ambassador to partners and the community
- Foster communication and collaboration among partners and with other initiatives in the community
- Ensure the initiative strategies and activities reflect a commitment to equity

The Executive Director will deliver on these responsibilities by working collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders (see list of stakeholders participating in the Dual Status Youth Initiative below). The Executive Director will manage any additional staff that may be hired to support the initiative and will engage with the initiative's multi-stakeholder Steering Committee on an ongoing basis.

Harris County Dual Status Youth Initiative Background

A broad group of stakeholders in Harris County have come together to improve outcomes for dual status youth. Dual status youth, also referred to as "crossover youth," are defined as youth who both experience maltreatment (and become involved in the child welfare system) and engage in delinquency (and become involved in the juvenile justice system).¹ These youth face even worse outcomes than those youth involved in only one system, including higher rates of recidivism, substance abuse and failure in school.² The **Dual Status Youth Initiative** currently includes representatives from the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department (HCJPD), the Department of Family & Protective Services (DFPS), Harris County Protective Services (HCPS), academic institutions, philanthropy, and several community-based organizations. This group has articulated an ambitious vision for the future success of dual status youth in Harris County:

*"Our vision is that all **dually-involved youth can thrive** in the areas of **wellness, education, and transition to adulthood**. In support of this vision, we aim to create an aligned and data-driven system that is inclusive of **families and caregivers, committed to equity, and responsive to youths' individualized needs.**"*

During 2016-2017, the Dual Status Youth Initiative will develop detailed goals, strategies and a long-term implementation structure to improve outcomes for Harris County's dual status youth in a sustainable manner using the **collective impact** approach to social change as a model. The initiative will be guided by principles such as being outcomes-oriented and accountable, honoring existing supports in youths' lives, embracing a spirit of learning and understanding, and sharing responsibility to align resources.

The Executive Director will lead the initiative's **backbone organization**, a neutral, coordinating body that provides ongoing support to the partners in a collaborative effort. Partners are organized into the following groups:

- The **Steering Committee**, comprised primarily of public agency, non-profit, and community leaders who help to guide the vision and overall strategies of the initiative
- **Working groups**, comprised of frontline managers who develop specific strategies and implementation plans to make the initiative's vision and goals a reality
- **Community partners**, consisting of various government agencies and community members and organizations critical to implementing the initiative's strategies

¹ The Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM): An Abbreviated Guide; Guidebook for Juvenile Justice & Child Welfare System Coordination and Integration: A Framework for Improved Outcomes

² Supporting Youth in Transition to Adulthood: Lessons Learned from Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice

Executive Director Responsibilities

The role of the Executive Director is to perform the following functions:

Guide vision and strategy

- Provide strategic leadership, guiding the initiative's vision, strategy, and long term goals (i.e. stewarding the common agenda), recognizing patterns and challenges
- Support the Dual Status Youth Initiative's governance structure, including the Steering Committee, as well as other councils or committees that might be developed

Support aligned activities

- Manage overall work plan for initiative at all levels, including planning and implementation
- Facilitate regular meetings of the Steering Committee and any leadership advisory bodies (including preparing agendas and meeting materials), and ensure information flows appropriately across the various groups
- Provide input and oversight to working group implementation plans
- Manage the initiative's core infrastructure, including the staff (hiring, training, supervision, evaluation), budget, information systems, contact management system, administrative processes and other support functions

Establish shared measurement and learning

- Track and report on progress of the initiative against agreed upon success measures and implementation milestones
- Identify information (both qualitative and quantitative) required to make decisions; conduct research, analyze, and create material for appropriate audiences in partnership with the data analyst team member
- Use a technical understanding of the juvenile justice and child welfare systems to improve collaboration and decision making

Cultivate community engagement & ownership

- Serve as the public face of the initiative as a neutral and reflective party, in service of a goal that is community-wide rather than organization specific
- Utilize strong interpersonal and public speaking skills to effectively communicate the initiative's vision, goals, and strategies, as well as challenges, opportunities and achievements to all relevant community partners
- Promote inclusivity, create safe spaces for difficult conversations and represent the needs of others
- Develop and oversee a communications and community engagement plan that:
 - Creates awareness of the initiative
 - Includes community voice / voice of those with lived experience in all facets of the initiative
 - Encourages community partners to align their work to the initiative's goals and strategies

Advance policy

- Engage with policy-makers and ensure they are aware of the initiative
- Develop policy change recommendations based on policy needs identified by working groups

Mobilize resources

- Develop and manage the initiative's financial sustainability plan by identifying and applying for grant support and establishing ongoing public and private revenue sources
- Support partner organizations in aligning their resources to the initiative's goals and strategies, including state or federal funding sources

Ideal Experience, Education, and Traits

- 5-7 years of experience in a community nonprofit organization, government agency or similar organization, of which 2-3 years should be at a senior or executive level
- Demonstrated success leading teams to achieve strategic goals
- Dedication to improving outcomes for youth and families
- Demonstrated commitment to equity and addressing disparities
- Understanding of the Harris County juvenile justice and child welfare systems
- Ability to think and problem solve at a systems level, as opposed to a program or organizational delivery level (e.g., identify strategies focused on increasing coordination or filling gaps in service)
- Experience fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Comfort with work planning and managing multiple priorities in a context of change and ambiguity and adapting to changing needs or momentum
- Comfort with ambiguity
- Ability to work independently, exercise appropriate action and good business judgment
- Experience working directly with dual status youth, or youth involved in either the child welfare or juvenile justice systems, preferred

Location, Employer, Salary & Benefits

Houston Endowment has committed to funding this position and the operating costs of the backbone for three years. Backbone staff will likely be physically located in the [TRIAD Prevention Program](#) office at the Harris County Youth Services Center. A nonprofit intermediary will serve as the fiscal agent, managing the funding and administering salary and benefits. The salary and benefits package will be competitive. Salary will be determined commensurate with experience, with a minimum salary of \$100,000 per year.

How to Apply

Please submit a resume and a cover letter addressing the questions below:

1. Why are you passionate about transforming Harris County's approach for dual status youth, and what experience will help you successfully do so?
2. What do you believe to be the greatest opportunities for transforming the systems that serve dual status youth in Harris County?
3. Specifically, how do you think the strategies and activities of this initiative can be committed to equity and ultimately reduce disparities among dual status youth?
4. What do you perceive to be the most significant challenges for this initiative and for the future Executive Director?

*Please send applications to DualStatusYouthED@fsg.org. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis starting **October 10, 2016**.*