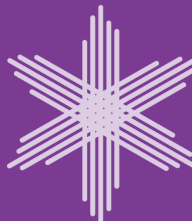


POINT SOURCE YOUTH PRESENTS:

DIRECT CASH TRANSFERS, YOUTH EMPOWERMENT, RACIAL JUSTICE, AND HOUSING STABILITY

- Bishop Jha'asryel-Akquil, *Youth Advocate*
- Melanie Jimenez Perez, *MPA, Program Manager, Office of the County Executive, County of Santa Clara*
- Amanda Misiko Andere, *MPA, Chief Executive Officer, Funders Together to End Homelessness*
- Sarah Stripp, *Program Manager, Springboard To Opportunities*

Direct Cash Transfers (DCT) for youth experiencing homelessness provides an opportunity to walk the walk of youth empowerment. If youth are the best experts in their own lives, then why are agencies not providing them with the resources (cash and support) they need, regularly, to get the housing they require? BIPOC youth are most impacted by homelessness and are, and should be, distrustful of larger systems that have consistently failed and oppressed them. We need to look at Direct Cash Transfers as an opportunity for justice.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Homelessness disproportionately affects Black youth. Direct Cash Transfers is one way to provide justice for structural racism that has displaced so many young people in our country.



Q + A

Why is youth engagement vital to DCT programs?

Santa Clara was at first only providing funding for 50 youth, which wasn't enough to cover our target population of youth aging out of the foster care system. We decided to bring youth to the meeting asking for enough funding for 72 youth. We were able to push the budget higher and further due to youth input.

What would you say to folks who are hesitant to start a DCT program?

If you haven't done that internal work to identify that housing, reparations, and personal autonomy are justice, then you will have reservations with this program. I shouldn't have to convince people that they should trust folks and know that they are capable of making their own decisions

What should you keep in mind when designing a new DCT program?

With Direct Cash Transfers, don't create barriers. If you overthink and add in policy after policy, then you're doing it wrong

IN-DEPTH

As direct service providers, funders, program managers, and government employees, we must realize that we are all gatekeepers when it comes to providing services that youth experiencing homelessness want and need. Gatekeepers inherently have power over those trying to access resources and create uneven power dynamics in social programs and in deciding how public and foundation money is spent. Direct Cash Transfers (DCT) is a program that aims to remove the gatekeepers and allow young people to make decisions about their futures for themselves.

DCT can be a form of housing and racial justice for BIPOC youth experiencing homelessness. DCT programs are “radically resident driven” in that service providers meet youth at the youth-led and youth-built table and ask how they can provide resources for their needs, not telling youth what boxes they must fit into for them to receive support.

In order for this program to take root on a broader scale, we need to reverse the power dynamic and ensure that funders are meeting communities, and more importantly youth, where they're at. Any other dynamic is a formula for failure if our programs are actually aimed at providing youth what they need. This reversal will take lots of introspection and radical action on the part of service providers, foundations, governing bodies and think tanks in order to eradicate racist, sexist, adultist, and colonizing values instilled at the core of our organizations.



IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE THAT INTERNAL WORK TO IDENTIFY THAT HOUSING, REPARATIONS, AND PERSONAL AUTONOMY ARE JUSTICE, THEN YOU WILL HAVE RESERVATIONS WITH THIS PROGRAM. I SHOULDN'T HAVE TO CONVINCЕ PEOPLE THAT THEY SHOULD TRUST FOLKS AND KNOW THAT THEY ARE CAPABLE OF MAKING THEIR OWN DECISIONS.
-AMANDA MISIKO ANDERE, MPA



ACTIONS TO TAKE NOW

1. Ask youth what they want from a DCT program: payment amount, program supports, payment frequency, program duration, and how youth get paid should all be youth-led decisions.
2. Ensure youth are at the table in every funding discussion, especially if you are struggling to attain it for a program.
3. TRUST YOUTH. Many of the questions that come up about the way youth will use money are rooted in racism and adultism. Identify that and call it out when advocating for Direct Cash Transfers.



**WITH DIRECT CASH TRANSFERS,
DON'T CREATE BARRIERS. IF YOU
OVERTHINK AND ADD IN POLICY
AFTER POLICY, THEN YOU'RE
DOING IT WRONG.
-BISHOP JHA'ASRYEL-AKQUIL**

RESOURCES & LINKS

- [Magnolia Mother's Trust \(Springboard to Opportunities' Direct Cash Transfer Program\)](#)
- [CEO of Springboard to Opportunities Aisha Nyandoro's TED talk on Direct Cash Transfers](#)
- [Announcement of Santa Clara County's Youth Basic Income Program for Youth Aging Out of the Foster Care System](#)
- [Santa Clara County's APPROVED Budget Item for Their Youth Basic Income Program for Youth Aging Out of the Foster Care System](#)
- [The Public Health Effects of Interventions Similar to Basic Income](#)