

# Family Interventions: What Do We Know about What Works to Address Youth Homelessness

## *Speaker Biographies*

**Amanda Benton** is a social science analyst in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at the US Department of Health and Human Services. She is the lead analyst for family and youth homelessness, coordinating inter- and intra-agency policy work and managing research contracts, including Family Interventions for Youth Experiencing or at Risk of Homelessness. In addition to homelessness, Benton works on place-based issues and trafficking. She previously was director of policy outreach at the National Alliance to End Homelessness. Benton holds a bachelor's degree from Dickinson College and a master's degree in public policy from Harvard Kennedy School.

**Jasmine Hayes** is deputy director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. She leads the policy team, including the council's work to prevent and end youth and family homelessness. Over the past 15 years, Hayes has worked with local and state leaders to drive child welfare practices. At the state level, she led the planning, policy, and quality improvement divisions and the Resource Development Office for the District of Columbia's child welfare agency. In addition to developing short-term and transitional housing resources for child welfare-involved families, Hayes helped shape and launch the District's Title IV-E waiver demonstration project. Hayes has a master's degree in social work from the University of Toronto.

**Amy Louttit** is a public policy associate at the National Network for Youth. She began her work with homeless youth through her service with Straight Up AmeriCorps in Eureka, California, where she was an academic mentor and advocate for students and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness. She received the President's Volunteer Civic Service Award. Louttit then was a residential counselor in a group home before attending law school. She received the Lawyers Club of San Diego's Women and the Law Project Scholarship at Thomas Jefferson School of Law, the Charles T. Bumer Civil Libertarian Award from the National Lawyers Guild, and the Outstanding Law Student at Thomas Jefferson School of Law Award from the National Association of Women Lawyers. She was the youth director of the San Diego Unaccompanied



Youth Task Force, a collaboration between the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth and the San Diego Continuum of Care. At the task force, Louttit consulted with legislative staff to guide and build new legislation. In her work on state policy, she traveled to the California capitol to deliver legislative testimony at committee hearings regarding bills about youth experiencing homelessness. In addition to policy work, Louttit has led trainings on various topics, including youths' rights, building a local task force, and implementing new laws and regulations.

**Sharon McDonald** is director for families and youth at the National Alliance to End Homelessness, where her primary focus is on policy and program strategies to prevent and end family and youth homelessness. Before joining the alliance, McDonald was a direct practitioner in a Richmond, Virginia, community-based service center for people experiencing homelessness. She has experience providing and supervising the delivery of social work services to families in a service-enriched subsidized housing development for low-income families. McDonald was the 1999 National Association of Social Workers/Council on Social Work Education congressional fellow and served in Senator Paul D. Wellstone's office, where she focused on welfare and housing issues. McDonald holds an MSW and a PhD in social work and social policy from Virginia Commonwealth University.

**Michael Pergamit** is a senior fellow at the Urban Institute. He conducts research on vulnerable youth, particularly youth aging out of foster care; runaway and homeless youth; and disconnected (opportunity) youth. He recently completed a review of the evidence base for family interventions for youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness. He was the project director for the Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) multisite evaluation of foster youth programs (Chafee evaluation) and now directs a project for the ACF on planning the next generation of Chafee evaluations. He is also the principal investigator on an evaluation of Urban Alliance, an employment program targeted at high school seniors in underresourced DC and Baltimore public schools and recently completed an evaluation of the case management and mentoring Promotor Pathway Program at DC's Latin American Youth Center. Past projects include a multipart study in Los Angeles and Chicago of runaway youths' knowledge of and access to services. He has also worked with Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System data for the Family and Youth Services Bureau, identifying predictors of safe exits from Basic Center Program shelters. Pergamit's child welfare work includes codirecting two evaluations of housing programs for families involved in the child welfare system. Pergamit earned a PhD in economics from the University of Chicago.



**Kimberly Waller** is a policy adviser in the Family and Youth Services Bureau in the Administration for Children and Families at the US Department of Health and Human Services. She leads and directs policy development and interpretation on matters related to vulnerable youth and their families, including runaway and homeless youth, family violence prevention and services, and adolescent pregnancy prevention. Before joining the bureau, Waller advocated for low-income children and families in the District of Columbia as a senior policy attorney in the Children’s Law Center, focusing on children and youth in the foster care system, runaway and homeless youth, trafficked youth, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families policy, and youth who have experienced significant traumatic events or toxic stress. Waller also conducted a research fellowship at the University of Michigan Law School, where she identified best practices in improving health and education outcomes for youth aging out of foster care to advocate for policy reforms in Michigan. She started her career as a legislative assistant for Senator Joe Manchin, where she managed the senator’s health, education, and child and family legislative portfolio. Waller holds a bachelor’s degree in social work from the University of Pittsburgh and a law degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of Law.