



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Wednesday, January 13, 2016

CONTACT:

Dora Taylor (DHS) 202.374.9473; dora.taylor@dc.gov

Mayor Bowser Announces New Investments for LGBTQ Youth Experiencing Homelessness

(WASHINGTON, DC) – This morning, Mayor Muriel Bowser and Administration officials joined Casa Ruby Executive Director Ruby Corado, Verizon State Government Affairs Director Mario Acosta-Velez, and LGBTQ advocates to announce expanded capacity for LGBTQ youth at Casa Ruby. The announcement included an additional six new shelter beds at the Casa Ruby Drop-In Center, a \$45,000 investment by Verizon to support Wanda Alston House and Supporting and Mentoring Youth Advocates and Leaders (SMYAL) – two organizations that serve LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness in the District – and the recipients of five mini-grants to support community-based organizations involved in this work.

“We are making progress. And we should be proud of our accomplishments. But we’re not there yet. We will not rest until all young people have access to safe, immediate emergency housing---and the services needed to get back on their feet quickly,” said Mayor Bowser.

“The District is investing over \$5 million every year to implement and bring to scale solutions to end youth homelessness. This investment provides the necessary resources to support additional shelter and transitional housing beds, drop-in centers, street outreach, and a youth census. With more accurate data on the number of youth experiencing housing instability we are able to implement more effective interventions and programs to provide services,” said DHS Director Laura Zeilinger.

These investments have come as a result of the End Youth Homelessness Act and the Homeless Youth Census (HYC) conducted last summer and exemplify the Bowser Administration’s commitment to ensuring equity and increasing excellence in serving District residents experiencing homelessness. The

HYC is a coordinated effort across DC to survey all young people living on the streets, in shelters, or in other unstable housing situations.

Youth homeless service providers in the District conducted the census to help provide a more accurate picture of the number of youth experiencing homelessness, the characteristics of these youth, and their pathways into homelessness, and better inform service delivery. The Bowser Administration invested \$1.3 million in the Fiscal Year 2016 budget toward ending youth homelessness including a little over a half a million dollars for 15 additional shelter beds.

Improvements in service delivery due to the count include:

- Investing strategically in capacity enhancement at every level, primarily emergency shelter or crisis beds
- Providing additional investments in housing strategies oriented to the developmental needs of youth, such as transitional housing programs
- Developing more effective prevention and intervention strategies such as family reunification programs
- Creating a more youth friendly intake and referral process
- Improving the Coordinated Entry for Youth initiative currently underway

###

