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Kaleidoscope Youth Center Announces Housing Program Closure

COLUMBUS – It is with great frustration and sadness that we are announcing the closure of the KYC Housing Program. Since its inception in 2019, we’ve served over 50 young people experiencing homelessness and/or housing insecurity or vulnerability. Our program was established at a time when many doubted the necessity of a housing program that centered the needs and experiences of LGBTQIA+ young adults, even though approximately 40% of the homeless youth population is LGBTQIA+ - and they are 120% more likely to experience homelessness than their non-LGBTQIA+ peers.

Through our programs we know that youth experience greater and more sustainable outcomes of care and services when their experiences are centered.

Like almost every other LGBTQIA+ organization across the country, and non-profits here at home, we have been hit hard as a result of the current socio-political climate. While the circumstances are not unique to KYC, we are uniquely impacted.

In August 2025, we learned from the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) that our funding would not be renewed for the 2025 - 2026 fiscal year. This grant has been a significant source of funding for our housing program since 2021. Notably, this information was received approximately 45 days past the start date of July 1st, and we are now left with a pending deficit and the need to quickly relocate 10 young people without resources, within the next 60 days.

Prior to this notification, we received a letter from ODH that included the following regarding HB 96:

“Per HB 96 (136th General Assembly), the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) is seeking additional information from organizations that submitted applications for Services for Homeless Youth and Pregnant Homeless Youth (HY26) grant funding.



HB 96 includes the following requirement for the distribution of Youth Homelessness funds: “No funds shall be distributed to youth shelters that promote social gender transition, in which an individual goes from identifying with and living as a gender that corresponds to the individual's biological sex to identifying with and living as a gender different from the individual's biological sex.

Please submit a letter indicating whether your entity qualifies for funding under this requirement.”

Our response was concise, simple, and true: KYC is not a youth shelter.

On September 8th, the participants in our housing program were informed that the program would be closing. Although we do not have a current date by which they will need to move, the soonest would be early to mid-November.

What we're doing

While the program is indeed closing, the timeline is still in question. Our ambitious goal is to maintain the program through July 2026 when our final lease ends. This would provide the resources and time to safely and humanely transition current participants while decreasing the threat of returning to homelessness.

Requests have been made to the Franklin County Commissioners, Columbus City Council, and many advocates and donors, and we are currently awaiting their responses.

We've reached out to our landlord to discuss creative options.

Our housing team is providing mental health services and support to participants, as well as, identifying opportunities to support youth as they transition into another housing opportunity.

The truth is, we lack affordable, low-cost housing in Columbus and Franklin County. Trans youth are consistently underemployed. City and county budgets are tight because everyone is in need.

When we say elections have consequences, this is what we mean.

Our youth are scared, and so are we. It is not okay that they are facing the threat of returning to homelessness. And it is not okay that they are having to independently raise money to meet their basic needs.

What you can do

Donate to KYC. In 2024, we lost over \$500,000 due to reduced grant funding. The ODH grant request was written for \$241,500 and would have covered two full-time staff and expenses for the program.



Provide no or low-cost housing opportunities for the impacted youth.

Consider sponsoring a young person for up to 6 months (approximately \$1000/month) to support moving costs, furnishings, and general stabilization.

This is a movement moment, one that we are all being tasked to meet. We don't have to feel hopeless or helpless, indeed, we can meet this moment together and let our young queer and trans youth know that they are not alone.

About Kaleidoscope Youth Center

Established in 1994, Kaleidoscope Youth Center (KYC) works in partnership with young people in Central Ohio to create safe and empowering environments for LGBTQ and ally youth ages 12 – 20. They support youth who are struggling with identity issues, family discord, mental health problems, or the challenges of adolescence; educate youth and the community about LGBTQ issues; and advocate for safe and inclusive spaces everywhere.