December 2017

*Opening Doors for Youth **2.0**:*

An action plan to provide all Connecticut youth and young adults with safe, stable homes and opportunities

Written by:
Connecticut Department of Housing
Center for Children's Advocacy
Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness
Partnership for Strong Communities

With support from:
The Melville Charitable Trust

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

We owe a debt of gratitude to each of the individuals and agencies (see Appendix A) who gave so generously of their time, expertise, experience, and resources to participate in the statewide effort to end youth homelessness – those who continuously work on the effort and those who have taken the time to join our Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) planning efforts.

Youth and young adults who have experienced housing instability and homelessness have contributed substantially to the strategies and decisions within this plan. This youth collaboration would not have been possible without the support from Melville Charitable Trust, Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, the Connecticut Departments of Children and Families, Institute for Community Research, and the Connecticut Department of Housing.

We would also like to thank the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for providing us with the opportunity to participate in the new YHDP initiative as well as our fellow YHDP communities, who have inspired us with their innovation and dedication to ending youth homelessness. A special thanks to our YHDP technical advisors: Brooke Spellman, Abt Associates, Inc.; Sarah Hunter, Corporation for Supportive Housing; and Ziggy Keyes & Nadja Bentley-Hammond, National Youth Forum on Homelessness.

VISION STATEMENT:

A Connecticut where all young people have safe, stable places to live and opportunities to reach their full potential. Where:

- Community partners in child welfare, juvenile and criminal justice, and educational systems, among others, work closely to ensure youth falling into homelessness is a ***rare*** occurrence;

- There is a coordinated response system within each region of Connecticut that provides low-barrier, individualized, and quick access to housing assistance and services needed for youth to obtain stability through self-determined goals, thereby ensuring a youth's episode of homelessness is ***brief***; and

- Youth are connected to services within the community, kin and/or other natural supports, and employment as well as provided with the necessary tools, such as living and relationship skills, to maintain stability and well-being, ensuring homelessness is ***non-recurring*** and providing youth with an opportunity to achieve their goals and thrive.

Once Connecticut achieves this vision, we will continue to update and improve the homeless prevention and response system in collaboration with our youth partners based on feedback from youth participants and providers, data, and emerging best practices to meet the evolving needs of youth.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

Acknowledgements 1

Vision Statement 2

Introduction 4

Governance Structure 8

Statement of Need 10

USICH Four Core Outcomes 15

Subpopulations 25

- Pregnant & Parenting 26
- Minors 30
- Child Welfare 33
- Survivors of Sexual Trafficking and Exploitation 36
- LGBTQ 38
- Juvenile Justice 40

Goals 43

Integrating Key Principles 49

Anticipated YHDP Projects 54

Youth Action Hub 62

Continuous Quality Improvement 67

Signatures from Official Representatives 70

Appendix A – Acknowledgements 71

Appendix B – When to Administer Next Step Tool 73

Appendix C – CAN Regional Data 74

Appendix D – Goals, Objectives and Action Steps 82

Appendix E – Projected Need Percent and Time Assumptions 123

Appendix F – Governance Structure 124

INTRODUCTION:

"I can observe myself better because a number one worry of mine is always, where am I going to sleep? Or am I going to be here tonight again? So now I can see a little bit better mentally. It's not that fuzzy cloud there. I know what I have to do. Like I know I have to find a second job. Know I have to start saving. Now it's like, I can work towards goals now. I don't have to just live."
- Youth with Lived-Experience, Start Evaluation Study

Every youth deserves a safe and reliable place to call home. Lack of stable housing can decrease a young person's ability to perform important life functions such as acquiring and maintaining a job or recovering from a substance abuse issue. Homelessness can also force youth to engage in survival strategies that are oftentimes dangerous or traumatizing, that they would not otherwise participate in, to meet basic needs and sustain themselves. Youth homelessness is a pervasive yet frequently hidden challenge in Connecticut and nationwide. According to the 2017 Youth Count, an estimated *4,396* sheltered, unsheltered and unstably housed youth were experiencing homelessness in Connecticut during a single night in January. With this plan, we are coordinating strategies to ensure rapid access to permanent housing for youth regardless of barriers, with no preconditions, providing them with safety, stability, and a foundation upon which they can better their lives. Together we will effectively end unaccompanied youth homelessness by the end of 2020.

Addressing Youth and Young Adult Homelessness in Connecticut

Recognizing the vulnerability of homeless youth, the American Bar Association Commission on Homelessness and Poverty asked the Center for Children's Advocacy (CCA) in 2007 to create a Connecticut Team for Runaway and Homeless Youth. The purpose of the group was to identify and advocate for systemic changes necessary to improve outcomes for runaway and homeless youth. CCA merged the Connecticut Team for Runaway and Homeless Youth into the Reaching Home structure, creating the Reaching Home Youth and Young Adult Homelessness (YYA) Workgroup in 2012. The YYA workgroup is chaired by CCA with backbone and policy support by the Partnership for Strong Communities (PSC).

In 2015, the YYA workgroup published the Opening Doors for Youth plan after a year-long multi-stakeholder planning initiative aimed at creating a comprehensive, integrated network of services for young people experiencing homelessness and housing instability. The YYA workgroup and its subgroups, continue to use this plan to set annual priorities and steer their work. Over the past 2 years, the YYA workgroup, with added leadership from the CT Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH) and the Department of Housing, has made numerous enhancements to the coordinated entry system for youth, conducted another Youth Count, and helped establish regional groups to push youth efforts forward on a local level.

"Youth" Definition

Unaccompanied Youth- persons who are age 24 or younger, who are not a part of a family with children and who are not accompanied by their parent or guardian during their episode of homelessness.

Pregnant or Parenting Youth- persons who are 24 and younger who are the parents or legal guardians of one or more children who are present with or sleeping in the same place as youth parent, or who are pregnant.

Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program

In 2016, the Reaching Home YYA workgroup in partnership with the Connecticut Balance of State Continuum of Care (CT BOS CoC) applied for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP). This is a new HUD initiative, providing technical assistance as well as funding for planning and homeless assistance projects, to learn how communities can successfully approach the goal of preventing and ending youth homelessness by building comprehensive systems of care for young people rather than implementing individual or unconnected projects that serve this population. In January 2017, HUD awarded the CT BOS CoC $6,552,903 under the YHDP initiative. A YHDP Grant Management team was formed, led by the Connecticut Department of Housing (DOH) with administrative support from the Partnership, to manage the process of developing a coordinated community plan and executing other YHDP requirements. The Youth Action Hub (YAH) serves as a partner and advisory board (See page 62 for more YAH details).

Connecticut Homeless Response Structure Background

Connecticut has 2 Continuums of Care, which manage the development of homeless response systems and investment of HUD homeless grant funds throughout Connecticut. The CT BOS CoC area includes 146 of the state's 169 municipalities while the Opening Doors of Fairfield County (ODFC) CoC includes the other 23. The statewide coordinated entry system divides the state into 8 Coordinated Access Networks (CANs) of community partners that work together to systematically identify and serve households experiencing homelessness in their region. Each CAN's strategy is tailored to address their unique regional challenges. Sparsely populated rural areas have few providers and limited homelessness as opposed to densely populated urban centers with several service providers and larger numbers of homeless. While the CoCs are major funding bodies, CANs manage and operate their regional homeless response systems. Seven CANs are fully included in the CT BOS CoC area and only one municipality – Danbury - from the 8th CAN, Fairfield County, is included.

This plan addresses preventing and ending youth homelessness on a statewide level; however, the YHDP funding was only awarded to the CT BOS CoC. While Fairfield County is ineligible for YHDP funding (except Danbury), they were fully incorporated in the planning efforts and this plan.

Planning Process

The 2015 Opening Doors for Youth Plan and the learnings from over 2 years of work since it was published are the foundation for this updated plan. This plan was formed through a collaboration between YHDP Grant Management team, YYA workgroup, Youth Action Hub, and the CT BOS CoC. While numerous conversations between the groups and with other stakeholders informed the plan, we focused on 3 primary planning strategies:

1. ***System Dynamics Modeling (SDM)* - The** goal of the SDM project is to build a system dynamics simulation model to be used by stakeholders to identify leverage points in the homelessness system where interventions will produce the greatest impact for ending youth homelessness in Connecticut by the end of 2020. A system dynamics simulation model offers an empirically-derived analytic tool for stakeholders to see the system as a whole and to develop a comprehensive and coordinated response. A key benefit of a system dynamics model is that it can be simulated. Simulation models essentially

become a “learning lab” to run experiments on possible interventions that could be implemented so that stakeholders can assess how much it would cost to implement different interventions in the context of the outcomes it would produce.

Unfortunately, due to funding delays, the Institute for Community Research (ICR) and the Youth Action Hub were only able to complete Phase 1 of the project. During Phase 1, ICR convened 12 separate workshops with approximately 100 system stakeholders, including 30 youth who have experienced housing instability or homelessness, to build and validate a map of the underlying system structure that drives youth homelessness. Four of the sessions, each in different CANs, specifically targeted youth throughout the state. These sessions were crucial to our planning, enabling us to hear from a wider range of youth. During the sessions, researchers also elicited input from stakeholders on interventions and strategies to improve system performance and address youth homelessness. Funding is currently being sought from multiple sources to complete Phase 2 of the project.

2. ***YETI (Youth Engagement Team Initiatives) Meetings -*** YETIs, created through the leadership of CCEH are the regional workgroups that bring together partners in youth and housing services to end youth homelessness within their respective regions. Each of the 8 CANs have a YETI. Membership varies by YETI but typically includes youth and young adult service providers, Runaway and Homeless (RHY) providers, McKinney-Vento liaisons, representatives from government agencies, and youth and young adults with lived experience. Among other responsibilities, the YETIs organize and implement their region’s Youth Count.

YETI Mascot

In late spring, CCEH and DOH led special YETI meetings to identify and prioritize needs within each CAN. In each meeting, CCEH and DOH provided an overview of the YHDP initiative, the YETI’s regional data from the 2017 Youth Count and the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), a chart of existing housing resources and guidance questions intended to assess their needs along the continuum. YETIs continued to meet following these discussions to complete and submit to CCEH and DOH their local needs assessments and priorities.

3. ***Review Data and Needs Assessment -*** We pulled a comprehensive data set from HMIS that detailed the inflow and outflow of young adults in our homeless response system during the July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017 state fiscal year (FY17). This pull highlighted gaps in our data and data quality issues that we will work to address. We also reviewed findings from the 2017 Youth Count. Building on the success of the first statewide count of youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability in 2015, Connecticut conducted the second Youth Count in January 2017. This data was especially helpful in estimating the numbers of youth under 18 years old experiencing housing instability. We looked at other data sources, such as McKinney-Vento numbers, data from the Department of Corrections, the National Youth in Transition database reports, among other sources.

Abt Associates Inc., using their needs assessment tool, worked with the YHDP Grant Management Team and additional stakeholders, including YYA workgroup members, CT BOS members, YAH, and CAN/YETI members, to predict how much of each housing intervention is necessary to meet the needs of young adult individuals experiencing homelessness in CT. Estimates were based on annual inflow, agreed upon

assumptions established using best available data and expectations for the near-term that set the percentage of need for each intervention, and average length of time in each intervention.

We discussed the culmination of our findings from these 3 major planning activities with the Youth Action Hub to determine how to allocate the YHDP funding and what action steps we should take to end youth homelessness.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE:

Connecticut's efforts to end homelessness have been called "disgustingly collaborative," for which we are exceedingly proud. The Reaching Home YYA workgroup leads the coordinated effort to end youth homelessness in Connecticut, collaborating with its fellow Reaching Home workgroups, which are all coordinated, guided, and supported by its Coordinating and Steering Committees.

The YYA workgroup is currently undergoing a reorganization process that will improve coordination and make it more action-oriented. Four new subgroups are forming: Youth Connections, Engaged Systems, Funders Collaborative and Education & Employment. All six of the subgroups, old and new, will implement their assigned action steps, updating the YYA workgroup on their progress for accountability. The YYA workgroup is now comprised of all the subgroup co-chairs, representatives from state agencies, HUD, two YAH members, two YETI members (from CT BOS and ODFC) and Center for Children's Advocacy as chair. The Core Vision Team manages and supports the work of the YYA workgroup.

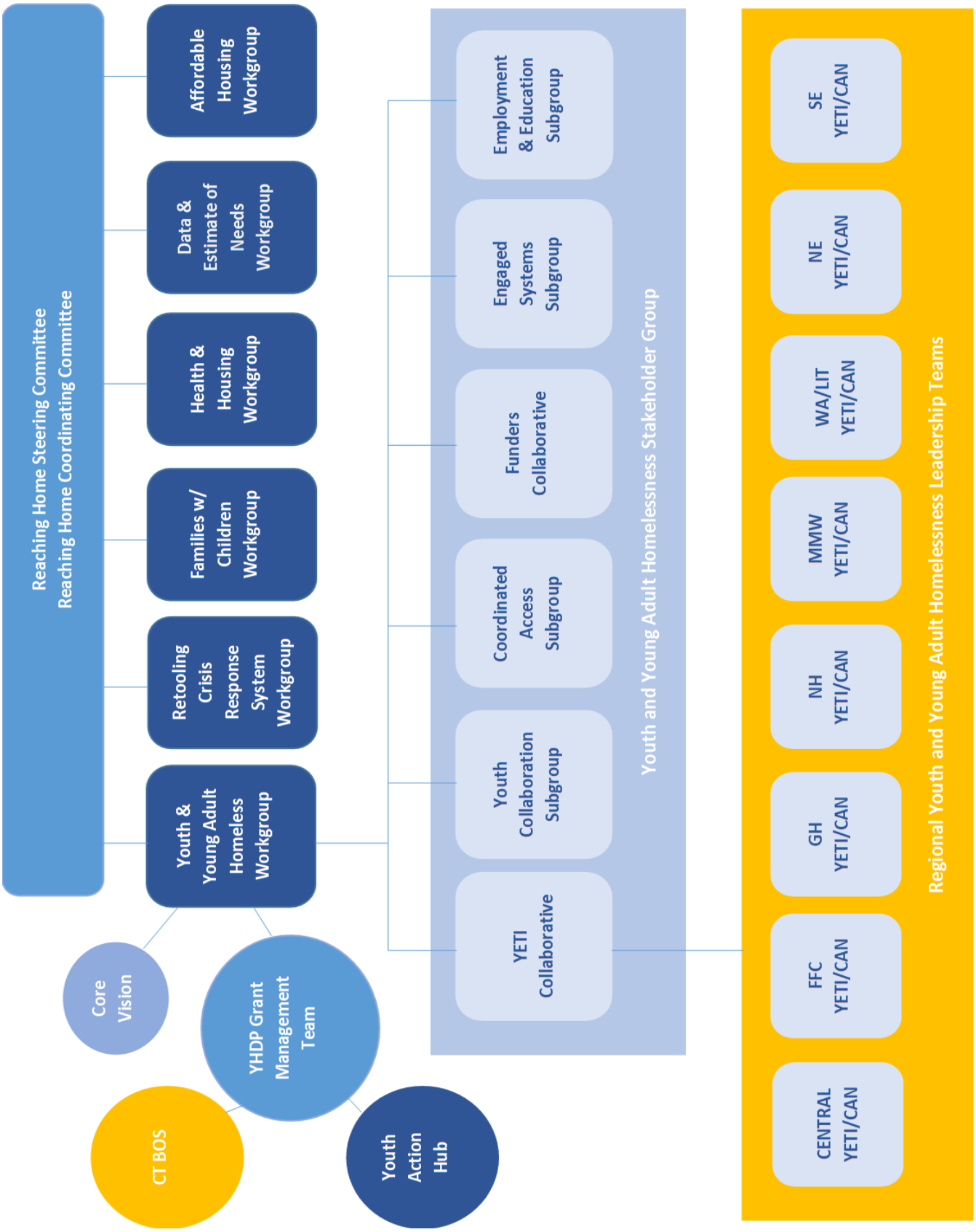
Local YETIs coordinate the effort on the regional level. YETI leaders meet monthly for the YETI Collaborative subgroup, where they discuss promising practices and challenges in implementing statewide strategies on a regional level as well as other issues.

The aptly named YHDP Grant Management Team is a limited-time, subcommittee of both YYA and CT BOS that manages the implementation of the YHDP grant. The YYA workgroup continues to be the entity responsible for managing and implementing the strategies and action steps within the Youth Plan, while CT BOS will eventually fully integrate the YHDP projects into its portfolio and supervision once the projects are renewed through the standard CoC competition.

The YHDP Grant Management Team drafted and approved this Youth Plan. Sign off from the YAH, DCF, CT BOS, DOH, and the YYA workgroup is also being finalized. The YHDP Team makes final decisions on all YHDP funding allocations with YAH collaboration and sign off. For the planning funding, YHDP Team is also considering recommendations from YYA WG and CT BOS. The YHDP project evaluation team will include select members from CT BOS, DCF, YHDP Team, YAH, and the YYA workgroup. The YHDP team will make the final project allocation decisions.

Youth voice has been an integral part of the YYA workgroup's discussion on how to end youth homelessness. In 2015, the Youth Action Hub was created to serve as an advisory board to the workgroup. Its members continue to actively participate in the YYA workgroup and subgroup meetings as well as lead various youth research projects to aid the effort. The YAH has a representative on the YHDP Grant Management Team and serves as the YHDP Team's youth advisory board, collaborating on each step of the process.

A visual depiction of Connecticut's coordinated effort to end youth homelessness can be found on the next page. A detailed narrative chart, further explaining the governance structures of our statewide youth effort and YHDP implementation, is available in Appendix F.


Reaching Home Steering Committee
Reaching Home Coordinating Committee
Affordable Housing Workgroup
Data & Estimate of Needs Workgroup
Health & Housing Workgroup
Families w/ Children Workgroup
Retooling Crisis Response System Workgroup
Youth & Young Adult Homeless Workgroup
Core Vision
CT BOS
YHDP Grant Management Team
Youth Action Hub
Employment & Education Subgroup
Engaged Systems Subgroup
Funders Collaborative
Coordinated Access Subgroup
Youth Collaboration Subgroup
YETI Collaborative
Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Stakeholder Group
SE YETI/CAN
NE YETI/CAN
WA/LIT YETI/CAN
MMW YETI/CAN
NH YETI/CAN
GH YETI/CAN
FFC YETI/CAN
CENTRAL YETI/CAN
Regional Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Leadership Teams

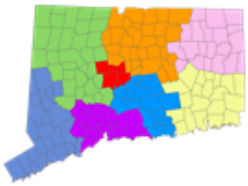
STATEWIDE STATEMENT OF NEED:

Our decisions are data-driven. The next few pages highlight some of the data from HMIS and the 2017 Youth Count, we considered when making our decisions regarding YHDP allocations and action steps. We refer back to this data throughout the report. While this section largely focuses on quantitative data, qualitative data, as highlighted throughout this plan, has played a major role in informing our strategies to end youth homelessness.

The next five pages focus on the statewide need, including our inflow and outflow numbers for young adults during State Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17), which was from July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017. However, region specific data by CAN is available in appendix C, which also includes information on existing youth-specific housing resources in each region.

Unless otherwise noted, the data includes both singles as well as pregnant and parenting youth. The Youth Count data refers to both "homeless" and "unstably housed" youth. In accordance with HUD's Point-In-Time (PIT), "homeless" means youth who are living in a place not meant for human habitation or are living in an emergency shelter, transitional housing or hotel/motel paid for by government or charitable organization. "Unstably Housed" refers to youth who are couch surfing, feel unsafe, are paying to live in a motel or do not feel they can stay where they are living without being asked to leave. These unstably housed youth are "at-risk" of experiencing homelessness.

Additional information on the 2017 CT Youth Count can be found at http://cceh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/CT-Counts-2017.pdf.

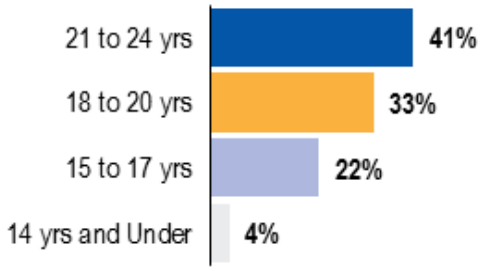


Statewide 2017 Youth Count

On January 24, 2017, we estimated that there were **4,396** sheltered, unsheltered, and unstably housed youth in Connecticut.

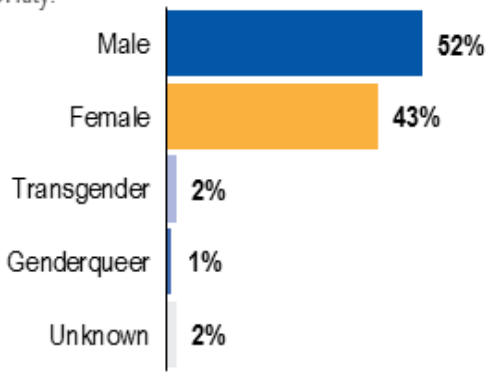
Age

Homeless and unstably housed youth by age.

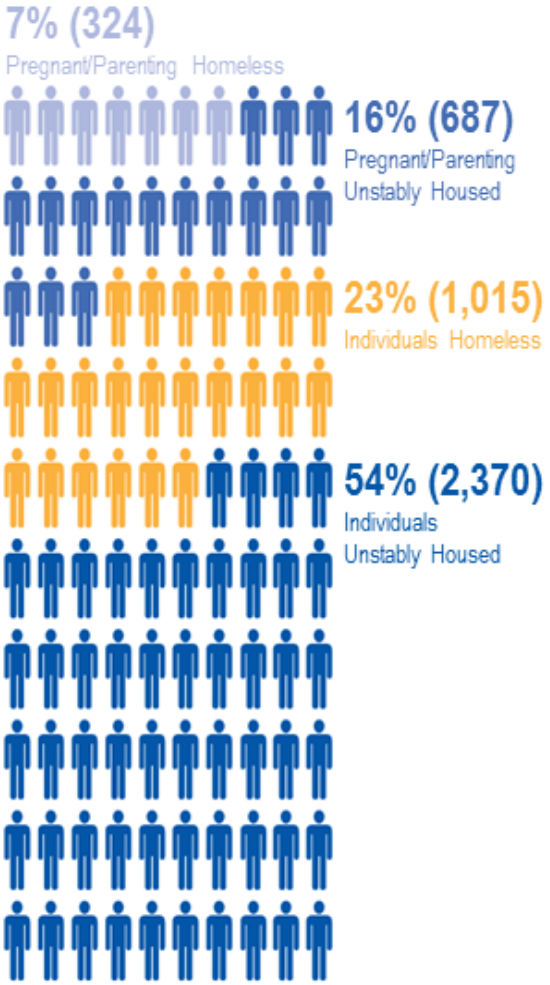


Gender Identity

Homeless and unstably housed youth by gender identity.



Youth Count Summary

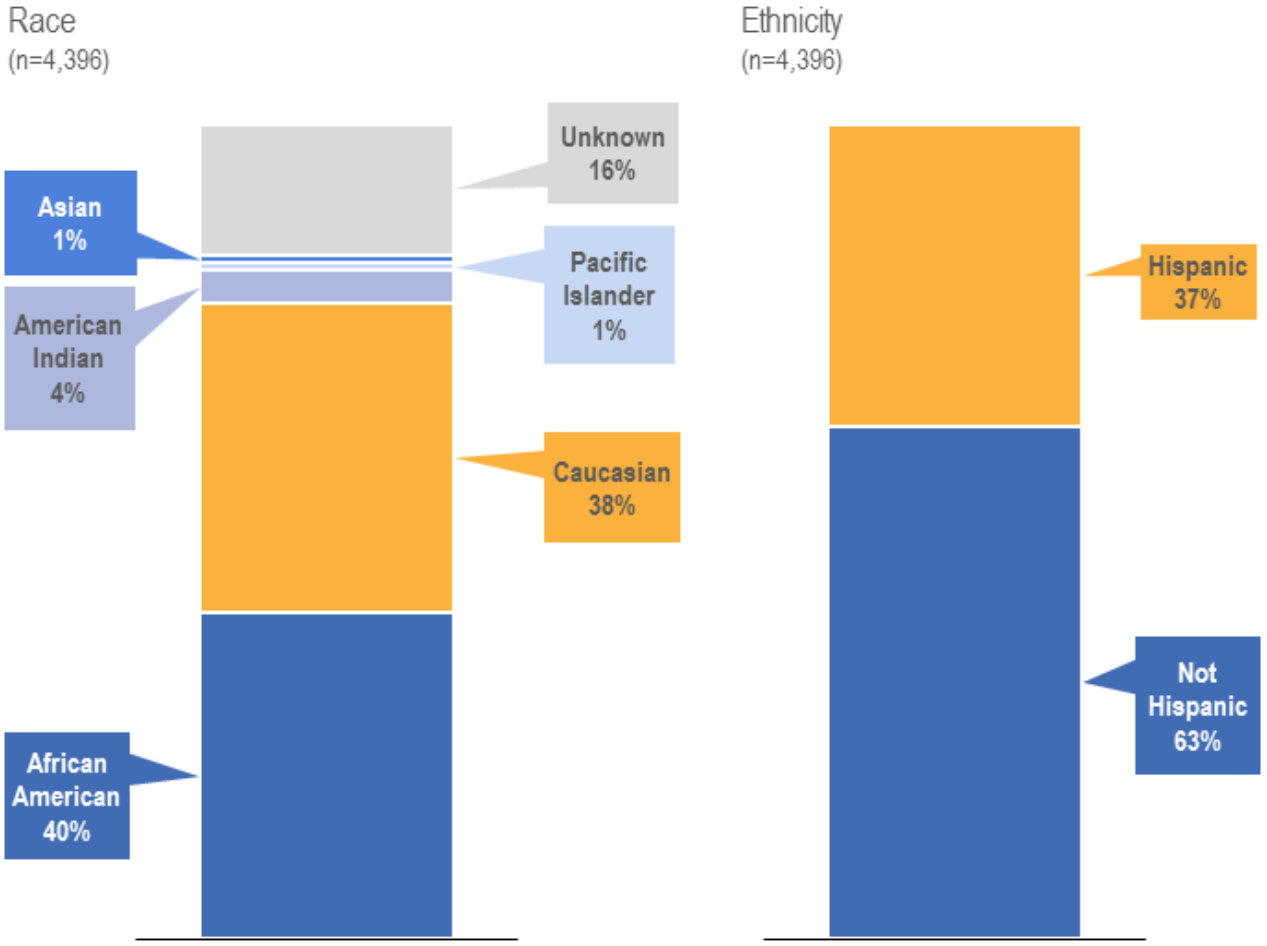


Unaccompanied Youth

2,808 youth moved in past 60 days, with and without parent(s) or guardian(s), 2017 Youth Count

Youth Count Race and Ethnicity

Race and ethnicity data collected in the 2017 youth count

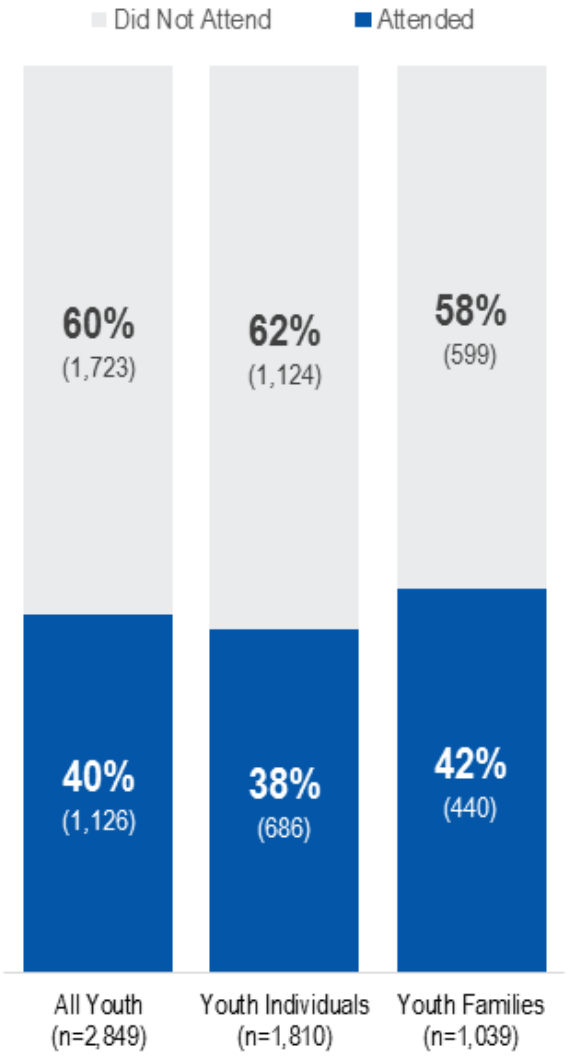


Youth of Color on the By Name List

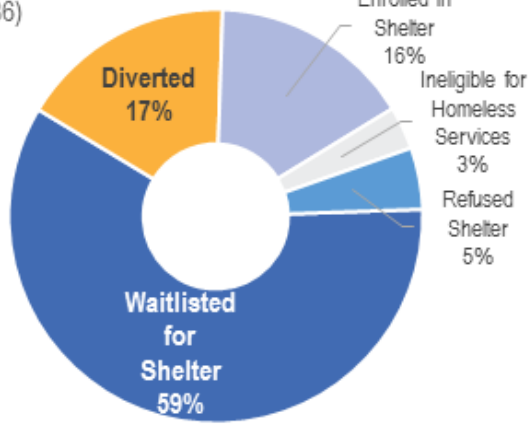
Consistent with national trends, youth of color are overrepresented among youth experiencing housing instability or homelessness in Connecticut. Connecticut continues to track youth of color status on the By-Name-List through monthly Away Home America dashboards, which are shared nationally. See an excerpt from the July 2017 dashboard below.

Youth Referrals from 2-1-1 to CAN

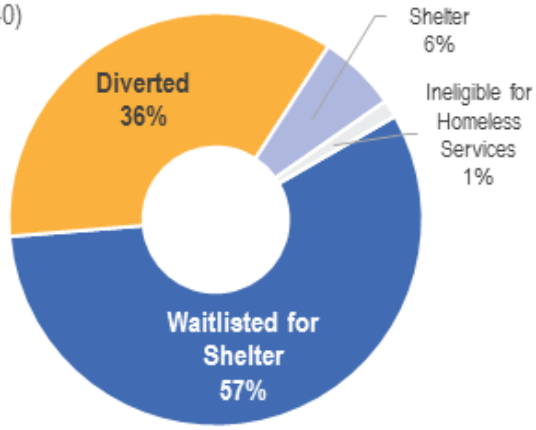
Unduplicated households who were scheduled for at least one CAN intake during FY17.



Outcomes of Attended Youth Individual CAN Intake Appointments
(n=686)

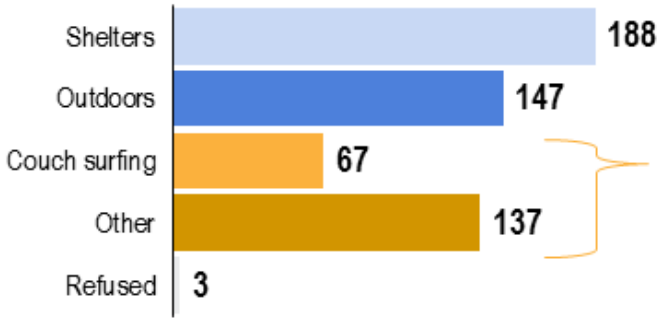


Outcomes of Attended Youth Family CAN Intake Appointments
(n=440)



Most Frequent Sleeping Location

As reported by households added to the BNL during FY17 (July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017).

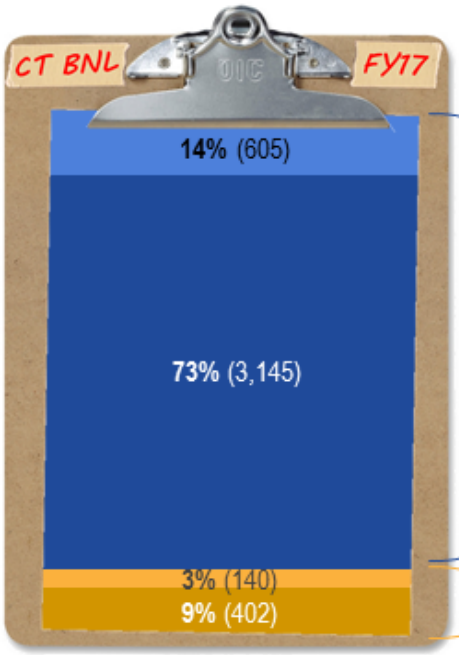


204

Youth who were assessed with the VI-SPDAT and sleep in a couch surfing arrangement may be included with "other".

Percent of Youth on the BNL

All households added to the BNL during FY17.



88% (3,750)
NonYouth Households added to BNL in FY17

12% (542)
Youth Households added to BNL in FY17

Special Populations on BNL

7 Veterans
Self-identified veteran youth added to BNL in FY17

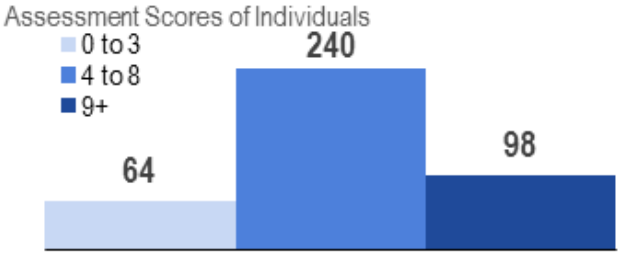
12 Chronic (Verified)
Youth who meet HUD CH criteria were added to BNL in FY17

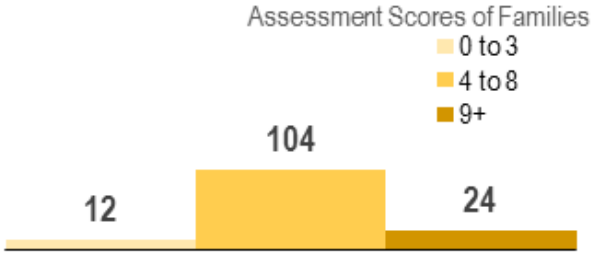
Youth on the By Name List

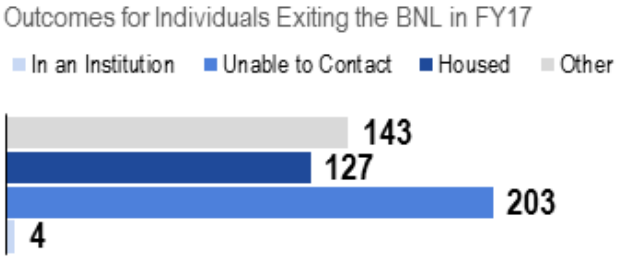
Individuals and Families added to the By Name List (BNL) during FY17

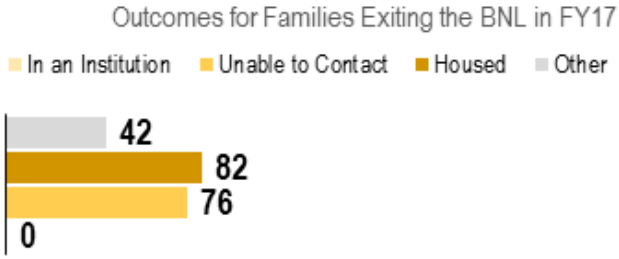
402
INDIVIDUALS

140
FAMILIES



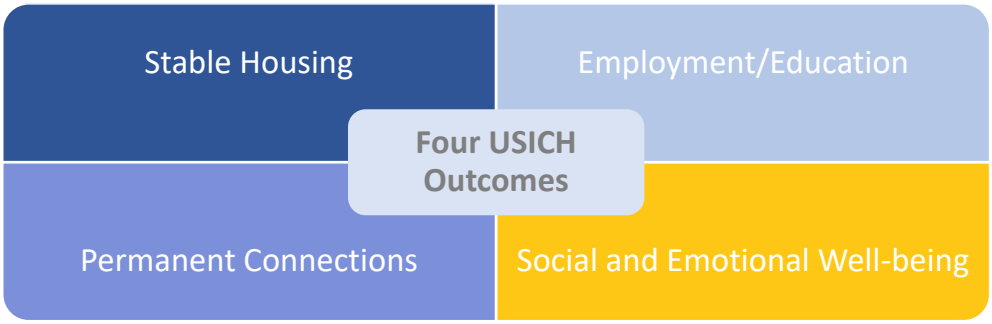






USICH FOUR CORE OUTCOMES:

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) identified four core outcomes in its Framework to End Youth Homelessness document that would positively impact a youth's healthy and productive transition to adulthood.



Stable Housing:

The primary focus of our Youth Plan is to ensure every youth has a safe and stable place to call home. The previous statement of need section provided a broad overview of the number of youth experiencing housing instability or homelessness and their demographics while the subsequent subpopulation sections will further detail the need and key strategies to addressing the need for certain subpopulations. This stable housing section will therefore further highlight the needs and key housing interventions for young adult individuals.

The YHDP Grant Management Team, in partnership with the YAH, CT BOS Steering Committee and the YYA Workgroup, is focusing most of the YHDP funding on young adult individuals to meet their large unaddressed need. Coordinated Entry staff and providers are diverting and housing young adult families at over twice the rate they are for young adult individuals, illustrating a difference of capacity within each system. As of the December 13th By-Name-List (BNL) report, there are 46 young adult families and 324 young adult individuals active on the statewide BNL. However, there is still an unmet need for young families that will be addressed through the key strategies listed in the pregnant & parenting subpopulation section.

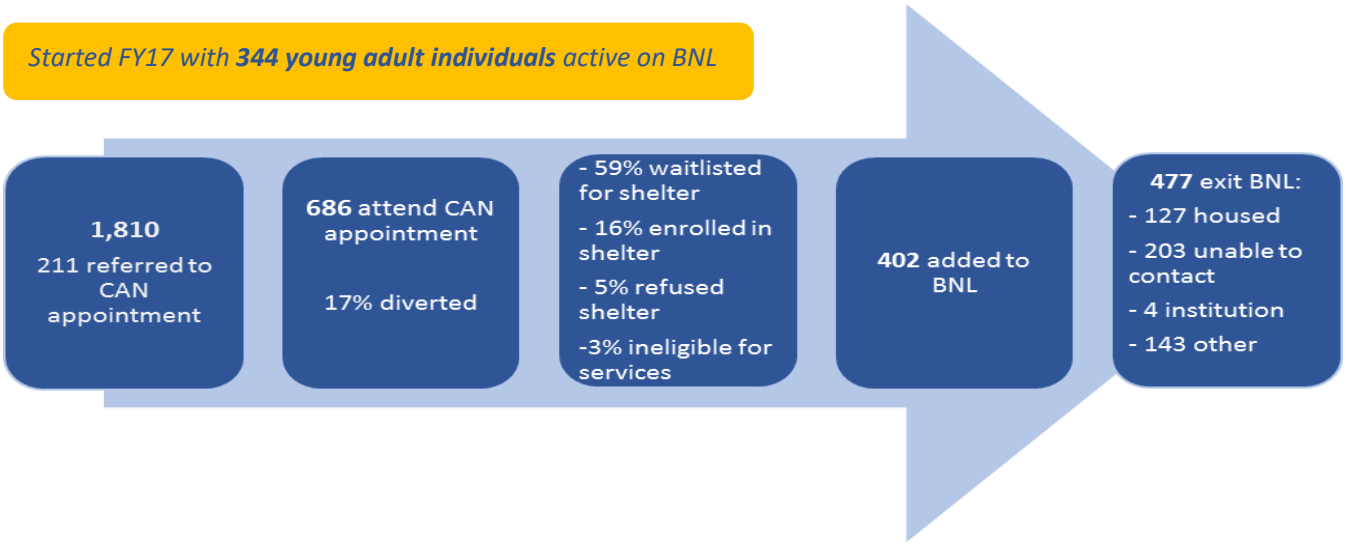
FY17 BNL Inflow/Outflow Numbers:

For every 10 young adult individuals added to the BNL in FY17, approximately 3 positively exited (were housed)

For every 10 young adult families added to the BNL in FY17, approximately 6 positively exited (were housed)

A needs assessment tool developed by Abt Associates Inc. helped guide our discussions on system projections and the need for specific housing interventions. Data from last fiscal year, expectations based on planned shifts in our coordinated entry/exit systems, and how new resources would affect other interventions, were all considered, among other things, when making key assumptions for through the Abt tool (See Appendix E for

high-level summary of assumptions). Below is a chart depicting the general inflow and outflow of young adult individuals in our homeless response system from state fiscal year 2017.



For purposes of the needs assessment, we added 20% of CAN intake non-attenders to the FY17 inflow number (essentially raising the attendance number to 50%) to create the annual estimated inflow amount. With increased outreach efforts and enhancements to the coordinated entry system, we expect the number of CAN appointment attenders to rise, at least for the short term, despite efforts to prevent youth from newly falling into homelessness. The Greater New Haven and Greater Hartford CANs have already increased their young adult attendance by 15% in the past few months due to access improvements.

To meet the need of incoming young adult individuals, the statewide need assessment concluded we need:

Program Types (Proposed Inventory)	Statewide Projections
Diversion Assistance (no financial assistance)	164 slots
Diversion Assistance (with financial assistance)	109 slots
Short-term Crisis Housing	106 beds
Rapid Exit Assistance	159 slots
Rapid Re-housing	250 units
Non-Time-Limited Supportive Housing (new units/ year)	64 units

Diversion with/without financial assistance:

Dedicated diversion funding to provide financial assistance, such as security deposits, moving costs, and public transportation to employment among other expenses, for youth is lacking in each CAN.

Only 17% of the 686 young adults who attended their CAN appointment were diverted.[1] We aim to divert at least 30% of young adults, which will necessitate new diversion programming/training and financial assistance within each CAN. With YHDP funding, we will supplement existing CAN intake staff with Youth Navigators and Diversion funding specifically for youth.

While the current data we have on diversion in HMIS is limited, we know from a Southeastern family diversion pilot that about a third of families diverted through their program required financial support. We predict the number requiring financial support for youth will be slightly higher. This YHDP funding will enable us to provide the necessary financial assistance to the majority of young adults who need it. It will also require us to track diversion that happens beyond the CAN intake appointment in a more formalized way, providing us with more accurate data on the number of youth diverted in each CAN.

Diversion works! Diversion is a crucial part of a homeless response system, enabling us to rapidly re-house youth as quickly as possible with minimal financial assistance, which reduces the number of youth becoming homeless, the demand for shelter beds, and the size of housing program wait lists.

Return Range	Total	Percent
0-30 Days	9	3%
31-90 Days	2	1%
91-180 Days	4	1%
181-365 Days	7	2%
No Return	**277**	**93%**

Connecticut began implementing diversion statewide in February 2016. During this time period, **93%** of the 299 young adults diverted from shelter in Connecticut between 9/1/2016 and 8/31/2017 have not returned to the homeless response system.

Short-term Crisis Housing:

Approximately ***1 out of 4 young adult individuals*** added to the BNL in FY17 ***reported that they had been attacked or beaten up since becoming homeless***. It is imperative that we have safe places for young adults to temporary reside while we work to rapidly exit them from homelessness.

The entire CT BOS area has only 34 crisis beds targeted to young adults with another 16 in Fairfield County. During the 2017 Youth Count, 2-1-1 managed an emergency fund for young adults in crisis, paying for short-term stays in motels/hotels when no other crisis beds were available. The utilization of this limited-time program, similar to Connecticut's Severe Weather Shelter protocol, further demonstrated the current need for crisis beds. While this emergency short-term program was not ideal, it did illustrate the need for safe crisis bed options for young adults. During the past 6 months, 70 young adult individuals experiencing literal homelessness, who attended a CAN intake appointment seeking assistance, were waitlisted for shelter.

The Youth Action Hub advises, based on their experiences and research, that there will always be youth who fear adult crisis options that are not specific to young adults, forcing them to seek alternatives that are high-risk.

Only 35% of literally homeless youth surveyed in the 2017 Youth Count tried to seek services at emergency shelter. Their top 3 reasons for not seeking shelter were:

1. Thought I could make it on my own (24%)
2. Didn't like shelter staff treatment (18%)

[1] [1] This number does not reflect the diversions that occur initially through 211 or other crisis calls. One provider has tracked 59% diversion rates for youth calling them with a housing crisis.

3. Heard shelter was dangerous (18%)

Efforts to better accommodate young adults in existing adult shelters are underway, but, among the continuing issues, funding limitations restrict the ability to hire properly trained staff at a sufficient ratio at some shelters, creating safety and harassment concerns as well as impeding efforts to create welcoming environments.

"I continued to engage in sex work because I felt that it was a better alternative for me than living in a place where I would be stigmatized, mistreated, and possibly have my safety compromised."

-Youth with lived-experience, SDM

We have several approaches to addressing the crisis housing need for young adult individuals:

- **Create new crisis beds:** Fund new 10-20 beds with YHDP funding. In addition, DOH is prioritizing a portion of their Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Small Cities funding for crisis housing for youth, which will be available through a statewide competitive round in 2018. DOH is currently amending its Annual Action Plan and CDBG application materials to enable this new prioritization, which will be further discussed with municipalities and interested stakeholders at the annual CDBG bidders conference in January 2018.

- **Prioritize crisis beds for the most vulnerable**: The Coordinated Entry subgroup is currently reviewing shelter prioritization protocols for existing young adult specific beds (and those to be created), which will enable CANs to serve the most vulnerable youth first in a way that will not create process delays to getting young adults in shelter.

- **Work with adult shelters to improve their policies and physical structures to better serve young adults**: There are 2,248 emergency shelter beds in Connecticut. Adult shelters have existing capacity to serve a portion of young adult experiencing homelessness. There were 564 young adult individual entries into emergency shelter in FY17. This number is not unduplicated (meaning it reflects number of entries which could include multiple entries by the same youth) but it shows there is existing capacity, though not ideal, in the adult system to shelter young adults. There is a need to review the adult shelter prioritization for each CAN to assess youth's current standing. Funders and stakeholders have already begun conversations about potentially restructuring the general adult population shelter system to ensure anyone experiencing literal homelessness has a bed.

  There is also a need to make adult shelters more youth-friendly. Shelters can better accommodate youth in numerous ways, including: youth-friendly policies, youth programming, staff trained in positive youth development and cultural competency, increased safety measures, personal storage, and/or privacy in the bathroom and bed areas. DOH is considering rebidding its current shelter operations funding in 2018, which would include provide extra points in its competitive shelter operating funding round to applicants that accommodate young adult individuals.

  DOH also published a $10 million Homeless Shelter Capital Needs Notice of Funding Availability directed to existing emergency homeless shelters seeking funding to make capital improvements to their facilities to improve the quality of the services provided to shelter residents. DOH identified

three priorities for this funding, shelters that make modifications to shelter space that enables them to keep adolescent boys with their families or to better serve young adults or transgender individuals. Modifications may include creating private, gender-neutral bathrooms or having bed space dedicated to transgender or young adult individuals located close to shelter staff to make the emergency shelter more hospitable and safer for these populations. CCEH and DOH hosted a webinar on re-imagining shelter space for youth to assist potential applicants.

Rapid Exit Assistance:

Diversion funding, when any is available, is only offered to young adults when they have a diversion plan prior to entering crisis housing. But, data suggests that a portion of youth (approximately 150 young adults) cannot rapidly be diverted, entering crisis housing, but then only require minimal support to return to stable housing.

Without a rapid exit option, these youth are likely to remain homeless longer than necessary. In 2016, the average wait time for those who enrolled in a rapid rehousing program was 4 months from their CAN appointment to rapid rehousing enrollment. As Youth Navigators and other providers assist youth to continually remove barriers to housing during this time period, a Rapid Exit fund will allow Youth Navigators to help those with minimal needs exit homelessness more quickly with one-time financial assistance, reducing the length of their homelessness and ultimately reducing the need for rapid rehousing assistance for this cohort.

CANs currently lack Rapid Exit funding for youth. DOH had a security deposit program but it was drastically cut in the last couple years and regions have limited access to flexible funding for security deposits, transportation costs and other one-time expenditures that can assist young adults to exit crisis housing into permanent housing. YHDP funding will cover the cost of Rapid Exit funding to serve approximately 200 youth over the two year period. The YYA workgroup will consider the need for additional Rapid Exit funding, beyond the YHDP amount, within a few months of the YHDP Rapid Exit launch.

Youth Navigators:

The Youth Action Hub's coordinated entry study found that the majority of youth participants wanted a homeless response system that is personalized and caring, with in-person assistance from consistent staff who are relatable, knowledgeable, responsive and supportive. The implementation of youth navigators into each CAN's system will provide that greater guidance and support many youth are seeking. Although not listed in our intervention options, youth navigators are integral to our proposed system, the administration of diversion and rapid exit funding and in assisting youth to stable housing.

> *"I want someone to sit there and explain to me, and basically guide me. Okay when you go here, this is what you're going to ask for."*
> - Youth with lived-experience, YAH *Improving Coordinated Entry for Youth* study

Youth Navigators will assist in increasing the diversion rate for young adult individuals to at least 30%, and will also help to improve the CAN appointment attendance rate by providing additional capacity and flexibility to the CAN intake process. In addition, they will help youth navigate the system, connect them to services within the community, and assist youth with self-resolving their housing crisis, helping to remove housing barriers.

Youth navigators will also provide more consistent contact with youth on the BNL to avoid losing connections with youth who still need help. These follow-ups will be personalized and caring, not simply "checking a box."

Last fiscal year, 203 young adult individuals were marked as inactive on the BNL because providers were unable to reach them, following the "hard-to-engage" protocol which moves households to the inactive list after a certain number of attempts to contact. We can assume some of these youth self-resolved without sharing their outcome, but others could have "slipped through the cracks" during their wait for a housing program. As of December 13, 2017, there are 324 young adult individuals active on our statewide BNL. Their median time on the BNL is 117 days (tracked from entry on BNL not point of identification). Youth navigators could be working with these youth to continually empower them to self-resolve or be document ready if they do need a housing program.

We anticipate funding at least one full-time navigator per CAN and a part-time navigator in Danbury. Through DMHAS funding and other alternate sources, Fairfield County has two part-time youth navigators but is seeking additional capacity.

Rapid Re-housing:

Rapid Rehousing is a proven intervention that successfully returns young adults to permanent housing quickly. Between 1/1/13 and 12/31/16, there were 364 young adult households served by rapid rehousing, most remaining in the program for 5-6 months. (These statistics do not include the Department of Children and Families Start rapid rehousing program for youth which only recently began entering data into HMIS.) Of the 364, 301 exited the program. As of September 2017, 255 of these youth have not returned to shelter for an 85% success rate.

Over a quarter of the young adult individuals experiencing homelessness would be best served through a rapid re-housing program. However, there is insufficient capacity to provide rapid re-housing to all young adults on the BNL who need it to obtain permanent housing. We estimate needing approximately 250 units of rapid rehousing per year to meet the need.

There is a major gap in housing programs specifically tailored to young adults, and adult programs lack sufficient capacity to serve all those in need. Youth Continuum recently launched a CT BOS CoC funded young adult rapid rehousing program with the capacity to serve 4 young adult individuals or families. The Connection Inc.'s Start program originally only served youth who were DCF involved. However, the YYA Workgroup successfully advocated for an additional commitment of state funding for youth experiencing homelessness, which provided DCF with the necessary funding to accept non-system youth in the Start program. The rapid re-housing component serves approximately 80 young adult individuals and families statewide. Typically over 65% of the young adults served are youth aging out of foster care. The other approximately 30 units are now open to non-system youth. We are working in partnership with DCF and their provider to more fully integrate at least the community units in the CAN coordinated entry system. Without integration in the system, we cannot rely on the availability of these units to serve young adults with and without children on our BNL. The Start program averages approximately 370 young adults on their waitlist (60% former DCF youth, 40% non-system youth).

As an alternative to rapid rehousing, there are only 5 transitional housing beds dedicated to young adult individuals experiencing homeless outside the Family and Youth Services Bureaus Transitional Living Program beds (TLP). Four of the 8 CANs have TLP beds that serve youth between the ages of 16-22 years old. We are working to better integrate these TLP programs into the coordinated entry process but it is complicated by the

age range of program participants and the fact that program eligibility is broader (broader definition of homelessness) than most of the other housing interventions within the CANs.

We plan to dedicate a large portion of our YHDP funding toward rapid rehousing in anticipation of serving approximately 200 youth over a two year period. Given that Fairfield County CAN is ineligible for YHDP funding, DOH provided them with HOME dollars, which they are matching with existing case management resources to create a new rapid rehousing program for young adults.

Some of the demand will also be met through existing adult rapid rehousing providers who serve both young and older adults, but the existing housing placement prioritization makes it difficult for young adults to be prioritized for these programs. The entire CT housing prioritization system is in transition, moving toward a dynamic prioritization structure that is also reconsidering our priority criteria so it is difficult to predict the ongoing capacity for this adult system to serve youth. Additional training is necessary to ensure these programs are young-adult friendly. We will continue discussions with all the YETIs/CANs to ensure they have the necessary capacity to serve all youth who need and want rapid rehousing to achieve housing stability.

Non-Time-Limited Supportive Housing:

Our system projections estimate a need for 64 available units of Non-Time-Limited supportive housing per year to meet the demand. There are approximately 56 units of longer-term supportive housing statewide dedicated to young adult individuals and families. The vast majority of these units are dedicated specifically to youth aging out of foster care. We are working with state agencies and community partners to bring these existing project-based supportive housing units for youth into the CAN referral process and possibly expanding eligibility.

There is currently little capacity within the adult system to offer longer-term supportive housing to young adults. The majority of the over 7800 beds are prioritized for individuals/families experiencing chronic homelessness, and only 12 of the 542 young adults added to the BNL last fiscal year were verified as meeting HUD's chronic definition. As discussed, the adult system is restructuring its housing placement prioritization making it difficult to predict future capacity to serve young adults, but we continue prioritization discussions with our colleagues. We are also focusing on training to ensure adults programs are youth-friendly and providing developmentally appropriate services for young adults. Given that we are shifting to a progressive engagement approach, we are also trying to identify and address eligibility issues that would preclude youth who are unsuccessful in rapid rehousing from entering longer-term supportive housing.

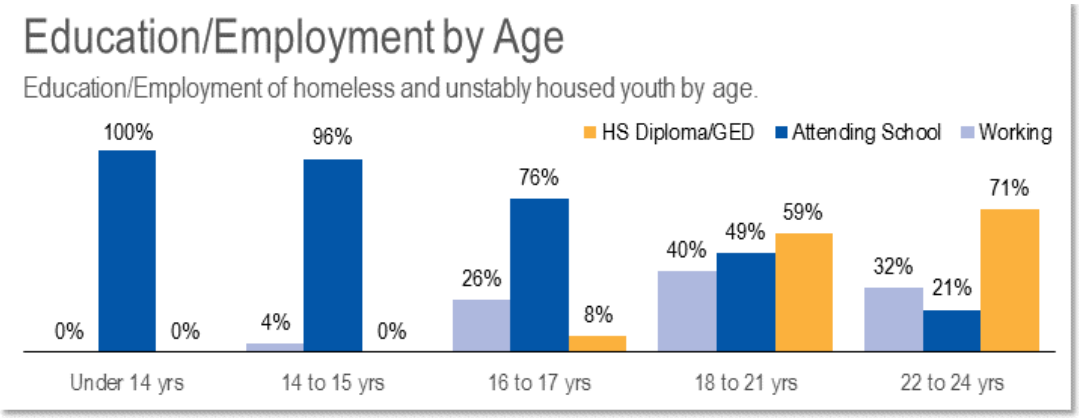
We are working to create new units specifically for young adults as well. DOH is currently reviewing several applications under its Non-Time-Limited (NTL) supportive housing for youth funding round. This funding opportunity offers construction, operating, and services dollars in partnership with DMHAS to create supportive housing for young adults experiencing homelessness. Each development will have 6-12 efficiency units with an emphasis on common space, youth engagement, and community integration. Applicants were required to describe how youth will be involved in the site design and programming.

In addition to the aforementioned housing interventions, we are working with state agency partners to include prescreening and streamlined referrals for their programs within our coordinated entry for youth system. DMHAS has a Yong Adult Services division that provides a range of supports for eligible youth as well as residential and rental assistance options. DCF has housing options for young adults remaining in their care or re-entering their care after turning 18. The Department of Developmental Services also has some housing

options for eligible individuals. The Coordinated Entry and the new Engaged Systems to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness subgroup will continue to work with these agencies to improve coordination of these resources.

Education/Employment:

The lack of stable living environment can have a devastating effect on employment and educational success for young adult families/individuals. In the 2017 Youth Count, all youth were asked about their employment and education status as depicted below:



In addition, surveyed youth were asked what assistance would improve their well-being. Employment/career help was the third most popular answer. In addition, lack of education and/or employment place youth at a higher risk of housing instability. Chapin Hall's recent report, *Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America*, noted that 18-25 year olds with less than a high school diploma or GED are 346% more likely to experience homelessness than their peers who completed high school.

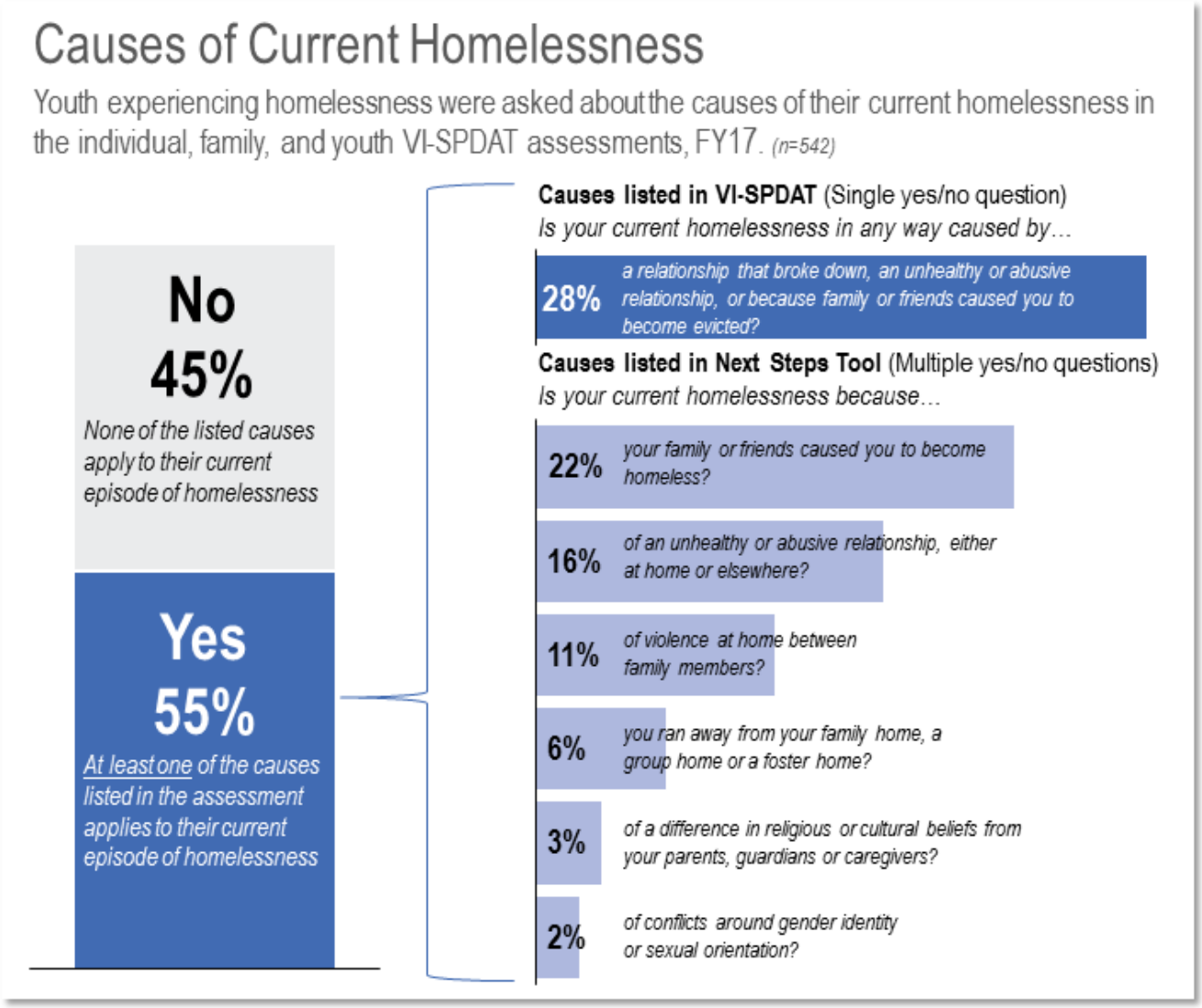
System Dynamics Modeling and additional feedback from providers identified a lack of employment programs for young adults experiencing homelessness, eligibility barriers to employment programs, and confusion around how housing providers can best partner with these programs. The YYA Workgroup is launching a new employment/education subgroup to address some of these issues, beginning with asset mapping employment and skills training programs in each CAN. The subgroup will also handle education issues such as connection to higher education opportunities.

YHDP funded rapid rehousing staff will assist youth with achieving the youth's individualized education and/or employment goals. Youth navigators and crisis housing staff will also strive to connect youth to employment and educational opportunities.

Permanent Connections/Social and Emotional Well-being:

Young adult families/individuals experiencing homelessness are often left to face alone the challenges of transitioning into adulthood, their current unstable and possibly unsafe situation, as well as daily life. In the Overarching Goal section of the plan, we discuss how we intend to improve permanent connections for youth throughout our homeless response system, creating positive, ongoing attachments to relatives, school faculty, mentors, among other natural supports.

The majority of young adult individuals and parenting young adults added to the BNL last fiscal year said that a relationship issue contributed to their current episode of homelessness.



Youth experiencing homelessness, who lack meaningful relationships, may have difficulty in developing skills and positives attitudes, such as self-sufficiency, how to develop healthy relationships, self-esteem, coping skills, among others. Approximately 40% of young adults added to the BNL last fiscal year answered "no" or refused to answer when asked whether they "had planned activities, other than just surviving, that make you feel happy and fulfilled?" Our YHDP programs, as applicable, will strive to assist youth with increasing their social and emotional well-being.

In addition, part of improving well-being is empowering youth to engage in self-care, providing case management and connections to community services that enable youth to manage their own physical or mental health issues and reduce their substance abuse and other risky behaviors.

41% of youth surveyed in 2017 Youth Count	Said they had at least one of the following: chronic health condition, physical disability, severe mental illness, learning disability, or a chronic substance abuse issue
38% young adult individuals **14%** young adult families added to BNL in FY17	Said they avoid getting medical help when they are sick
Approximately **1 out of 5** young adults added to BNL in FY17	Reported not taking doctor prescribed medication

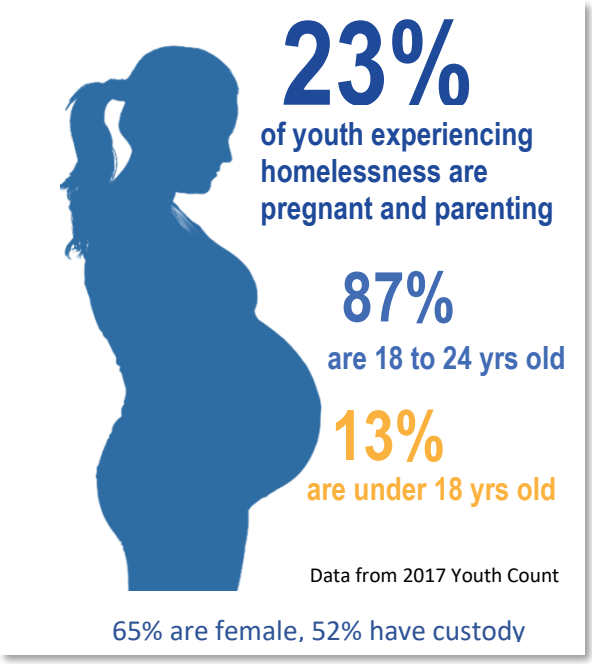
Programs need to work with youth based on their individualized goals, guiding them in how they can apply their unique strengths and interests in a positive and productive way in the community. Assisting them with building social and emotional skills that will enable them to successfully care for themselves, pursue a career, develop relationships, and excel across other domains of daily life.

SUBPOPULATIONS:

USICH and its partners have identified six subpopulations of youth that are particularly susceptible to homelessness. Each face a distinctive set of challenges in their pathways to becoming and exiting homelessness. These populations include: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth; minors (under age of 18); pregnant and parenting youth; youth involved with juvenile justice; youth involved with child welfare system; and survivors of sexual trafficking and exploitation. Prevention, identification & engagement, and services need to be tailored to their specific needs. Listed below is highlighted data, challenges, and strategies that are specific to these subpopulations.

Pregnant & Parenting Youth Experiencing Homelessness in Connecticut

Approximately 26% of youth entered onto our statewide By-Name-List (BNL) during state fiscal year 2017 were parenting. Youth may fall into homelessness when they are pregnant or parenting because of lack of acceptance from their family or partner, while others become pregnant when experiencing homelessness, at times due to engaging in survival sex. The Reaching Home Campaign's Families with Children (FwC) Workgroup is leading the statewide coordinated effort to end homelessness among families, including parenting youth, by the end of 2020 in CT with a comprehensive plan on how to achieve this goal. That is why the action steps incorporated in this community plan do not thoroughly detail family-specific strategies.



The FwC and Youth & Young Adult (YYA) workgroups work closely together, with each chair attending the others' meetings to ensure the needs of young families are being met and that access and interventions are tailored to appropriately serve parenting youth.

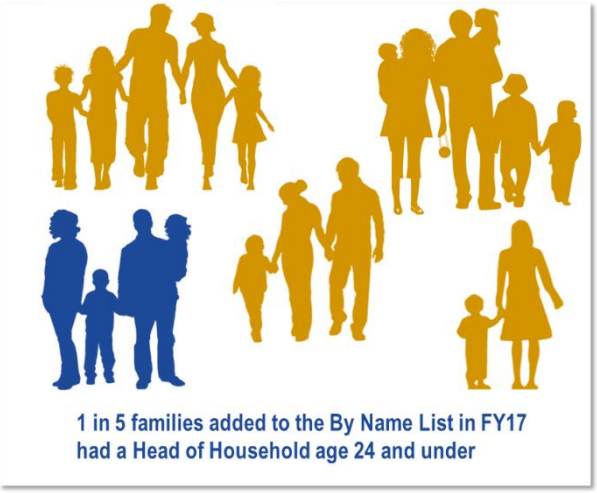
Highlighted Challenges

- Rapidly addressing the needs of young children while simultaneously providing developmentally appropriate supports for young parents and skills training on parenting, tailored to their needs. Homelessness affects the physical, emotional, social and cognitive development of young children.
- Lack of child care is one of biggest barriers to achieving and obtaining stable housing.
- Refusal to seek assistance in fear of DCF involvement
- Minors experiencing homelessness or housing instability remain a challenge because of limited data. Connecticut has a comparatively low adolescent (aged 15-17) birth rate of 4.4 per 1000 with elevated rates in some of its cities, compared to a rate of 9.9 for the nation according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Vitals Statistics Report. The 2017 Youth Count found that approximately 3% of youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability are pregnant or parenting minors. We are still learning more about this population and how best to serve them in partnership with the Runaway & Homeless Youth providers, the State Departments of Children and Families and Education as well as the Office of Early Childhood.

"Especially with my daughter around I'm not gonna keep letting people take advantage of me…And I'm not gonna let her see that. 'Mommy's weak, mommy lets people do things like that to her.' Cause I want her to be strong. She's not gonna see that.
…I feel like a weight's been lifted off my shoulders in a way. Like, again, I don't have to deal with anybody I don't wanna deal with anymore. You know, before I had no choice but to deal with those people no matter how I felt."
- Parenting Youth with Lived-Experience, Start Evaluation

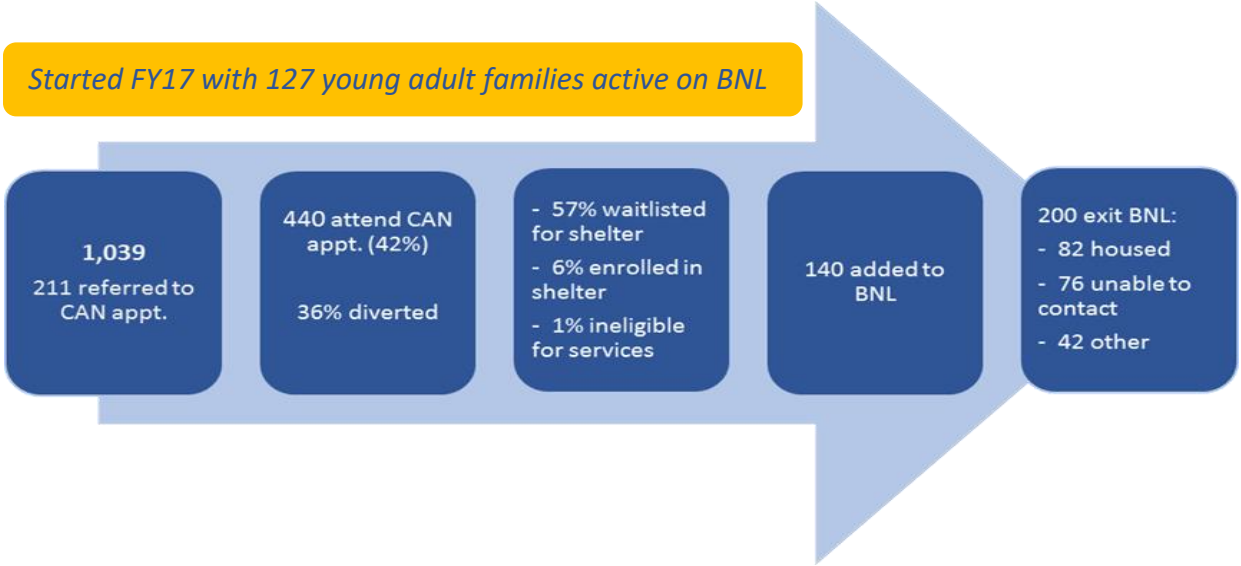
Key Strategies

- Making quality childcare more accessible to families experiencing homelessness is a top priority of the FwC workgroup, advocating for changes in legislation and policy that would ease the documentation requirements to enter child care for 90 days and would prioritize eligibility for child care and early education programs to families who are experiencing literal homelessness.



- Parenting Young Adults experiencing homelessness are served through the family coordinated entry process. They often receive a coordinated access intake appointment with a family provider, are assisted by a family navigator (dependent on the region), assessed using the Family VI-SPDAT, and their possible interventions are discussed, coordinated, and prioritized in family placement team meetings. The FwC is making enhancements to this process, including a child development screening pilot in the Southeast. The YYA workgroup is assisting with viewing this system and enhancements through a youth-friendly perspective to ensure young adults are appropriately assisted.

- DOH enhanced the BNL report it generates monthly for CAN leaders to aid the effort to end chronic homelessness to now show inflow and outflow details for four separate populations: families, young adult families, young adult individuals, and individuals. The report will be sent to a broader group of stakeholders in including the FwC and YYA workgroups to better understand the evolving needs of each population. There are currently 46 young adult families active on the BNL. These young families have spent a median of 91 days spent on the BNL (note: this is from entry on BNL, not from point of identification). Below is a chart depicting the general inflow and outflow of parenting young adults in our homeless response system in state fiscal year 2017.



- The Connecticut Departments of Housing and of Mental Health and Addiction Services, along with the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Melville Charitable Trust recently created a Funder's Collaborative. The core of this collaborative's work is an analysis of the performance of our homeless and housing systems statewide. They are using the System-Wide Analytics and Projection (SWAP) Study, commissioned by the National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) and developed by Focus Strategies. The SWAP is examining measures at both program and system levels and at both the local CAN level and statewide. Focus Strategies recently presented initial findings, but is collecting additional data and conducting further analysis before publishing a report about our system performance, highlighting areas of strength and areas in need of improvement. We hope to learn from this work what it will take to get to scale in our different intervention types for both individuals and families, and identify what shifts funders could make to support greater progress.

  The SWAP Study's inventory of housing programs for families by CAN along with their analysis and recommendations will assist the FwC workgroup identify gaps along the housing continuum for families and strategies to meet the need. The YYA workgroup will continue to collaborate with the FwC workgroup to ensure young families are considered in this ongoing needs discussion.

- The Reaching Home Data & Estimated Needs workgroup is exploring how to more accurately capture diversion data outside CAN intake appointments, but, as noted in the chart above, we know that at least 36% of young families in our coordinated entry system were diverted from shelter last fiscal year. The FwC workgroup strongly believes this percentage, along with the percentage of overall families diverted from shelter, can be dramatically increased. In the past 6 months, the Southeastern CAN, one of the family diversion leaders, diverted 77% of young adult families presenting for shelter. Each CAN has access to the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness' "be homeful" funds, which provides flexible shelter diversion funding for families. In addition, DOH is prioritizing funding for diversion specialists under its next Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Small Cities funding round. For those who cannot be diverted, there are 1036 emergency family beds in Connecticut. Lessons learned from the SWAP study may lead to a shift in how these beds are filled, ensuring that literally homeless families have beds. In the past 6 months, 14 young families experiencing literal homelessness who attended their CAN intake appointment were waitlisted for shelter rather than having immediate access.

- Rapid rehousing is another primary housing intervention the FwC workgroup is targeting to end family homelessness, including young families. The two existing rapid rehousing programs for young adults mentioned earlier serve both individuals and families. In addition, Thames River Community Service, Inc. in the Southeast CAN has a 24 bed transitional housing program that it has recently converted to serving only young adult families. DOH is beginning to use HOME funding for limited-time rental assistance this year, including for a young adult rapid rehousing program in Fairfield County. DOH anticipates dedicating a larger portion of its HOME funding to rental assistance/security deposits next year, expanding the capacity to serve more families.

- There are 2,267 permanent supportive housing beds for families in Connecticut, which are currently being reviewed through the SWAP study. The SWAP study and ongoing BNL review will assist in identifying need for additional units. The shift to a dynamic prioritization approach will also impact

how these existing units are being utilized. In addition, DCF partnered with DOH, the University of Connection and The Connection, Inc. on an Intensive Supportive Housing for Families program, and the state further supports families involved with DCF who are housing unstable through state-funded Family Unification Program rental assistance. DOH also created a preference for financially burdened young adult families leaving housing assistance programs under its statewide administration of the HUD Housing Choice Voucher program, making housing spots available for young families who still need case management. The YYA workgroup continues to work closely with the FwC workgroup to identify trainings or protocols that would enable family programs to better serve parenting young adults.

- Incorporate family reunification/mediation for young parents when safe and appropriate.

- Cross-reference Department of Social Services data to ensure that families experiencing homelessness are receiving all the benefits to which they are entitled and to understand benefit use patterns, family needs, and cost across systems.

Minors Experiencing Homelessness in Connecticut

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is the state agency primarily responsible for providing services for any minor experiencing homelessness. However many minors fear system involvement and go to great lengths to avoid this. Connecting a youth to services can be done through numerous pathways; schools, street outreach, drop-in centers, Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) providers, healthcare professionals and 211. Creating a process with each of these pathways and the child welfare system is critical.

The Youth Action Hub *Improving Coordinated Entry for Youth* study showed that schools were the primary place unstably housed youth went to seek help. In addition, the report showed some youth would never reach out for help, which means it is incumbent upon schools to proactively engage those students.

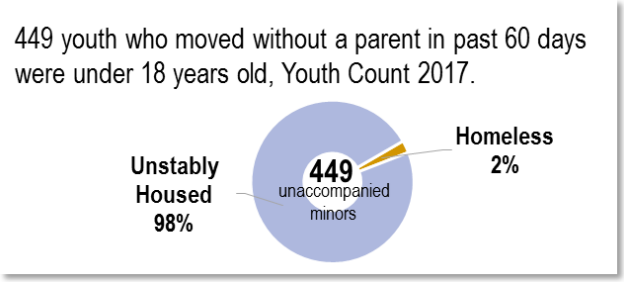
"A lot of younger kids…just wait for somebody to notice…Kids act up in school so people notice…and that's how people end up getting help. We just don't come out and simply say what we're going through."

- Youth with Lived-Experience, YAH Improving Coordinated Entry for Youth Study

A few current projects to enhance our identification efforts include the establishment of the youth-help.org website (which details rights and resources for unstably housed youth in CT), development and dissemination of a School Engagement Packet (which includes toolkit of videos on school rights and where students can seek homeless assistance, lesson plan, and youth count participation information), training and technical assistance, changes to our 211 system informed by YAH research, and concerted efforts to form local, regional, and statewide partnerships between child welfare, schools, and the homeless service sector.

Highlighted Challenges

- Connecticut conducted two statewide youth counts, one in 2015 and the most recent in 2017. The limited ability to capture minors using the methodology for the Point in Time (PIT) count was one of the most compelling reasons to do the youth counts. In the 2016 PIT, only 8 minors were identified across the state. The 2017 CT Youth Count estimated 4,396 sheltered, unsheltered, and unstably housed youth, **with 26% under age 18 and 4% under age 14**. Some key findings for minors of the 2017 Youth Count:
    - Of the 23% of pregnant and parenting youth, 13% were under 18.
    - 14% of 14 and 15 year olds and 18% of 16/17 year old homeless/unstably housed youth had involvement with the criminal justice system.
    - 24% of 16/17 year old homeless and unaccompanied homeless youth were not attending school.
    - 22% of 16/17 year old homeless and unaccompanied homeless youth reported being encouraged or coerced to exchange sexual acts for money, drugs, food, or a place to stay.



The 2015 CT *School Health Survey Youth Risk Behavior Survey Component* (YRBS) showed that 8% of high school students (11,600) indicated they had lived away from their parents or guardians because they were kicked out, ran away, or were abandoned in the past 12 months. In addition, 6.4% of students (9,300) did not sleep at their parent's or guardian's home in the past 30 days. Of these students, 33% said they stayed with family, friends or other people because they- or their parents – lost their home and cannot afford housing. Of these, 24% stayed in a hotel or motel, 13% in a shelter or emergency housing, and 11% slept in a car, park, campground or other public place. Six percent indicated they moved from place to place and 13% stayed "somewhere else".

The CT State Department of Education also provided data for the 2015-2016 school year. Of the enrolled youth PK-12, there were 3192 children/youth identified homeless (789 shelter/ 1963 doubled-up/ 420 hotel-motel/ and 20 unsheltered. Of that, there were 111 unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY) identified with 100% reporting as doubled-up.

- Reviewing the above data, the number of UHY under 18 identified via traditional PIT counts and existing school identification processes is significantly lower than the same population estimated by the CT Youth Count and YRSB. This discrepancy highlights the importance of youth, homeless service sector, child welfare, and schools partnering to create better systems for outreach, identification, and access.

- Some of the challenges for providers who are referring youth to the child welfare system include lack of knowledge about DCF resources, many of which are available without requiring system involvement, accessing DCF services for youth under 18, knowing how to access other community based services, and DCF licensing requirements for non-DCF funded programs.

- Each of the systems that serve minors are very complex with multiple layers; eligibility differs depending on funding sources. In addition, each system has differing and sometimes conflicting definitions about homelessness creating tensions between the homeless service sector and other systems.

- CT has an uneven distribution of emergency housing options for minors through the RHY providers with only five Basic Center providers (now four through the latest RHY funding round) and many regions without any.

- Historically minors who run away from child welfare were particularly hard to reach, however this has shifted through strengthened relationships with law enforcement and the agency's focus on permanency teaming.

Key Strategies

- Develop regional capacity through the YETI's to identify, assess the needs and outreach to minors and reduce barriers for minors to access services. Connect minors with individualized, client-centered, trauma-informed, personalized navigational and advocacy services.
- If a youth under 18 is at risk for homelessness or experiencing homelessness, develop capacity within each CAN to provide immediate assistance to stabilize the youth in a safe and healthy environment.
- Utilize existing resources (in particular child welfare (DCF), schools, and RHY providers) as effectively and efficiently as possible to identify at-risk youth early and meet their needs in a timely fashion.
- Integrate consistent feedback mechanisms in each CAN to help identify gaps in service and needs within communities in order to communicate and advocate for additional resources, changes in policy, and/or changes in local, regional, or state practices.
- Continued Partnership with child welfare (DCF), DOH, DMHAS and DDS to build a more comprehensive safety net, transparency of service responsibilities, and capacity to evaluate system outcomes.
- Continue training and technical assistance with RHY providers and other local partners serving minors, including child welfare case workers and school staff. Given that many youth under 18 years old are leaving their homes due to family conflict, we are working to expand family mediation services within each CAN.
- Strengthen school identification, engagement, and service delivery through school-community partnerships, training, and youth leadership.
- Coordinate existing youth-serving agencies to create seamless network of care in each CAN region, including RHY providers, child welfare, homeless services, schools, and youth-serving organizations.
- Establish a coordinated way, in accordance with confidentiality laws and policies, of identifying and tracking youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability within each CAN (a By-Name-List equivalent for minors).

Child Welfare in Connecticut

Connecticut's child welfare agency, the Department of Children and Families (DCF), has approximately 4000 children and youth in its care. In addition to child welfare services, DCF's statutory mandate includes prevention, children's behavioral health, education, and juvenile justice. DCF's juvenile justice mandate has been jointly shared with the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) of the Connecticut Judicial Branch; however, due to recent legislative changes which will become effective 7/1/18, oversight of the juvenile justice population will be fully transferred to CSSD.

DCF administers CT's only state-funded program specifically dedicated to youth experiencing homelessness as well as youth aging out of DCF care who are at-risk of experiencing homelessness. DCF contracts with a private agency, the Connection, Inc., to manage the Start Program, which provides street outreach and emergency apartments in Hartford and a statewide rental assistance program for up to two-years with intensive case management services, financial literacy and skill development for 18-24 year old youth. Through the Department's continuous quality improvement efforts, quarterly and annual RBA reports are generated for the range of community based programs including the Start Program. In SFY17, 90% of youth discharged to stable housing and 84% were enrolled in school or employed during program participation. This program currently has a waitlist of approximately 370 youth.

Connecticut Youth Outcomes: Percent Reporting having been Homeless **Data from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' National Youth In Transition Database**		
17 year-olds in Foster Care, FY-2011 (in lifetime)	Follow-up Population, 19 year-olds, FY-2013 (in past 2 years)	Follow-up Population, 21 year-olds, FY 2015 (in past two years)
10% of 362	16% of 268	28% of 128

With regard to adolescent and transition services, Connecticut has statutorily implemented 3 of the 5 prongs of the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act. Recognizing the individualized needs of youth, the Department has integrated all elements of the Act into agency policy and practice that allows youth to remain in care until age 21, and sometimes 23, while partnering with DMHAS and DDS to support appropriate transitions into the adult service system.

For youth who left care after age 18, DCF has a policy that allows them to re-enter DCF care before age 21 under certain conditions. The re-entry policy (DCF Policy # 42-8) enables youth to apply if s/he:

- Was committed as abused/neglected at the time of his/her 18th birthday;
- Left DCF after age 18, is reapplying before age 21, and has not participated in two post-secondary education or employment training programs;
- Has had his/her case closed or services discontinued for at least 90 days;
- Has proof of an educational plan or employment; and
- Is not married or on active duty in the military.[2]

[2] Additional requirements may apply to youth who have been determined, as a result of a substance abuse assessment, to be in need of in-patient or extensive outpatient treatment. Additionally, the Commissioner, in her discretion, may waive certain policy requirements.

DCF has Memorandums of Understanding with the adult mental health and developmental services systems, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) and Department of Developmental Services (DDS), to transition older youth into their services. Youth may continue to receive post-majority support from DCF while engaging in services with the adult systems.

DCF is an important partner in the effort to end youth homelessness with active representatives in the Youth and Young Adult workgroup and the YHDP Grant Management Team as well as regional staff on the YETIs.

Highlighted Challenges

- Consistent with national data, 43% of youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability in the 2017 Youth Count were previously involved with child welfare: running away from care or lacking a safety net and skills or services needed to succeed after exiting care.

- Many minors avoid system involvement and do not come into DCF care, despite experiencing unaccompanied homelessness.

- The most vulnerable youth may not meet the requirements to remain in care past age 18 and/or they opt out of care. In addition, the Start program has insufficient capacity to meet the need.

- DCF's re-entry policy explicitly states that it shall not be construed as a housing program. The primary focus is on post-secondary educational/vocational training.

- The transitional period of young adulthood is developmentally fraught with turbulence, risk-taking and vulnerability. Yet, it is during this exact time when young adults are required to transition from a child welfare system focused on youth development to an adult- focused system focused on client choice.

  "My experience was …that, they could've like - paid attention to me more. … And I kind of just basically, like I failed out of school. I was - my social worker told me she wanted me to go away to college. And I'm thinking like, I've never had a job in my life. Like, what am I gonna do out there by myself? … So, I go out there, no support from anybody, no family. No social worker, only time I hear from her is "did you get your check?" And that's it. And I ended up failing.

  I had nowhere to go on the breaks. I had to bring all my stuff with me to the dorms and when it was time to go on like spring break or something, cause you know how no one can be there? …. So after that I was just - put anywhere. I would stay with my aunt. I ended up moving in with an ex boyfriend. And then my dad took me in, and that was a horrible experience. Oh my god."
  - Youth who was in DCF services and became homeless after DCF support ended, SDM

  During this transition, many of the most vulnerable young adults fall through the cracks of the two systems.

Key Strategies

- Collaborate with child welfare to:
    - Advance permanency outcomes for youth to further decrease the risk of homelessness in their adulthood. Such activities include enhancing permanency teaming for all adolescents in care, monitoring of discharge planning, emphasizing education, work and independent living skills through case planning,[3]
    - Provide safe and developmentally appropriate crisis housing for minors experiencing homelessness without requiring legal commitment to the child welfare system.
    - Implement a Housing First approach for youth in care, including those in danger of being discontinued from care.
    - Develop data to understand who is exiting child welfare and later experiences homelessness and be able to address those gaps.
    - Continue to educate stakeholders on DCF eligibility and services,

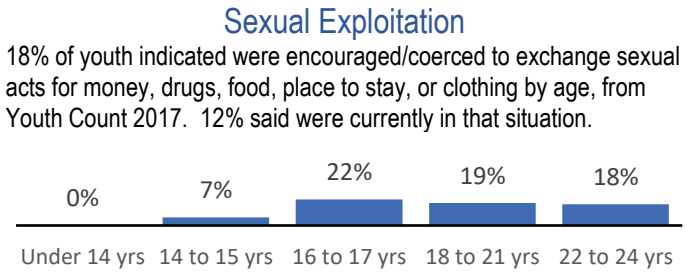
- The Youth and Young Adult workgroup is convening a new Engaged Systems to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness subgroup that will focus on addressing prevention of homelessness through systems collaboration, including preventing homelessness for youth involved or formerly involved with child welfare.

- Ensure each YETI has a regional DCF representative participating in meetings (several do already).

[3] See "Adolescent Needs Prior to Transitioning from Care" document created by the DCF Youth Advisory Board in January 2017.

Youth and Young Adult Survivors of Sex Trafficking in Connecticut

The 2017 CT Youth Count data is consistent with other research that shows approximately 1 in 5 homeless youth are survivors of trafficking.[4] Connecticut is at risk for trafficked youth because of the proximity to New York City and major airports; as well as hosting some major thoroughfares like Interstate 95 and the Berlin Turnpike. The existence of casinos has also been a contributing factor.



More than 485 youth have been referred to the child welfare department (DCF) as possible victims of sex trafficking.[5] In 2016 DCF received 202 unique referrals for high risk or confirmed survivors of domestic minor sex trading. This was an increase from the previous year where DCF received 133 unique referrals.[6]

Nationally, we also know that while less than 4% of all adolescents exchange sex for money, 28% of youth living on the street and 10% of those in shelters engage in 'survival sex' in exchange for food, shelter or money. In a recent 2017 study conducted by Covenant House and other partners shows approximately one in four homeless youth had been a survivor of sex trafficking or had engaged in survival sex, and that 48% of those who engaged in a commercial sex activity did so because they didn't have a safe place to stay. In addition, of the 911 homeless young people interviewed in 13 cities, researchers found that 56% of homeless transgender youth had been involved in the sex trade in some way with 27% of LGBTQ youth reporting experiences that fall into the definition of trafficking.[7]

In CT, child welfare is the main state agency tasked with providing services and training regarding the sex trafficking of minors. DCF has established six Human Anti-trafficking Response Teams across the state. These teams work to ensure children and families are provided with appropriate medical and mental health care as well as working with multi-disciplinary teams to maximize prosecutions. DCF has also contracted with a private agency, Love 146, to provide direct services to youth who are at risk of, or victims of sex trafficking. Love146 anticipates providing Long-Term Services to approximately 50-60 youth and Rapid Response services to over 150 youth identified as high-risk/suspected and confirmed victims of human trafficking annually.

CT also has a statewide Trafficking in Persons Council. The Council is convened by the Commission on Women, Children and Seniors and chaired by the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence. It consists of members from diverse backgrounds, including representatives from state agencies, the judicial branch, law enforcement, motor transport and community based organizations that work with survivors of sexual and domestic violence and immigrants and refugees, and address behavioral health needs and social justice and human rights. The chair of the Council, Jillian Gilchrest, is also a member of the Youth and Young Adult Homelessness workgroup. This cross collaboration allows us to consider the unique needs of this population as we advocate for policy changes and increased resources.

---

[4] See https://covenanthousestudy.org/landing/trafficking/?_ga=2.202796049.1004196397.1505745323-1994850347.1505745323).
[5] See DCF website: http://www.ct.gov/dcf/cwp/view.asp?a=4743&Q=562246.
[6] DCF newsletter, HART Helps, winter 2017.
[7] Id.

Highlighted Challenges

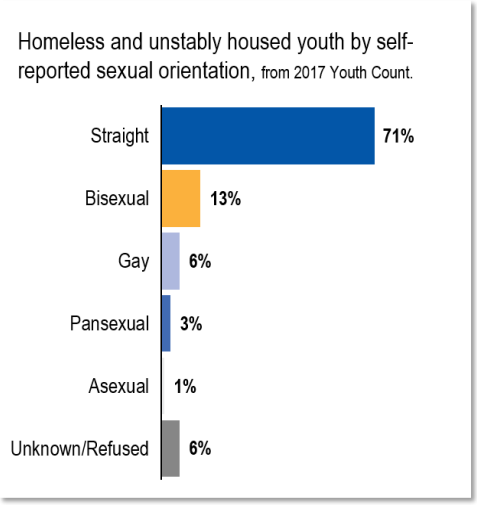
- Ensuring the safety of youth who have been trafficked, including understanding protocols for active cases.
- Preventing youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability from becoming trafficked.
- Ensuring homeless providers understand how to address the unique needs of trafficked youth.

Key Strategies

- Incorporate outreach, coordinated entry, and housing solutions that address the unique needs of trafficked youth and young adults.
- 211 housing specialists are well-trained on identifying and handling cases of human trafficking, making appropriate linkages though established partnerships with relevant providers and law enforcement officials. Need to educate regional YETIs, CAN intake staff, and homeless providers about handling active cases and referrals for additional support from anti-trafficking providers when appropriate.
- Collaborate with DCF, the Trafficking in Persons Council and others to provide training on the signs of and services for sex trafficking survivors to homeless youth providers. CCEH hosted a training in September 2016 on human trafficking and homeless and unstably housed youth, to educate individuals and organizations on preventing, identifying, and ending human trafficking in Connecticut. Additional trainings are necessary to ensure stakeholders are informed.
- Fill the gaps in the housing continuum so that youth have access to safe housing at all times and do not fall victim to sex trading for housing or trafficking.

LGBTQ Youth in Connecticut

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth are overrepresented among the state and national homeless youth population. It is essential to design a system that is highly responsive and promotes proactive prevention strategies, including early connection to family mediation, to keep this highly vulnerable population safe.



CT's anti-discrimination statutes include provisions prohibiting the discrimination of individuals on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.[8] Additionally, the Department of Children and Families has a specific policy, "Non-Discrimination of LGTQIA Individuals"[9] to ensure fair treatment of all individuals involved in their care. However, LGBTQ youth continue to face discrimination.

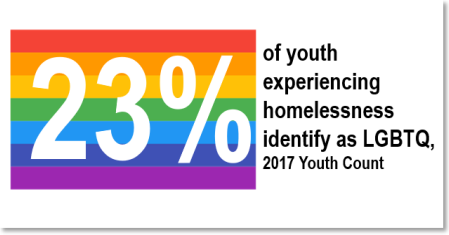
True Colors CT is the only statewide non-profit organization in CT dedicated to the needs of this population, and its Executive Director, Robin McHaelen, is a member of our Youth and Young Adult Homelessness workgroup. Her and her staff continually bring this perspective to our work. True Colors works with other social service agencies, schools, organizations, and within communities to ensure that the needs of sexual and gender minority youth are both recognized and competently met. The organization trains more than 6,000 people annually, organizes the largest LGBTQ youth conference in the country with more than 3,000 attendees and manages the state's only LGBTQ mentoring program. True Colors has been spotlighted by both national and local media for their expertise in LGBTQ youth issues.

In addition, DMHAS recently funded the Triangle Community Center, the only Fairfield County (FFC) organization focused exclusively on the LGBTQ community, to serve as drop-in space for young adults to receive social support and case management services including housing, employment, support with name-change documents, crisis intervention, and referrals. Center staff are active in the FFC YETI.

Highlighted Challenges

- LGBTQ youth face a heightened risk of discrimination as well as harassment and abuse. During the SDM sessions, one transgender youth remarked on the continuing confusion among providers on where to place transgender individuals: *"Sometimes I would have to go to facilities under a male bed, sometimes under a female bed. Sometimes I'd have my own room."*

[8] See Conn. Gen. Stat. §46a-51, 58, et seq.
[9] See DCF Policy # 30-9.



- The 2017 CT Youth Count data indicates nearly a quarter of our homeless youth identify as LGBTQIA, consistent with national data. Additional work is needed to prevent and quickly address abandonment and rejection by families.

Key Strategies

- Ensure that our prevention strategies, crisis response system, and housing interventions incorporate best practices specific to this population, including linkages to support resources.

- At the point of access, whether at an initial 211 screening or through a drop-in center, if youth identify as LGBTQ, in particular transgender, they are at an increased safety risk, and should be given additional follow up. This can include: increasing safety measures at first access point as well as developing and supporting efforts to increase awareness of the specific vulnerabilities and increased risk factors at the front door to housing resources, specifically, through refining protocols for 211 Call Specialists, young adult coordinated entry sites, drop-in centers, and other first contact entities.

- Increase statewide coordinated outreach for LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness, unstable housing, or at risk of homelessness. Work through partnerships with True Colors CT, schools, including Gay-Straight Alliance groups, child welfare, youth providers, and young people to improve awareness of resources and enhance prevention efforts and early intervention strategies.

- Train, monitor, and enforce best practices. Expand training for shelter providers, rapid-rehousing case managers, and other homeless service agencies to include topics such as Fair Housing and "Safe Shelter for Transgender Youth" and "LGBTQ Cultural Competency." Implement increased monitoring and enforcement of existing regulations and laws.

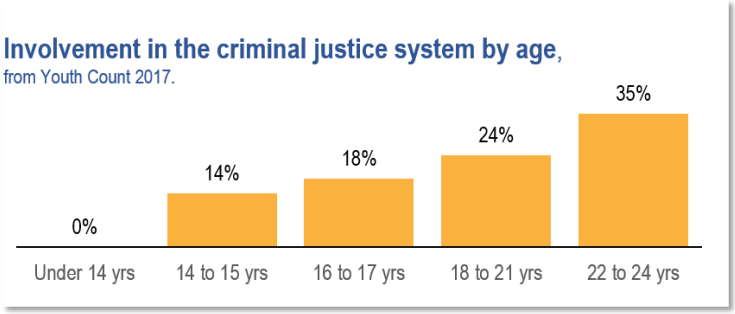
- Work with DCF and the Judicial Department to mandate training for all child welfare and juvenile justice staff, and contracted agencies, on open and affirming policies to ensure the needs of LGBTQ youth are served in all child welfare and juvenile justice locations. DCF has worked closely with True Colors in the ongoing delivery of training for child welfare representatives.

- Upgrade the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) to collect information on sexual orientation of youth to more accurately track through data the number of LGBTQ youth in our homeless response system and their connection to services.

- Enhance the draft coordinated entry protocol to include immediate linkages to services and supports for LGBTQ youth who indicate an interest in these connections.

Juvenile Justice in Connecticut

Connecticut's juvenile justice system is managed through a partnership between DCF and the Judicial Branch, particularly the branch's Court Support Services Division (CSSD). A variety of agencies and organizations carry out specific programs related to the system, including the Department of Education, the Department of Correction, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and municipally-run Youth Service Bureaus, in addition to a wide network of youth development organizations throughout the state.[10] In 2016, there were 10,567 justice-involved youth.[11] Connecticut's transfer statute requires a juvenile to be transferred to adult court for certain felony offenses if committed after the child turned 15 years old.[12]



Connecticut Public Act 14-217, Section 79, established a Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) to evaluate policies related to the juvenile justice system. The committee consists of legislators, officials from juvenile justice, law enforcement, education and mental health as well as advocates from the youth serving areas. Housing stability of children, youth and their families has been identified as a major concern, and there is work on a data development and collection plan for at risk of homelessness among children and youth involved in the juvenile justice system. The Partnership for Strong Communities (PSC) and the Center for Children's Advocacy (CCA) work with the JJPOC to build housing services and supports into the Committee's recommendations/plans, including strategies for utilizing housing stability as a foundational approach for reducing recidivism and increasing diversion from both the juvenile and adult justice systems.

PSC and CCA also serve on the Advisory Board for *Collaborating for Change: Addressing Youth Homelessness and Juvenile Justice* to inform the direction of national policy and system recommendations and technical assistance resources. In addition, PSC hosted a statewide forum with approximately 200 stakeholders in May 2017 on justice involvement and housing instability, to engage stakeholders in discussion around these issues. Both DCF and CSSD are members of the Youth and Young Adult Homelessness workgroup. This cross collaboration ensures key partners are considering the interrelationship between homelessness and juvenile justice when pursuing youth policies and programs.

Highlighted Challenges

- The collateral consequences of a juvenile record can limit access to stable housing, employment, and other needed resources and services.

- A historical lack of identification of housing instability or homelessness at intake and lack of tracking of this status within the juvenile justice system.

[10] State of the System Report, March 2016, Tow Youth Justice Institute.
[11] Connecticut Juvenile Justice Policy Oversight Council Population and Systems Metrics Report, May 2017.
[12] Conn Gen Stat § 46b-127.

- Inadequate discharge planning, including discharge plans to housing situations that are temporary or untenable, contributes to subsequent youth homelessness once a youth has left the system.

- A lack of data sharing and coordination across systems.

- Homelessness can lead to behaviors that make youth susceptible to criminal justice involvement.

- Of the youth surveyed for the 2017 Youth Count, approximately **1 in 4 had prior or current involvement with the criminal justice system.**

"When you are homeless, you do whatever you got to do to get money. Good or bad. That's what I had to do. It comes down to selling your food stamps, hustling, whatever it takes."

- Youth with Lived-Experience, SDM

- From the 2015 CT Youth Count: youth involved with the criminal justice system were **5 times more likely** to have moved two or more times in the last 6 months, and **3 times more likely** to be living outside/in a place not meant for human habitation. In addition, youth involved with DCF or foster care system **6 times more likely to be involved with the criminal justice system**

- The Coalition for Juvenile Justice's (CJJ) recently released report entitled, *Addressing the Intersections of Juvenile Justice and Youth Homelessness: Principles for Change,* notes that of 656 interviews conducted with runaway and homeless youth in 11 U.S. cities, nearly 44% have stayed in a jail, prison, or juvenile detention center, and nearly 78% have had at least one interaction with law enforcement. Nearly 62% of the young people who were interviewed reported that they had been arrested at some point in their lives.[13]

Key Strategies

- Build upon and refine our base of research and data to fully understand the scope and nature of the problem and to effectively target interventions.

- Integrate housing solutions into discharge planning from juvenile justice and child welfare systems, ensuring youth are not released into unsafe or unstable living situations that could lead to homelessness. Ensuring case management and discharge planning include elements that will assist youth with maintaining housing: employment/educational connections, family mediation, among others.

- Fill the gaps in the housing continuum so that youth have access to safe housing at all times, which diverts youth from the juvenile/criminal justice system.

- Identify and begin to plan for housing needs immediately upon entry.

- Continue to include housing solutions in the plans and recommendations of the state's JJPOC.

- Reduce barriers to housing for those with criminal records, including public housing policies that prohibit successful re-entry, disconnect families, and ultimately increase recidivism.

[13] Available here: http://www.juvjustice.org/homelessness.

- Advocate for a juvenile justice record erasure law in order to help prevent youth from experiencing collateral consequences of juvenile court involvement which can lead to homelessness.
- Create targeted service approaches for “dual status” or “cross over youth” given their vulnerability.
- Educate juvenile justice providers about the educational legal rights of students experiencing homelessness to ensure students remain in school and receive all necessary supports, thus preventing juvenile justice involvement.
- Increase coordination between juvenile justice providers and the homeless system’s YETIs. YETIs should include Juvenile Review Boards and Juvenile Justice re-entry programs, such as the F.R.E.E. programs, to help develop local resources and strategies.
- The Youth and Young Adult workgroup is convening a new Engaged Systems to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness subgroup that will focus on addressing prevention of homelessness through systems collaboration, including serving the needs of youth involved in the juvenile justice system. The Reaching Home Campaign also created a Criminal Justice Taskforce to tackle system issues related to the adult criminal justice system with a first phase focus on 18-24 year olds.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION STEPS:

We adopted the current USICH criteria to end youth homelessness as our goals and objectives, developing action steps to achieve them. Details on the corresponding objectives and action steps for each goal are in appendix D. Consistent with the USICH criteria, we incorporate Positive Youth Development and Trauma-Informed Care in all aspects of our youth crisis system, focusing on youths' strengths and personal goals while providing services that are appropriate for youth who have experienced trauma, emphasizing youth choice throughout our system and providing individualized, client-driven supports.

GOAL A: THE COMMUNITY IDENTIFIES ALL UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Youth who are experiencing homelessness or housing instability are less visible than our adult homeless population and often avoid traditional homeless service programs such as adult shelters. Therefore, it's imperative that we practice youth-specific outreach and in-reach strategies to ensure we are identifying and engaging youth in need of services. The Information and Referral Subgroup of the YYA Workgroup, co-chaired by the CCEH and DOH, has been leading efforts to improve outreach and in-reach strategies across the state. In addition, the statewide Youth Count has helped advance identification strategies considerably. For example, in preparation for the 2017 Youth Count, YETIs coordinated efforts to identify, with the assistance of providers, outreach staff, youth, law enforcement and others, youth "hotspots" (places where youth are known to congregate) in each region. Youth and young adults with lived experience were essential to determining the most effective hotspots to visit as well as the best time to conduct this outreach. CCEH assisted YETIs with creating regional google maps of these known locations for outreach volunteers. YETIs continue to utilize these maps to assist with ongoing outreach efforts.

Following the 2018 Youth Count, YETIs, in coordination with their CAN partners and CCEH, will create youth outreach plans within each of their regions that, among other things, coordinate schedules for weekly coverage of these area hotspots. Targeting known locations enables them to more efficiently cover a greater geographic area. Larger CANs, which serve the greatest number of unsheltered individuals in larger population centers, have developed outreach committees to create a common outreach schedule/calendar, using maps and pins to mark where unsheltered have been located and documenting contacts in HMIS. Given the extremely limited outreach programs specifically serving youth, it is crucial that the youth efforts be more fully integrated into these existing structures.

As the YAH *Improving Coordinated Entry for Youth* study confirmed, school involvement in this effort is crucial to achieving our shared vision. Survey participants indicated that schools were the primary place they went to seek help. Some youth would never reach out for help, which means it is incumbent upon schools to see the signs that something is off with students and proactively engage them. In a partnership between CCEH, ICR, the State Department of Education, Center for Children's Advocacy, Partnership for Strong Communities, and the Meriden Public School system, a free toolkit was developed for students and faculty that raises awareness of youth homelessness and students' rights under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and provides guidance on how students can seek assistance. The toolkit is available at *youth-help.org*, a website these same partners launched on youth rights and resources for unstably housed youth in CT. Additional efforts are needed to engage schools and other systems continue to aid them in identifying youth experiencing housing instability early in their crisis.

YETIs have also been working to connect with colleges and universities within their region to improve coordination and recruit them to assist with the 2018 Youth Count. CCEH hosted an event earlier this month to launch Single Points of Contacts (SPOCs) within our state college system who will serve as liaisons for youth experiencing homelessness at their institutions. Several of these colleges are hosting "Come and Be Counted" efforts in conjunction with the 2018 Youth Count at their schools.

We are able to track information about young adults throughout the state using a single, shared HMIS platform. We maintain our CAN By-Name-Lists, which include young adults, in this single, safe location that allows real-time access to all parties involved in the CANs. This includes, but is not limited to, frontline homeless providers including shelters and soup kitchens, housing providers, the mental health system, local hospitals, municipalities, DOH, and our Department of Social Services. The By-Name-List in HMIS is updated in real time. Clients are added to the list as soon as their Next Step Tool or Family VI-SPDAT assessment is entered into HMIS. This coordinated data is vital for us to track performance measures on a statewide, regional and program level.

Due to confidentiality barriers, we do not currently have an equivalent list for youth under 18 years old that would enable us to track this population. We continue to research the issue to ensure minors are linked to services and their needs are tracked to inform resource decisions.

GOAL B: USE SHELTER DIVERSION STRATEGIES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND PROVIDE IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO LOW-BARRIER SHELTER TO ANY YOUTH WHO NEEDS AND WANTS IT

Since 2015, Connecticut has been implementing the emerging best practice of shelter diversion as part of our statewide coordinated entry process to reduce new episodes of homelessness. At each CAN intake appointment, trained staff have a trauma-informed discussion with young adults to understand their barriers to housing and assist with problem-solving. To supplement existing efforts, we plan to use a portion of the YHDP funding to provide financial assistance (i.e. security deposits, rental arrears, bus tickets home, etc.) to youth and young adults who could be diverted from the system with one-time financial help. Our goal is to divert at least **30%** of young adult individuals from needing shelter.

The Families with Children Workgroup is in the process of selecting an even higher diversion target for all families, including young families. Our HMIS Data indicates that 17% of young adult individuals and 36% of young families were diverted last fiscal year.[14]

If diversion is not possible, the household is placed into shelter immediately or waitlisted for the next shelter opening. Last fiscal year, 408 young adult individuals were waitlisted for shelter, illustrating the need for increased capacity in order to provide immediate crisis housing to young adults. There are only 50 emergency housing beds statewide specifically for young adult individuals, 34 in the CT BOS area. We are working to increase the capacity and make adult shelter options more youth friendly to meet the need identified though our system projections.

[14] This number does not reflect the diversions that occur initially through 211 or other crisis calls. One provider has tracked 59% diversion rates for youth calling them with a housing crisis.

There is also little to no crisis housing for youth under 18 years old in each CAN. However, the RHY beds (shelters and host homes) that we do have are often underutilized. We need better data to understand the need in each CAN and barriers to using existing resources. Connecticut has 53 DCF funded Short-Term Family Integrated Treatment Program (S-FIT) beds across the state that are open to non-system youth, but these are not crisis housing beds with immediate access. They are respite beds to stabilize youth and return them to their families (biological, adoptive, foster, kin, and relative) within 14 days through intensive family therapy. We continue discussions with DCF, RHY providers and other youth partners to more accurately determine the need and how to ensure every youth has a safe place to stay when needed.

CAN intake staff, Youth Navigators, and crisis housing staff should encourage, reunification with family as an option when youth and young adults are interested and it is safe and appropriate. CCEH partnered with the University of California Los Angeles Education, Training and Research group to institute Project STRIVE (Support to Reunite, Involve and Value Each Other), a psycho-educational intervention to help in strengthening and reunifying youth and young adults experiencing homelessness with their families through 5 one-hour sessions. Training was conducted during the summer of 2017 with representatives from each CAN in attendance who are now actively assisting families with reunification. After assisting 5 families, these trainees will have the skills to train others, increasing mediation capacity across the state.

GOAL C: USE COORDINATED ENTRY PROCESSES TO LINK ALL YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS TO HOUSING AND SERVICES THAT ARE TAILORED TO THEIR NEEDS

Our system uses 211 as the universal “front door” to homeless assistance. However, there are many different access points where youth can seek assistance, such as drop-in centers, where staff will assist young adults with calling 211 if the young adult would feel more comfortable with that assistance. Youth may also choose to begin a conversation with 211 staff through the chat section of the United Way’s new Youth & Young Adult webpage, which can shift to a call when necessary.

When a young adult calls 211 and is experiencing a housing crisis, 211 works with the individual to help identify any resources that might be able to resolve their crisis immediately. They also assess if there are any safety concerns, such as suicidal thoughts, trafficking, or domestic violence, and will respond accordingly with a call for emergency assistance or warm handoff to appropriate service provider. If the young adult’s crisis cannot be resolved with resources available through 211 (including utility assistance, emergency food assistance, etc.), 211 creates an intake appointment for the young adult with the appropriate CAN. Most CANs have young adult-specific appointments.

Most CAN intake appointments are within 1-2 days of the call, but we need to further reduce that delay. YHDP-funded youth navigators will assist with providing young adults more immediate access in all CANs. 62% of young adult individuals versus 53% of older adult individuals did not attend their scheduled CAN appointment. We are piloting other ways to increase this attendance number by making CAN intake appointments more accessible and timely. At the CAN intake assessment, providers aim to divert the young adult from shelter by accessing other housing solutions. If diversion is not possible, the household is placed into shelter immediately, or waitlisted for the next shelter opening. Youth navigators and other providers will assist young adults with securing safe shelter, following through on referrals, navigating the system and eliminating barriers to housing.

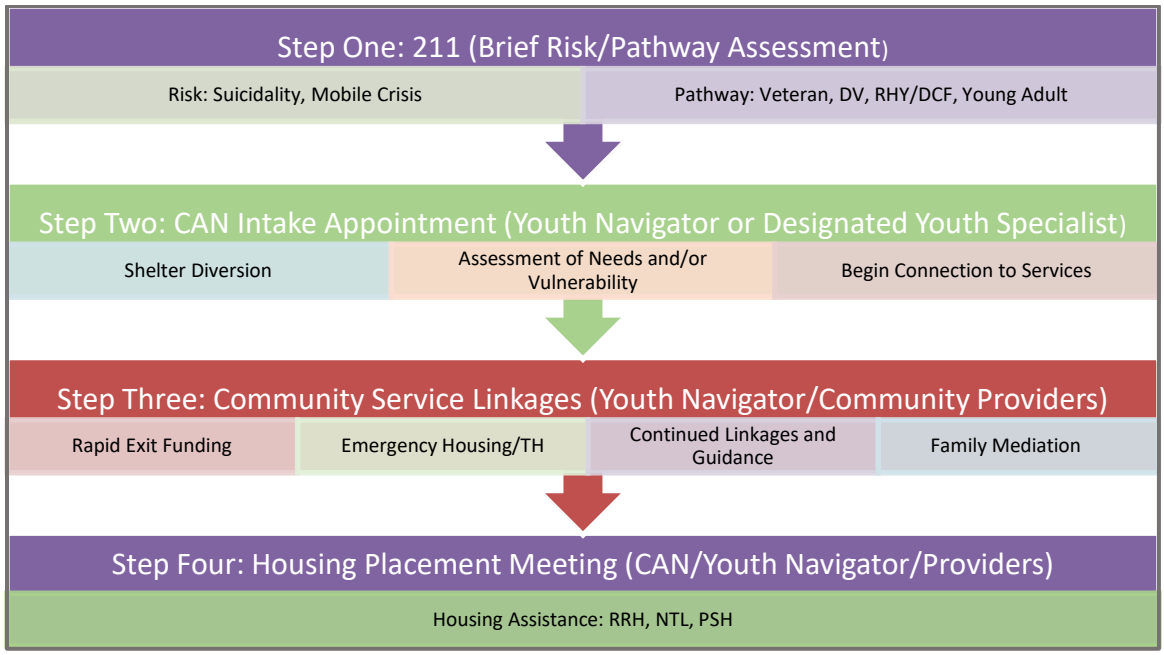
During the intake appointment if diversion is not feasible, CAN providers administer the Next Step Tool (the universal needs assessment tool used in Connecticut for young adult individuals and adopted by both Connecticut CoCs) in accordance with guidance disseminated by DOH and DMHAS to all CAN providers last fall (See Appendix B). The Next Step Tool assessments are entered into our statewide HMIS platform, which automatically feeds each youth's information into the By-Name List for each CAN in real time. Lists are generated and used at matching meetings in every CAN, which occurs multiple times per month.

The most vulnerable, highest need young adults are prioritized for housing services based on their assessment scores and case conferencing. We are moving toward a "Dynamic Prioritization System" with young adults as well as with older adults. Under this approach, participants are dynamically prioritized (working from most vulnerable) and referred to the best-fit resource currently available within the Coordinated Access Network.

Central to the concept of Dynamic Prioritization is the operationalization of a Progressive Engagement approach to maximize the impact of available resources and to ensure that no clients are left waiting for a resource that is unavailable, when another resource is available and may meet their needs. At all points in the system, staff will encourage client self-resolution. Interventions will be offered only when an individual is not able to self-resolve. All young adults who are considered for a higher-level housing intervention will be offered rapid re-housing first (with rare exceptions).

Rapid rehousing providers will seek to employ best practices to assist each individual to achieve housing stability regardless of their indicated vulnerability. If a client who is placed into rapid rehousing shows signs of destabilization, the rapid re-housing provider will bring that client's case back to the CAN for further case conferencing. The CAN will first seek to increase service supports for the client, to elevate chances of success in rapid rehousing before the CAN considers the individual/family for longer-term supportive housing.

Below is a basic depiction of our Coordinated Entry (CE) process for young adults:



Young families follow a similar path through coordinated entry but youth under age 18 experiencing housing instability who call 211 are given a warm handoff directly to a RHY provider or DCF, depending on the region. They do not need to call 211 to receive RHY or other services. We are working with DCF and other partners to refine this protocol.

Feedback from youth participants is a priority so we can better understand how they experience our system. The United Way offers every caller the chance to participate in a feedback survey at the end of the 211 call. They are working with their data team to isolate the youth surveys for review and consideration. In addition, the Coordinated Entry subgroup members, including the Youth Action Hub, created a survey for youth to complete after their CAN intake appointments, if they so choose. This survey is currently being piloting in several CANs. In addition, we will work with the Youth Action Hub to create a feedback mechanism for youth served by the Youth Navigators.

GOAL D: THE COMMUNITY ACTS WITH URGENCY TO SWIFTLY ASSIST YOUTH TO MOVE INTO PERMANENT OR NON-TIME-LIMITED HOUSING OPTIONS WITH APPROPRIATE SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

All state and HUD funded homeless response and housing providers in Connecticut are required to adhere to the principles of Housing First, ensuring no- or low- barrier access to housing resources. We continue to advocate for non-governmentally funded projects to adopt these principles as well. CCEH and AIDS CT continually offer housing first trainings and it is always a component of our housing conferences. For the YHDP funded programs and other state funded homeless programs for youth, we will require providers to adhere to HUD's four core principles of Housing First for youth: 1) Immediate access to permanent housing with no preconditions, 2) Youth choice and self-determination, 3) Individualized and youth-driven supports and 4) Persistent engagement.

Ensuring safety and confidentiality for special populations is also a priority. The 211 call specialists are trained to identify safety concerns and appropriately address them, making warm handoffs to DCF, domestic violence providers, sex-trafficking survivors service providers and others based on the unique situation. Many domestic violence survivors fall into homelessness as a result of their situation or associated issues, however their specific confidentiality needs can be a barrier to gaining access to housing services. CCEH, DOH, and the Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence developed a way for domestic violence survivors to get onto the By-Name-List, which enables them to gain access to resources such as rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing while maintaining their confidentiality.

In addition, the Coordinated Entry subgroup developed a young adult protocol, which is being piloted in select CANs, to ensure CAN intake staff are referring youth to appropriate community services. The CAN appointment will combine diversion with community service linkages through a trauma-informed, active listening session which will assist the CAN staff answer some pre-screening questions to help indicate if they might be a candidate for mental health or addiction services, educational supports, DCF services, Department of Developmental Services programs, among others. Youth Navigators and other CAN providers will assist youth with pursuing these referrals, which can lead to housing and other services provided through these agencies appropriately assisting youth and expanding our capacity to serve other youth. Youth Navigators will also assist with tracking referrals to gain an understanding of how many youth referred through our system successfully receive these services.

GOAL E: THE COMMUNITY HAS RESOURCES, PLANS, AND SYSTEM CAPACITY IN PLACE TO CONTINUE TO PREVENT AND QUICKLY END FUTURE EXPERIENCES OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG YOUTH

Connecticut has limited housing options specifically for youth and young adults statewide.

EXISTING YOUTH-SPECIFIC HOUSING RESOURCES individuals and families	
Under 18 Crisis Beds	24
18-24 Crisis Beds	50
Transitional Housing	52
Rapid Rehousing	~ 80 (Start program), 4
Longer-Term Supportive Housing	56

Through findings from our system projections project and other planning efforts we are targeting our YHDP funding to the interventions we believe will have the most effective impact in reducing homelessness in the CT BOS area. We strive to build upon existing resources to create a range of services and housing options that will meet the needs of all youth.

As discussed in the stable housing and subpopulation sections, we are using data to predict the evolving housing need of youth, creating additional service/housing capacity, opening access to existing units, and ensuring programs are youth-friendly and providing developmentally appropriate services for young adults. The YYA workgroup and its partners will continue to track system performance and resources to identify evolving gaps in services and housing interventions.

At the other end of the continuum, we are ramping up efforts to further collaborate with state systems, such as child welfare and the juvenile justice system, which are already partners, to prevent homelessness for youth exiting their system. We are creating a new subgroup specifically focused on these partnerships and shared efforts to push forth further progress in these efforts.

As we have found with our other populations (Veterans, chronically homeless, etc.) frequent review of data and performance measures is the backbone to achieving and sustaining an effective end to youth homelessness. We are working to enhance our current data reporting for youth and incorporate ongoing quality improvement processes into our work to ensure we have the adequate resources and strategies to achieve our goal.

INTEGRATING POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION/PERMANENT CONNECTIONS:

Integrating Positive Youth Development (PYD), Trauma-Informed Care (TIC), and Social Integration/Permanent Connections into Connecticut's youth and young adult systems to end homelessness is an overarching goal. In each part of our system, from entry to exit, we will weave in components of trauma-informed care, positive youth development, and social integration/permanent connections. Each of these practices will also be emphasized in the YHDP RFP. Selected awardees will be required to present their plans for continuous quality improvement that would include how youth and young adults will be part of program design and an integral part of how CQI occurs. Below are the systems-level, front-door, and program elements that will be included to assure PYD, TIC, and Social Integration/Permanent Connections will be fostered throughout our community plan.

Positive Youth Development is grounded in empowering youth to believe in themselves and their capacity to have a meaningful impact in their communities and relationships. The approach focuses on educating and engaging young people in taking initiative, problem-solving, and demonstrating compassion within productive activities rather than highlighting any maladaptive coping mechanisms, negative behaviors, or pathologies. Programs that incorporate PYD, work to develop youths' confidence, character, connections, competence and caring, leading to youth contributions. In the spectrum of programs and services, the emphasis should be placed on helping youth develop and grow rather than "correct" or "cure".

Closely related is the concept of social integration, or the process by which youth experiencing a housing crisis or homelessness are incorporated into social structures such as their community, jobs, and relationships. Developing prosocial supports for youth experiencing homelessness can provide protective factors to help reduce problem behaviors, improve mental health, increase links to employment, housing and services, and build healthy coping mechanisms. For youth entering the homeless response system, youth-specific coordinated entry staff and other providers strive to identify early, and build upon, existing prosocial support networks. Each youth exiting our housing programs should have permanent connections: stable, positive relationships with family, friends, and others who will be there for the youth when needed.

In addition, every aspect within the service system should reflect a deep understanding of trauma and how a youth's exposure to traumatic stress can influence their cognitive, biological, and emotional functioning as well as impact their relationships and identity development. Service delivery should be shaped to recognize and appreciate each youth's resiliency and strengths, while understanding that change for RHY might be difficult and not always follow an upward trajectory given the challenges they have faced. Below is an outline of the plan to integrate these elements into the components of our community system to end youth homelessness. It is also important to note our intention to integrate these concepts within each engagement and to partner with each youth as a unique individual. Programming should be driven by the needs of the youth and not the system, agencies, or organizations.

Systems-level Integration of PYD, TIC, and Social Integration/Permanent Connections:

- Facilitate learning, employment, and leadership opportunities for YYA with lived experience within programs and organizations dedicated to ending youth homelessness.

- Establish two statewide learning collaboratives (coordinated entry and rapid rehousing learning collaboratives) that will bring providers together to share best practices, monitor progress on the implementation of these best practices, and provide regular learning opportunities through training in PYD, TIC, and Social/Permanent Connection development.
    - **Positive Youth Development**
        - Provide training in PYD for providers across the state.
        - Utilize principles of PYD in state-level workgroups, assuring that decision-making is in partnership with youth.
        - Create online resource page for providers and other stakeholders that highlights foundations of PYD and instructional material on integrating best practices of PYD.
    - **Trauma-Informed Care**
        - Create and disseminate standards for trauma-informed care within each level of the homeless service system.
        - Ensure case managers, system coordinators, program leads, and other stakeholders are familiar with principles of trauma-informed care through review of scripts/protocols, trainings, and dissemination of TIC standards.
        - Provide on-going training in TIC to providers within the homeless service sector.
    - **Permanent Connections**
        - Integrate an exploration of natural supports and the use of family/natural support engagement into every aspect of service delivery system, reunifying families and/or connecting to other supportive adults/peers. Begin with natural support exploration in coordinated entry/diversion appointments, connections to family mediation and STRIVE specialists, and consistent outreach to viable permanent connections.
        - Build a robust system of family mediation using the STRIVE model to help reduce family conflict leading to homelessness, strengthening and stabilizing families. Expand use of the model into schools, juvenile justice, and child welfare in order to help these systems reduce pathways into homelessness. The Department of Children and Families has implemented a Child and Family Permanency Teaming model that engages youth in identifying their supports, re-engaging family and working towards achieving the highest level of legal permanence.
    - **Social Integration**
        - Share best practices on engaging youth in community and school activities, including:
            - How to develop local resource guides and connections through 211 and social media and strategies for integrating regular social, creative, and/or other participatory activities into programming based on unique interests of youth.

        - Include regular discussions in CE and RRH learning collaboratives on how to build social integration strategies into work with all unstably housed youth.
        - Continue to raise awareness and expand accessibility of after-school and extra-curricular activity to unstably housed youth, including institutions of higher education.
        - Help forge stronger partnerships with faith-based organizations and other community-based associations with local YETIs to help promote social integration for youth in their regions.
    - Explore creation of a peer-support network, developed in conjunction with the Youth Action Hub and other youth-serving organizations, will provide opportunities for connectivity, mentorship, and support for youth on a local and statewide level.
    - Create process for youth experiencing homelessness to share experiences that reflect their challenges in connecting socially and within their communities and schools. Couple this sharing with feedback mechanisms and leadership opportunities within the RH YYA workgroup to help meet these challenges.

Coordinated Entry Integration of PYD, TIC, and Social Integration/Permanent Connections:

- Provide training and guidelines on how to utilize trauma-informed, culturally competent, and strength-based practices in coordinated entry, diversion, and navigation services.
- Create additional coordinated entry protocols and trainings to meet the unique needs of different populations, including trafficked, LGBTQ, domestic violence and sexual assault survivors, persons with disabilities, and youth/young adults living with mental illness. Each youth/young adult should have a crisis response that is crafted to meet their safety, trauma, social, health, educational, and employment needs.
- Ensure that all service delivery is provided in a safe space with consistent refinements based on youth feedback surveys.
- YHDP funded youth navigators will be required to implement best practices in the areas of trauma-informed care, positive youth development, and social integration/permanent connections.
- Include youth in Coordinated Entry/Front Door learning collaborative.
- Fund training on youth-specific coordinated entry, diversion, navigation, and housing that emphasizes PYD, TIC, and permanent connection development.
- Develop additional strategies for linking youth to community activities, peer mentorship programs, volunteer opportunities, creative endeavors and other engagements to build on strengths, interests, and social connectivity as early as possible.

Program-level Integration of PYD, TIC, and Social Integration/Permanent Connections:

- YHDP funded housing programs will be required to plan and implement programming consistent with best practices in the areas of trauma-informed care, positive youth development, and social integration/permanent connections. In particular, programs will:
    - Create leadership opportunities within programs for youth to help determine program rules, case management practices, intake procedures, life skills acquisition, and other important components.
    - Each program will have a CQI process in which youth can safely contribute ideas and submit grievances with the expectation that the program will be responsive to their input.
    - Programs will ensure that living spaces are safe and respectful of the unique needs of each youth. Choice of type of living space and location should be made with the youth.
    - Case managers will be trained in trauma-informed care, positive youth development, and social integration. How each of these is put into practice should be clearly spelled out in their program plans and monitored.
    - Youth will be provided with opportunities within their communities to participate in meaningful ways, including volunteering, social groups, faith-based organizations, extra-curricular activities, and other types of pro-social connections. Case managers will track social connectivity to ensure youth are not isolated and feel belonging within the program and community.
    - Programs will provide opportunities to youth and young adults to participate in regional YETI meetings and other activities related to the work around ending youth homelessness, including the youth count.
    - Every program manager and case manager will be trained in trauma-informed care and develop case plans accordingly. Case planning shall include the young person with full transparency.
    - One of the primary focus areas will be to empower youth and encourage voice and choice; creating opportunities within each program and community to foster independence and resiliency.
    - All programs should include youth in program design and specific plans on how they will understand youth interests, engagement process to connect youth to social and community events, and maintain knowledge and connections to the following types of organizations and activities: (based on youth-driven interest and not program requirements)
        - Social media, internet
        - Performing arts, visual arts
        - Music
        - Sports, exercise, bodywork

- Crafts
- Clubs or Youth Groups
- Civic activities, community gatherings and involvement
- Gardening, environmental work, nature
- Business and entrepreneurial activities

Integration of PYD, TIC, and Social Integration/Permanent Connections in CQI:

- Develop and implement youth feedback mechanisms throughout the system, from "front door" to housing programs, to ensure consistency of youth-informed practices and an incorporation of PYD, TIC, and permanent connection/social integration principles in every aspect of service delivery.
- Utilize this feedback to inform changes in programs, system and action steps.

ANTICIPATED ALLOCATION OF YHDP FUNDING:

Potential YHDP funded Planning Projects:

Approximately 3% of YHDP funding ($196,587) is anticipated to cover planning activities that enhance ongoing planning efforts, implementation, and evaluation of the YHDP projects as well as ensure compliance with HUD YHDP requirements. HUD is currently reviewing an application for $38,500 to ensure ongoing youth collaboration, enabling the Youth Action Hub to continue serving as the youth advisory board to the YHDP Grant Management Team. They continue to be an integral part of the team. For additional information on the Youth Action see the Youth Action Hub section as written by YAH members for additional details on page 62.

We understand that HMIS costs are considered renewable project funding, but we are counting these costs toward our 3% planning budget to not detract from our renewable housing project funding. Funding is needed to modify the HMIS data collection and reporting structure to more effectively track YHDP funded housing assistance projects. In addition, we are considering requesting funding to more accurately track and document youth who are homeless under HUD's Category 4 (fleeing domestic violence) definition, which is interpreted more broadly for youth, as well as to create customized reports for youth as we do with Veterans and individuals/families experiencing chronic homelessness. As discussed in Goals A and E, it is important that we accurately collect data so we can track progress toward our goals and design programs and systems that effectively meet the needs of youth. Our initial HMIS estimate with everything included is approximately $40,000 but we are waiting to firm up our HMIS request based on additional guidance from HUD on YHDP data standards and expectations and the next draft of USICH benchmarks.

We originally anticipated spending YHDP planning dollars on the next phases of the System Dynamics Modeling project to help inform our plan and the allocation of YHDP funding. But, due to funding delays, we are now considering the remainder of this planning funding to assist with implementing our YHDP funded projects and the strategies within this plan. Now that the plan is drafted, we are confirming implementation expense with the CT BOS Steering Committee and the YYA Workgroup for the YHDP Grant Management Team to vote on funding priorities in January 2018. The YHDP Team is considering expenses to ensure compliance with HUD standards, provide sufficient management capacity for plan implementation, and potential projects that will aid in ongoing planning (such as the System Dynamics Modeling Project) or will assist with creating statewide/regional response systems (such as through a Rapid Results 100 Day Challenge Project). Any leftover funding will be incorporating into YHDP projects.

Potential YHDP funded Projects:

Similar to CT BOS's annual CoC application process, housing assistance projects will be selected locally through a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process early next year and then submitted to HUD for approval. We anticipate publishing the RFP in January and submitting final applications to HUD in April. We are seeking projects that are innovative, sustainable, and meet the project criteria outlined below. CT BOS has over $6.5 million, over $3 million per year for two years, to allocate between seven CANs and Danbury based on need. RFP selections will also be based on geographic need. After an extensive planning process in collaboration with the Youth Action Hub, we determined that allocating YHDP project funding toward youth shelter diversion, a rapid exit fund, youth navigators, rapid rehousing, and crisis housing will most effectively assist us

in achieving our goals in ending youth homelessness. In addition, each of the project types we anticipate funding through YHDP assist with the achievement of multiple USICH identified outcomes.

Youth Shelter Diversion:

Target population:

Primarily unaccompanied 18-24 year old individuals experiencing literal homelessness, imminent homelessness or fleeing domestic violence (HUD Homeless Categories 1, 2, and 4). Each CAN has access to the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness' "be homeful" funds, which provides flexible shelter diversion funding for families. If this and other diversion resources within the CAN are exhausted, then parenting young adults will be eligible for this funding as well.

Estimated 2 year YHDP funding:

Approximately $400,000.

Anticipated number served:

We anticipate serving approximately 200 youth with this diversion funding over the 2 year YHDP period.

Overview:

Connecticut already incorporates youth shelter diversion into its coordinated entry process, preventing homelessness at the front door by helping youth experiencing a housing crisis preserve their current housing situation (which they are at imminent risk of losing) or make immediate alternate housing arrangements and, if necessary, connecting them with financial assistance to help them return to permanent housing. *Homelessness is a crisis*, as in conflict, and persons in crisis are less able to clearly think through problems and advocate for themselves than they are when not in crisis. Through trauma-informed diversion conversations, CAN coordinated entry staff are empowering youth to identify safe and appropriate housing options while assisting and supporting them to return immediately to housing.

The Shelter Diversion program will be used by youth-specific CAN appointment staff and Youth Navigators to support the housing options identified through the diversion conversations. Dedicated diversion funding would be used to provide financial *assistance*, such as security deposits, moving costs, and transportation, among other expenses.

Through YHDP project funding we will create a flexible diversion fund that is centrally administered through a statewide (CT BOS area only) fund administrator. The selected fund administrator will have experience operating a multi-CAN fund and the capacity to administer a federal grant. The funding will be disbursed through our established coordinated entry system, which means youth-specific CAN appointment staff and Youth Navigators will make funding decisions on a local level. All staff will be required to participate in youth diversion training to gain access to the fund.

This YHDP diversion project funding, in conjunction with YHDP funded HMIS upgrades and Youth Navigators, will assist in creating a more formalized diversion program for young adults across the CT BOS area. This program will include financial assistance for youth, more accurate tracking of need and performance outcomes, and a more uniformed structure that provides increased quality assurance.

Project type:

The shelter diversion fund will supply one-time diversion assistance as a modified CoC short-term rapid rehousing program.

Goals/Objectives project addresses:

Diversion funding will serve to help meet Goal B. More specifically, our objective to implement comprehensive diversion strategies to help youth avoid the need to enter shelter whenever possible.

Youth Navigators:

Target Population:

Unaccompanied young adult individuals and minors experiencing literal homeless, imminent homelessness or fleeing domestic violence (HUD Homeless Categories 1, 2, and 4) who were not diverted at their CAN appointment. Parenting young adults would be eligible for these services as well if other resources in the CAN region are unavailable. Many CANs have family specific navigators or family placement teams that are better suited to serve young adult families with children. Youth navigators may also assist RHY and other youth providers with assisting minors when appropriate.

Estimated 2 Year YHDP Funding:

Approximately $1,140,000

Anticipated number served:

Youth navigators will locally approve Rapid Exit funding, serving approximately 200 youth. But, they will also conduct a portion of the CAN intake appointments (number depends on existing capacity within each of the CANs), locally approve diversion funding with other CAN intake staff, as well as assist youth with navigating system and self-resolving.

Overview:

YHDP funded Youth Navigators in each of CT BOS's 7 CANs and Danbury will conduct CAN intake appointments and primarily provide light case management that serves as a continuation of the diversion/assessment discussion conducted during the young adult's CAN appointment, working with youth to identify and secure safe, viable housing opportunities outside of the homeless system. Their primary goal is to remove barriers to housing for youth.

There will be slight variation in the youth navigator role in each CAN, but they will all:

- Conduct youth-specific CAN intake appointments (supplementing existing CAN intake staff);
- Assist youth with following through on service linkages made during CAN intake appointment, such as connection to McKinney-Vento liaison, DCF re-entry process (if applicable)s, etc., ensuring young adults are successfully linked to all appropriate resources as quickly as possible;
- Further assess the youth's goals for additional referrals to and assistance with linkages to employment programs and other resources that can assist with obtaining and maintaining housing stability;
- Guide them through housing response system process, updating them on their BNL status;

- Connect with youth's potential natural supports such as immediate or extended family, when deemed appropriate by youth, to assess under what conditions they could serve as permanent/temporary housing, connecting them to mediation services and/or providing mediation when other resources are not available;
- When youth are interested, navigators connect young adults experiencing homelessness to one another, in an attempt to have them "pair up" to increase the potential for shared living arrangements with 2+ youth who have income;
- Allocate Rapid Exit funds as needed for young adults to achieve housing stability (see Rapid Exit funding) as well as participate in housing placement meetings;
- If young adult still requires an additional housing intervention to obtain permanent housing (enrollment in RRH, PSH, etc.), assisting youth with application process, obtaining necessary documentation, coordinating with the new case manager to ensure a smooth transition; and
- Participate in YETI meetings, discussing evolving needs of local youth and strategies to address them.

Youth Navigators will work collaboratively with YETIs and other local providers in empowering youth to resolve their housing crises. They will also assist DCF, RHY providers, McKinney-Vento liaisons, and other local youth providers to address a minor's housing crisis when needed. For youth currently staying in shelter, youth navigators will coordinate with shelter case management staff, clarifying roles in assisting the youth achieve housing stability and to move them into permanent housing as quickly as possible.

Youth Action Hub members have advocated for a preference for these navigators to have lived experience if possible, which is consistent with their *Improving Coordinated Entry for Youth* study. One youth research participant remarked, *"Just having someone who can relate with you, even a little bit can be such a huge difference."* Agencies in each CAN that are active CAN members, have experience serving this population, and have the capacity to administer a federal grant, among other factors, will be competitively selected for these navigator projects. In addition, navigators should work a few weeknight and weekend hours to accommodate youth's schedules and be able to travel to meet youth where they are. They will take a trauma-informed approach and strengthen youth self-determination by providing youth with options and the information necessary to make informed decisions. Youth navigator services will be voluntary for youth and we anticipate these services lasting approximately 90 days.

Project type:

Support Services Only used to fund youth navigators.

Goals/Objectives Project Addresses:

Youth Navigators will assist with meeting all our goals. They will help with the coordinated identification of all youth by assisting with maintaining the BNL. They will prevent youth from entering shelter through diversion, and will enhance our coordinated entry process by accommodating additional CAN intake times and utilizing their expertise to connect youth to services. They will also assist with swiftly connecting youth to housing services, when necessary, by administering the rapid exit funding, keeping in contact with them so they do not miss opportunity when they are next on BNL, and assisting youth with the application process and transition into new program. In addition, youth navigators will help ensure we have the resources and plans in place to prevent and quickly end homelessness among youth since their frontlines experience serving youth through

the system will help YETIs and the YYA Workgroup better understand the needs of youth within each region, informing how to improve our system.

Rapid Exit Funding:

Target Population:

Unaccompanied young adult individuals and minors experiencing literal homeless or fleeing domestic violence (HUD Homeless Categories 1 and 4). Minors who are imminently homeless (HUD Homeless Category 2) may also be eligible for this funding. Parenting young adult may be eligible for this funding as well, in consultation with one of the region's youth navigators, if other resources in the CAN region are unavailable. Rapid exit funding will be available for young adults who are unable to be diverted before entering crisis housing but have yet to be enrolled in a rapid rehousing or longer-term supportive housing program.

Estimated 2 Year YHDP funding:

Approximately $400,000

Anticipated number served:

We anticipate serving approximately 200 youth with this Rapid Exit funding over the 2 year YHDP period.

Overview:

Following CAN appointments, Youth Navigators and their local partners will continue to work with youth to follow through with referrals, develop housing plans, and remove barriers to permanent housing. As a youth's situation stabilizes, s/he may be able to exit homelessness with the help of short-term financial assistance.

Rapid exit funding will provide flexible financial assistance, such as security deposits and utility costs, designed to meet each young adult's particular needs. Rapid exit funding for expenses such as transportation costs to return home, will also be available to minors at any point during their homelessness episode.

A statewide (CT BOS area only) fund administrator will manage a single rapid exit fund that will be available to eligible participants through the discretion of local YHDP funded youth navigators. The selected fund administrator will have experience operating a multi-CAN fund and the capacity to administer a federal grant. This fund will be combined with the YHDP Diversion funding to create flexibility within these two resources.

Minors who are imminently homeless or experiencing homelessness will be eligible for this funding as well throughout their homeless episode in consultation with youth navigators. Runaway and Homeless Youth providers have acknowledged a gap in short-term light-touch financial assistance for minors experiencing homelessness. Our data on minors is severely limited so the availability of this funding will provide us with the opportunity to further learn about this population and their needs.

Project type:

The Rapid Exit fund will supply one-time diversion assistance as a modified CoC short-term rapid rehousing program.

Goals/Objectives Project Addresses:

Rapid Exit funding will assist us in meeting Goals C and E. Rapid Exit funding will expand our current range of assistance options for youth, providing an additional flexible resource that can be tailored to best meet the needs of youth who cannot be immediately diverted from homelessness but also do not need the higher level of assistance offered through other resource options such as transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and non-time-limited supportive housing. We anticipate serving approximately 200 youth with Rapid Exit funding.

Young Adult Rapid Rehousing:

Target population:

Unaccompanied young adult individuals who are literally homeless or fleeing domestic violence and scored 4 or higher on the Next Step Tool (or equivalent). Exceptions for those scoring below 4 can be made if region has capacity.

Estimated 2 Year YHDP funding:

Approximately $4 million. DOH also anticipates using HOME TBRA funding toward the 25% match. Consistent with a Housing First approach that enables youth to choose services, we are applying for a waiver from HUD to waive the mandatory once a month case management requirement, which would enable us to use HOME funding as a match. Case managers would proactively offer participants case management and persistently attempt to engage them but services would not be a condition of rental assistance.

Anticipated number served:

We anticipate serving approximately 200 youth over a two year period.

Overview:

These rapid re-housing programs will only accept eligible young adults referred through the CAN dynamic prioritization process, serving the most vulnerable youth first through a progressive engagement approach within the CAN. If a client who is placed into rapid re-housing shows signs of destabilization, the rapid re-housing provider will bring that client's case back to the CAN for further case conferencing and increased services before entering longer-term supportive housing.

Rapid re-housing case managers will assist youth with searching for an apartment based on where they wish to live and negotiating with landlords to obtain scattered-site, private-market units with lease in their own name. Program staff will build relationships with landlords to provide options to youth with high barriers and to mitigate issues before they escalate. Shared apartments will be available, subject to youth choice with case managers providing services to help prevent or mediate roommate conflicts. Programs will provide move-in and flexible rental financial assistance with the amount based on need and funding managed through a central CT BOS rental assistance administrator. Sufficient case management capacity, more intensive than older adult programs, is necessary, with an ideal ratio of 1:10. Case managers will provide more

"I just want them to check in on me. I just don't want them to give up like my social worker did... Like make me feel like I have to keep going…Make me feel like I have to. Like that's what I need, is a little bit of a push, that's all… don't call and check up on me once every five weeks. A lot can happen in five weeks."

Youth with Lived-Experience, Start Evaluation

intensive services for the first three months while youth stabilize – but will be based on youth choice and need. Program staff will employ positive youth development, trauma-informed, and harm reduction practices to serve youth participants, believing that every youth can succeed utilizing their own strengths. Services and connections to mainstream resources will be tailored to individualized need – not "one size fits all."

Social isolation can provoke youth to invest in harmful relationships to feel accepted or reduce loneliness so it is important for case management staff to remain available and responsive to youth. Numerous youth embrace the solitude and privacy that scattered-site apartments can afford after exiting congregate settings such as shelter, but several of the youth participating in the SDM sessions discussed a desire for connection with their fellow program participants and a sense of community. While staff should work to promote social integration into the community they should also provide voluntary opportunities for small group bonding activities with fellow participants. Youth should have a meaningful role in program planning with program meetings and a responsive participant feedback mechanism. The Youth Action Hub will assist with setting standards for youth collaboration and feedback processes for YHDP funded projects.

All YHDP funded rapid re-housing programs will meet together for a statewide learning collaborative as they launch their programs. This collaborative will provide a venue for them to problem-solve together and learn from each other as well as from promising practices nationwide regarding topics, such as: landlord recruitment strategies, how to incentivize youth to engage in services, and how to navigate shared housing. Providers with experience serving this population and administering housing programs, as well as the capacity to administer a federal grant program, among other factors, will be competitively selected based on their score and geographic need. We anticipate serving youth through this program for an average of 9 months.

Project type:

Rapid rehousing program.

Goals/Objects Project Addresses:

The YHDP funded rapid rehousing projects will assist in ensuring we have the capacity to provide permanent housing to youth. With this YHDP funding, we can provide rapid rehousing to approximately 200 of our most vulnerable young adults and tailor programming to help us ensure even fewer youth return to homelessness.

Short-term Crisis Housing:

Target Population:

Unaccompanied 18-24 year old individuals experiencing literal homelessness or fleeing domestic violence. Programs will accept young adults through the local CAN shelter prioritization protocol specific to young adult crisis programs.

Estimated 2 year YHDP funding:

Approximately $416,316

Anticipated number served:

We anticipate the YHDP funding will enable us to serve approximately 20-40 youth over the two year period, depending on the crisis housing model and the competitive applications received.

Overview:

Based on their experiences, research, and discussions with other unstably housed youth, the Youth Action Hub members advocated to utilize a portion of the YHDP funding for crisis housing specifically targeted to unaccompanied young adult individuals needing an immediate safe place to stay.

This crisis housing will utilize low- or no-barriers to admission and a harm reduction and positive youth development model. There will be meaningful collaboration with youth on the physical design, ongoing programming, and shelter rules.

Youth participating in the YYA SDM sessions were most concerned about crisis housing that is safe; offers privacy in showers, bathrooms and sleeping areas; has sufficient storage capacity for personal belongings; and has staff who are respectful and knowledgeable. Adequate staffing ratios and screening for safe behaviors will ensure all youth feel a sense of security. Staff will be trained on cultural competency, fair housing laws, trauma-informed care, among other key practices to ensure youth participants are treated in a non-judgmental, supportive way. The program will provide adequate storage as well as privacy measures for bathroom and sleeping areas. The RFP will be open to a range of crisis housing options: congregate shelter, shared apartments, multi-bedroom homes, host homes, among other options.

Case management will assist youth with meeting basic needs as well as provide individually tailored guidance and support to youth as they focus on quickly obtaining permanent housing. Opportunities for family connections and linkages to community resources will be provided.

Providers with experience serving this population and administering housing programs, as well as the capacity to administer a federal grant program, among other factors, will be competitively selected based on their score and geographic need. We anticipate serving youth through this program for 60 days or less.

Project type:

We anticipate funding this short-term crisis housing as a CoC transitional housing program.

Goals/Objectives Project Addresses:

This crisis housing project(s) will assist us toward the goal of providing immediate crisis housing to any youth who needs and wants it.

INTRODUCTION TO THE YOUTH ACTION HUB (as written by YAH):

"I joined the Youth Action Hub in January 2017 because I wanted to tell youth that it's not the end of the world being homeless. People think that since one thing goes wrong that you should just give up. That's not the case at all, pain is temporary, and situations are temporary. Everything in life nowadays is temporary. It's like, I understand completely, you get tired of trying, you just want to give up completely, and sometimes you may even want to die. I know those feelings. I felt every single type of pain there is, physically, mentally and emotionally. You're not alone, I honestly feel and felt the same way; I still have things going on that aren't easy to get over. But it's not the end of the world. It's all temporary. I tell myself every day, "Bro, you gotta keep going." I know what it's like to be in so much pain emotionally and mentally where you just wait for everyone in the house to leave so you can scream and cry. I do it all the time. It's okay to cry, it's okay to feel upset, and it's okay to be mad. I let it out and then watch how much better off I feel after. I'm here at YAH for comfort, I'm here to let youth know that they're not alone, and that it's not the end of the world."

Melenie Serrano*, Youth Action Hub*

We, the Youth Action Hub (YAH), serve as the official Youth Advisory Board of Connecticut Balance of State Continuum of Care. YAH is a youth-led center of research and advocacy under the guidance of Dr. Heather Mosher at the Institute for Community Research. The Institute for Community Research, an independent nonprofit organization located in Hartford and founded in 1987, helps communities and organized groups advocate for social/policy change through the use of innovative and rigorous research to inform collaborative efforts toward this change.

We are a group of eight young adults between the ages of 18-25 (six of us under the age of 24) who are part-time employees of the Institute for Community Research in Hartford, Connecticut. We have experience with housing instability and a desire to carry out research and advocacy around youth homelessness in Connecticut. Dr. Mosher guides our work using an evidence-based Youth Participatory Action Research training curriculum. We work as researchers, advocates and partners in the statewide effort to end youth homelessness. We are funded by the Melville Charitable Trust, with additional support from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, the Connecticut Departments of Children and Families and Housing. We are partners on the statewide workgroup to end youth homelessness in Connecticut.

"When I came to work at [The Youth Action Hub], I realized I was not the only one who had struggled, and I was being given an opportunity to give back alongside some of the people who had experienced similar troubles as me. Researching the services in Connecticut that allow people to access the help they need was eye-opening, and I immediately wished someone had been working to make sure I was being taken care of back when I was going through homelessness. Each of us sitting around the conference room table felt a personal connection to the work, each knowing a person - or a younger version of ourselves - that could benefit from improving youth access to housing and service information in our state, and even nationally."

Jay Perry, Youth Action Hub

Completed Projects

1. **Study on Young People's Access to Housing Services in Connecticut (2016):** In 2016, we completed a rigorous study that examined young people's experiences with trying to access housing services through a helpline used as the state's coordinated entry point for housing services. The purpose of the study was to improve access to housing resources for young people in Connecticut. A total of 200

young people (ages 14-24 years old) across the state of Connecticut were recruited to participate in this study through direct outreach, peer-to-peer referral, and referral by case managers of social service agencies. The research used a rigorous mixed-method design. Participants completed an anonymous online survey and/or participated in a focus group discussion. Recommendations based on study findings were shared with a coalition of partners and key stakeholders across the state and are being used in ongoing efforts to improve the coordinated entry system for young people. (For more information and to read about the key study findings, go to: https://youthactionhub.org/research/study-on-young-peoples-access-to-housing-services-in-ct/)

2. **Legislative Advocacy:** We participated in (and continue to participate in) legislative advocacy efforts regarding reforms designed to implement the state Action Plan to end youth homelessness in Connecticut.

3. **Stakeholder and Advisors in Statewide Policymaking, Planning, & Implementation of YYA Workgroup Plan:** YAH is recognized as a partner and stakeholder member of several statewide workgroups that are tasked with developing effective strategies to identify and reach youth who need housing assistance and to improve the coordinated entry process for these youth to access and obtain the resources that they need). This youth-adult partnership is crucial in the planning, design and implementation phase in order to ensure that planned changes are relevant and customized to youth.

4. **HUD's Point-in-Time Count – "Youth Count":** In November 2016, we partnered with the Greater Hartford Region Youth Engagement Team to train and coordinate volunteers to administer the Youth Count survey in the Greater Hartford region. We used our experiences as housing instable youth, as well as the findings from our research study on young people's access to services to inform the Youth Count volunteer trainings. These trainings included a webinar and a curriculum for trainings, which included topics such as sensitivity, proper ways of approaching young people, and proper ways to ask questions to young people. We went on to collaborate in developing a map containing hot spots of where young people gravitate towards, to plan for routes during the week of the Youth Count. This map and plan included locations and times for when it was best to survey young people in different areas.

"When I began research at YAH and started interviewing other young people, I learned that it was often difficult for them to reach out for help, just as it had been for me. Many youth feel a disconnect between service providers and themselves. They told us they needed helpers to be proactive, responsive, caring, and relatable.

It always stood out to me that youth didn't feel comfortable bringing up their issues to others. They felt like they would be judged or that people wouldn't truly understand their situations. This really resonated with me because I've had the exact same experiences.

If we want to end youth homelessness, we need to be able to connect with youth as if we were in their shoes. Because all of us at YAH have previously been those youth, our perspective helps to inform our research. Because we are peers, we have been able to establish strong connections with youth experiencing homelessness. The value of these connections is tremendous and has been crucial to our journey to end youth homelessness."

Natalie Garcia, Youth Action Hub

Ongoing Projects

1. **Improving the Coordinated Entry System for Youth:** We work closely with a statewide coalition of stakeholders to improve the coordinated entry system for young people in CT. A major finding from our 2016 study on young people's access to housing services in CT showed that the majority of young people who are in need of services or help do not tend to call helplines, like 2-1-1, when they first reach out for help. The majority of young people in the study reached out to friends and adults whom they trusted and interacted with regularly. However, they also reported that many young people and adults are not aware of the resources that are available to youth and where to best direct individuals when they are in need of help. To address this barrier, we developed a detailed Youth Communications and Engagement Plan that provides effective and low-cost strategies that raise awareness and engage a broader range of young people and adults, targeting communications toward a general population of young people. This plan focuses on specific places and institutions that interact with groups of young people who are more at risk of homelessness and housing instability. By raising awareness more generally, young people and professionals working with those young people will be able to direct youth and young adults to 2-1-1 and other points of access for services.

   The 2016 study highlighted the importance of multiple points of entry that offer physical locations for walking in and talking face to face with friendly and supportive staff. We are currently working with statewide partners to streamline the intake process and to identify and develop new youth-friendly entry points for young people to access services. For example, Hartford Public Library has been identified as a potential point of access for young people, and is working with us and other coalition stakeholders to be implemented as such.

2. **Evaluation of Rapid Re-Housing Program for Young Adults:** We are conducting a 2-year study (with mentorship by Dr. Mosher) on the impact of The Connection, Inc.'s Start Program (a rapid re-housing program for 18-24 year olds) on young adults' long-term vulnerability/risk, psychosocial well-being and housing stability over the program period and one year afterwards. The study will also: (1) identify key components of the rapid re-housing program that drive outcomes for young people and (2) examine the relationship between supportive/unsupportive social network ties, mental health and housing stability. Using a mixed-method interrupted time series design with a comparison group, approximately 120 young adults (18-24 years of age) will participate in the evaluation at baseline and 6 month intervals for one year. Study findings will be shared December 2018.

3. **System Dynamics Modeling to Identify Leverage Points for Ending Youth Homelessness:** We serve as members of the planning committee and on the System Dynamics Modeling researcher-facilitator team for this project. The first phase of the project is complete. Phase 1 involved using participatory system dynamics modeling to map the structural dynamics that drive the problem of youth homelessness in Connecticut, and to build systems thinking and collaboration among system stakeholders across multiple service sectors and young people who have experienced housing instability/homelessness. The rich qualitative information collected through this process has been used in the HUD Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) planning phase to develop our goals, objectives, and action steps in the Coordinated Community Plan. We will continue to be involved as partners in Phase 2 (Nov/Dec 2017 to June/July 2018), which is to develop a simulation model to

identify leverage points that will produce the biggest "bang for the buck" in efforts to end youth homelessness.

4. **LGBTQ+ and Youth Homelessness Photovoice Project:** Photovoice is a research method that combines photography, narratives, and social action to catalyze awareness and dialogue. We are carrying out a Photovoice project focused on the issue of LGBTQ+ Youth Homelessness to amplify and articulate the voices of those in that community. Two primary goals of this project are to: (1) build a coordinated network of youth leaders around the state that will become advocates and partners to end youth homelessness in Connecticut; and (2) increase awareness and enforcement of legislation that protects the rights of LGBTQ+ young people. The Photovoice exhibit will open in early March 2018 in the State Capitol Office Building during an intensive week of coordinated legislative advocacy around addressing homelessness in CT. This exhibit will serve as a launching point for future Photovoice projects to build a larger network of youth-led leadership and coordinated action to tackle youth homelessness in different regions of the state.

5. **YHDP Planning and Youth Advisory Board:** We have been part of the planning group for YHDP. Together with partners, we have created a youth collaboration plan and established a timeline to map out our involvement in the YHDP process, as well as other young people's involvement in research, discussions, and decision making for the various stages of the YHDP effort. This collaboration plan details the need for increasing the number of Youth Advisory Board members, and lists various youth & young adult groups and organizations that are able to be part of the Youth Advisory Board network. Along with the youth collaboration plan, we have been active members in discussions about the Coordinated Community Plan for YHDP.

As part of the YHDP committee, we have been involved in discussions of grant allocation and implementation. We have been able to advocate for other young people through our research and involvement in the Systems Dynamic Modeling project. We advocated for allocating money towards crisis housing options and involving young people in designing this crisis housing in Connecticut.

Our future involvement in YHDP includes developing an RFP and working with other young people in creating guidelines for proposals, in addition to designing the process for reviewing applications. We will review proposals and partner on making decisions on accepting or denying proposals.

We will work with young people in establishing performance measures and mechanisms for young people to provide feedback on projects funded through the RFP. This will allow youth & young adults receiving services through these projects to have direct impact in making changes and improvements to projects.

"The information I've learned through YAH and the service organizations we work with have all made a difference in my life, and I thank them for that. I can relate to the situations that we are researching, and I'm proud to be a member of this group. I've come really far. I've met a lot of different supports and I have learned skills like networking and interpreting data. I've learned different strategies to solve problems, and how to think more critically in many situations. Ever since I started working at the Youth Action Hub, I've felt like part of a family."

Jay Perry, Youth Action Hub

"This job has also shown me a possible future career path, one that fits my goal of improving my community. The Youth Action Hub has given me a love for participatory action research, where I'm able to learn about the

problems people are facing and explore different solutions to those problems. I want to continue helping people in this way for the rest of my life. And with the Youth Action Hub, I already have been given the opportunity to make a name for myself and to gain the knowledge needed for this career. Because of the YAH, I know the things I'm doing now are helping people in my community now and in the future."

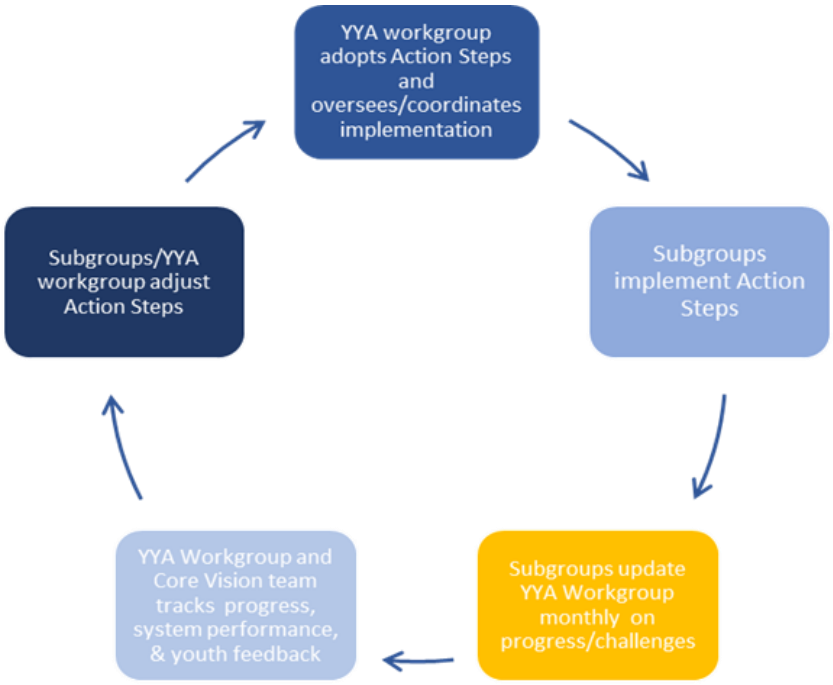
Angel Cotto, Youth Action Hub

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT:

We are committed to continuous quality improvement of both our YHDP funded programs and our overarching Youth Plan.

Youth Plan -

Accountability: The YYA Workgroup, which includes the Youth Action Hub as partner members, will continue to oversee the statewide effort to end youth homelessness, which includes monitoring the progress made on our action steps and overall system performance toward achieving our goals. YYA is creating additional subgroups to assist in implementing the action steps, reporting progress and any major changes to the workgroup. Subgroup co-chairs will be responsible for continually providing status updates on their group's assigned action steps within a shared spreadsheet, which the YYA workgroup will review monthly to coordinate and ensure each subgroup is maintaining progress. The YYA's Core Vision Team will assist in monitoring progress and serve to eliminate barriers to implementing the action steps.



Data-driven: The YYA workgroup will create system performance measures and goals, which will be consistent with any YHDP required measurements and will be informed by USICH's draft benchmarks. These goals will be tracked via quarterly dashboards until we are able to integrate our reports into HMIS for at least monthly reporting. The dashboards will help identify areas of the system that need further improvement. We recently began reviewing available data on a monthly basis regarding our youth CAN intake timing, inflow, and outcomes as well as our BNL inflow and outcomes, among other measurements. But, we need to expand these data points in dashboards that include all our system performance measures, including length of time to housing. The YYA workgroup will also explore incorporating other data sources, outside HMIS and the Youth Count, into its performance measures, including qualitative data sources such as the CAN intake feedback surveys. In addition, the Core Vision Team will review all measures semi-annually to question whether any

necessary metrics are missing or should be edited or deleted. Improvement in data quality is also a top priority. The Core Vision team will work with the Data & Estimated Needs workgroup on initiatives to measure and improve data quality.

Leadership: The YYA workgroup will keep key leaders such as relevant state agency commissioners apprised of prioritized objectives and action steps as well as share data on the progress to keep them informed and engaged with the effort.

Empower Stakeholders: The YYA workgroup will create opportunities for frontline staff to comment on action steps and new strategies to ensure voices at the federal, state, local, community, and frontline level are heard, to identify issues needing improvement and keeping everyone engaged in the effort. The YYA workgroup will also expand opportunities for youth to share their experiences being served by the homeless response system to understand its effectiveness through a youth perspective and to identify areas requiring improvement. In addition, the YYA workgroup will keep the broader stakeholder group apprised of our effort's progress and current projects. We are exploring creation of a website or shared drive for the broader key stakeholder group, which includes all the members of the YYA subgroups, to keep them informed.

Flexibility: The Youth Plan is viewed as an evolving document. We understand that the action steps are not fully comprehensive. We anticipate adding numerous new tasks and potentially deleting ones we decide are not worthwhile to pursue as we progress further in the effort. The YYA workgroup will remain flexible and will evolve the action steps and plan as needed to implement the intended vision and system response.

YHDP Program:

Accountability: The YHDP Grant Management team will monitor the implementation of YHDP grant and YHDP funded programs as well as track program progress through quarterly reports. CT BOS will assist with the monitoring and successful implementation of the programs. The YHDP team will provide updates to CT BOS CoC and YYA workgroup (which includes the Youth Action Hub). Each program will need to create a CQI plan that includes youth feedback and collaboration. We are creating two learning collaboratives (front-end services and rapid rehousing collaboratives) for YHDP funded providers, which will include peer monitoring of youth collaboration, positive youth development and other core program elements. We are also exploring avenues for YHDP youth program participants to contact the YHDP team directly when/if there are unresolved issues within the YHDP funded programs.

Data-driven: The YHDP Grant Management team will ensure there is quality data collection within the programs and will set performance measures based on the four USICH outcomes and HUD requirements. It will also track system performance measures in partnership with the YYA workgroup to understand impact of YHDP programs on the overall system. YHDP will track program progress through quarterly reports, which will be shared with YYA workgroup and CT BOS CoC.

Leadership: The YHDP team will keep the CT BOS CoC chairs, YYA workgroup, DOH commissioner, and other key leaders informed of the progress to make them aware of the effectiveness of such programs.

Empower Stakeholders: The YHDP Grant Management team will seek input from funded providers and youth participants to identify any issues with the programs that should be addressed. Our two learning collaboratives will provide ongoing training for YHDP funded providers (and possibly for other funded providers as well) and opportunities to learn from each other on how to improve their programs.

Flexibility: The YHDP team will support change within the programs in response to concerns or suggestions from providers and youth participants based on their experiences. We expect providers to be adapting and improving their programs based on lessons learned, evolving best practices, and most importantly, on input from youth participants.

SIGNATURES FROM OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES:

We support the Opening Doors for Youth 2.0 plan and agree to work collaboratively with our partners to prevent and end youth homelessness in Connecticut as outlined in the plan.

Evonne M. Klein
Commissioner
CT Department of Housing

Joette Katz
Commissioner
CT Department of Children and Families

Stacey Violante Cote
Chair
Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Workgroup

Natalie Garcia
Researcher/ YAH Representative
Youth Action Hub and YHDP Grant Management Team

Steve DiLella
Co-Chair
CT Balance of State Continuum of Care

John Merz
Co-Chair
CT Balance of State Continuum of Care

Katie Durand
Lead
CT BOS YHDP Grant Management Team

APPENDIX A – ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

The following individuals/organizations serve as the YHDP Grant Management Team:

Lisa Bahadosingh, *Supportive Housing Works/ODFC*

Carline Charmelus, *Partnership for Strong Communities*

Katie Durand, *CT Dept. of Housing*

Natalie Garcia, *Youth Action Hub/Youth Advisory Board*

Mary Ann Haley, *Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness*

Aimee Hendrigan, *Melville Charitable Trust*

Alanna Kabel, *U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development*

Alice Minervino, *CT Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services/CT Balance of State CoC Liaison*

Heather Mosher, *Institute for Community Research*

Kim Somarroo-Rodriquez, *CT Dept. of Children and Families*

Louis Tallarita, *CT State Dept. of Education*

Stacey Violante-Cote, *Center for Children's Advocacy*

Alicia Woodsby, *Partnership for Strong Communities*

Suzanne Piacentini, *U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development*

The YHDP Grant Management Team would like to thank the following organizations and committees for their involvement in the YHDP planning process:

- Abt Associates, Inc.
- Access Agency
- Annie Casey Foundation
- Boys and Girls Club
- Capital Community College
- Catholic Charities
- Center for Children's Advocacy
- Child and Family Agency
- Chrysalis Center
- City of New Britain
- City of New Haven
- Citywide Youth Coalition, Inc.
- Coalition on Housing and Homelessness
- Community Health Resources
- Community Renewal Team
- Consolidated School District of New Britain
- CT Balance of State Continuum of Care Steering Committee
- CT Coalition to End Homelessness
- CT Court Support Services Division
- CT Department of Children and Families
- CT Department of Corrections
- CT Department of Education
- CT Department of Housing
- CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
- CT Housing Coalition
- CT Judicial Branch, Court Support Services Division
- CT State Colleges and Universities
- CT Strong
- CT Voices for Children
- Corporation for Supportive Housing
- DOMUS Academy
- FCA Agency
- FISH Emergency Shelter
- Friendship Service Center
- Greater Bridgeport Area Prevention Program Inc.

- Happy Family
- Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
- Hartford Public Schools
- Holy Family
- Institute for Community Research
- Institute of Living
- Job Corps
- Journey Home
- Juvenile Justice
- Kids in Crisis
- Killingly School Board
- Lisa Inc.
- Love146
- Madonna Place
- Maloney High School
- Marrakech Young Adult Services West Haven
- Melville Charitable Trust
- Meriden Health Department
- Merrill Lynch
- Middletown Police Department
- Middletown United Way
- My People Clinical Services
- National Youth Forum
- New Britain Board of Education
- New Britain Public Schools
- New Haven Public Schools of Choice
- New London Homeless Hospitality Center
- New Reach
- Newington Public School District
- Noank Community Support Services
- Norwich Youth and Family Services
- NTTPS
- Office of Policy Management
- Our Piece of the Pie
- Partnership for Strong Communities
- Peacebuilders
- Perceptions Programs
- Prudence Crandall
- Rainbow of Life
- Reaching Home Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Workgroup
- Reliance House
- River Valley Services Young Adult Services
- Salvation Army
- Shelter Now
- Sound Community Services
- St. Vincent De Paul
- St. Vincent de Paul Bristol
- Staywell Health Center
- Step Ahead!
- Support for Pregnant and Parenting Teen Program
- Supportive Housing Works
- Thames River Community Service
- Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc.
- The Arc Connecticut
- The Connection, Inc.
- Thompson Ecumenical Empowerment Group
- Trafficking in Persons Council
- Triangle Community Center
- United Way of Greater New Haven
- United Way of Meriden and Wallingford
- USI
- Village for Families & Children
- Waterbury Public Schools
- Waterbury Youth Services
- Windham Public Schools
- Windham Region No Freeze Project
- Windham Regional Community Council, Inc.
- Women & Families Center
- YMCA
- Youth Action Hub
- Youth Build
- Youth Continuum

APPENDIX B – WHEN TO ADMINISTER NEXT STEP TOOL:

When to administer the Next Step Tool

Ages 18-24

The Next Step tool should be administered for the individual young adult population of 18 to 24 year olds in the place of the VI-SPDAT (parenting youth should continue to use the family VI-SPDAT). Those who have been previously assessed by the VI-SPDAT can be reassessed as needed to help assure they receive the appropriate assessment for their age group. Reassessment policy, however, should be decided within each CAN region. Additionally, this population will remain part of the current HMIS by-name prioritized list.

If the client's current living situation – the place where the client slept <u>last night</u> - is the following…

A place not meant for habitation, including a car, sleeping outside, in a tent, at a train station/bus station/airport, garage, porch, hallway, unfinished basement/attic, rooftop, abandoned building, or 24 hour business.	1. Conduct Next Step Tool 2. Refer to Outreach/PATH
In a Hospital, Rehab or other institution — Homeless prior to entry <u>and</u> <90 day stay	1. Conduct Next Step Tool
In a Hospital, Rehab or other institution — Not homeless prior to entry OR > 90 day stay	DO NOT CONDUCT Next Step Tool but connect youth to services
In a Hotel / Motel — Self-paid	1. Conduct Next Step Tool
In a Hotel / Motel — Paid for by an agency or government	1. Conduct Next Step Tool
In a Warming Center and has no place to stay	1. Conduct Next Step Tool 2. Refer to Outreach/PATH if appropriate
If the individual is fleeing or attempting to flee abuse or domestic violence and has no alternative safe place (includes unsafe couch surfers)*	1. Refer to domestic violence provider or youth/young adults service provider 2. Conduct Next Step Tool
In an Emergency Shelter	1. Recommended to administer immediately but can wait up to 14 days.
With family and/or friends in a safe place meant for habitation	<u>Do Not</u> Conduct Next Step Tool

*Domestic violence or fleeing domestic violence, or Category 4 as defined by HUD, includes trading sex for housing, trafficking, physical abuse, violence or perceived violence, stalking, or other life-threatening conditions. Youth must have no safe, alternative housing, resources, or support networks to maintain or obtain permanent housing.

APPENDIX C – CAN REGIONAL DATA:

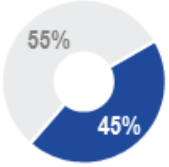
Northeast CAN

140
YOUTH

CAN Appointments

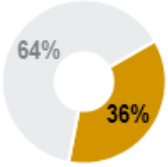
Unduplicated Youth CAN Appointments in FY17

YOUTH INDIVIDUALS
76 scheduled appts
Attended Not Attended



34 attended appts

YOUTH FAMILIES
22 scheduled appts
Attended Not Attended



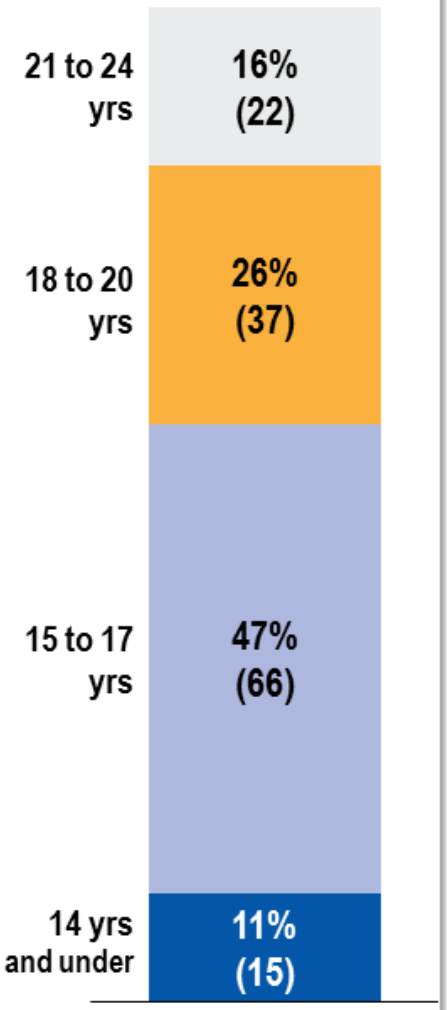
8 attended appts

OUTCOMES OF ATTENDED APPTS

7	Waitlist	0
5	Diverted	2
17	Enrolled	6
2	Not Appropriate	0
3	Refused Shelter	0

Youth Count by Age

Homeless and unstably housed youth by age.



Youth on BNL

Activity on the By Name List (BNL) for FY17

YOUTH INDIVIDUALS
Added to BNL
13

YOUTH FAMILIES
Added to BNL
6

OUTFLOW FROM BNL
(regardless of date added)

7	Housed	0
2	Unable to Contact	0
10	Other	2

Existing Youth-Specific Housing Resources

Under 18 Crisis Beds	18-24 Crisis Beds	Transitional Housing	Rapid Rehousing	Supportive Housing
0	0	0	0 *(Eligible for Start program)*	0

Greater Hartford CAN

1,258 YOUTH

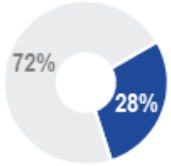
CAN Appointments

Unduplicated Youth CAN Appointments in FY17

YOUTH INDIVIDUALS

462 scheduled appts

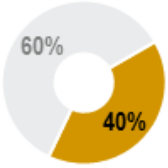
Attended · Not Attended



YOUTH FAMILIES

267 scheduled appts

Attended · Not Attended

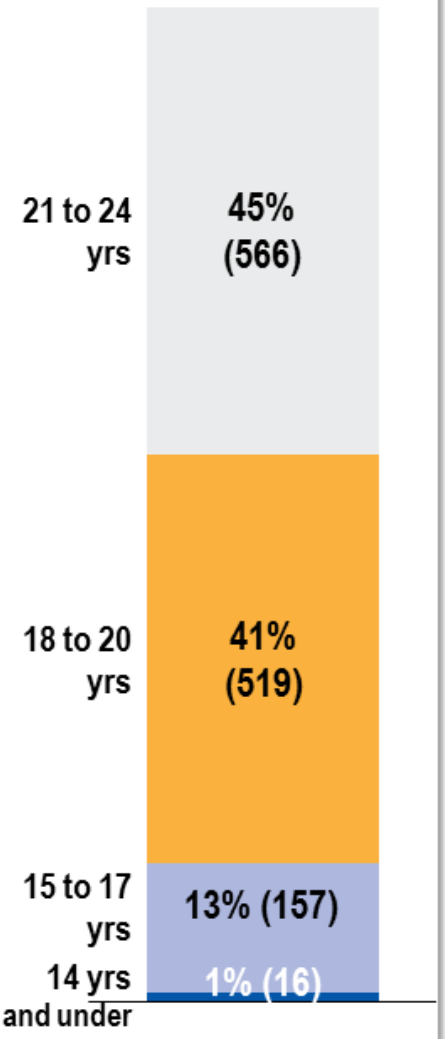


131 attended appts **OUTCOMES OF ATTENDED APPTS** **108** attended appts

74	Waitlist	73
51	Diverted	34
1	Enrolled	0
3	Not Appropriate	1
2	Refused Shelter	0

Youth Count by Age

Homeless and unstably housed youth by age.



Youth on BNL

Activity on the By Name List (BNL) for FY17

YOUTH INDIVIDUALS Added to BNL

45

YOUTH FAMILIES Added to BNL

30

OUTFLOW FROM BNL
(regardless of date added)

10	Housed	20
93	Unable to Contact	23
6	Other	0

Existing Youth-Specific Housing Resources

Under 18 Crisis Beds	18-24 Crisis Beds	Transitional Housing	Rapid Rehousing	Supportive Housing
4	14	0	~21 *(Start program)*	16

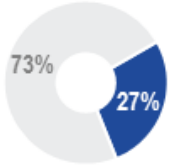
Waterbury/Litchfield CAN

363
YOUTH

CAN Appointments

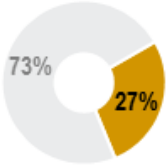
Unduplicated Youth CAN Appointments in FY17

YOUTH INDIVIDUALS
154 scheduled appts
Attended Not Attended



42 attended appts

YOUTH FAMILIES
59 scheduled appts
Attended Not Attended



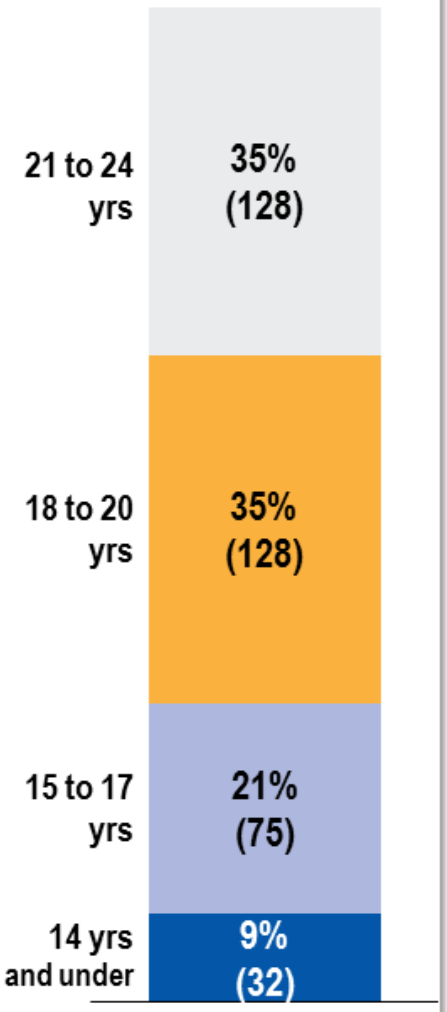
16 attended appts

OUTCOMES OF ATTENDED APPTS

21	Waitlist	1
0	Diverted	12
17	Enrolled	3
0	Not Appropriate	0
4	Refused Shelter	0

Youth Count by Age

Homeless and unstably housed youth by age.



Youth on BNL

Activity on the By Name List (BNL) for FY17

YOUTH INDIVIDUALS
Added to BNL
35

YOUTH FAMILIES
Added to BNL
7

OUTFLOW FROM BNL
(regardless of date added)

16	Housed	9
13	Unable to Contact	1
18	Other	9

Existing Youth-Specific Housing Resources

Under 18 Crisis Beds	18-24 Crisis Beds	Transitional Housing	Rapid Rehousing	Supportive Housing
0	0	0	~8 *(Start program)*	5

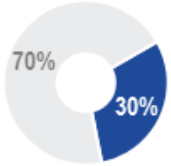
Central CAN

293
YOUTH

CAN Appointments

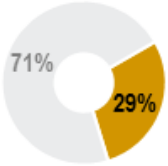
Unduplicated Youth CAN Appointments in FY17

YOUTH INDIVIDUALS
129 scheduled appts
Attended · Not Attended



39 attended appts

YOUTH FAMILIES
70 scheduled appts
Attended · Not Attended



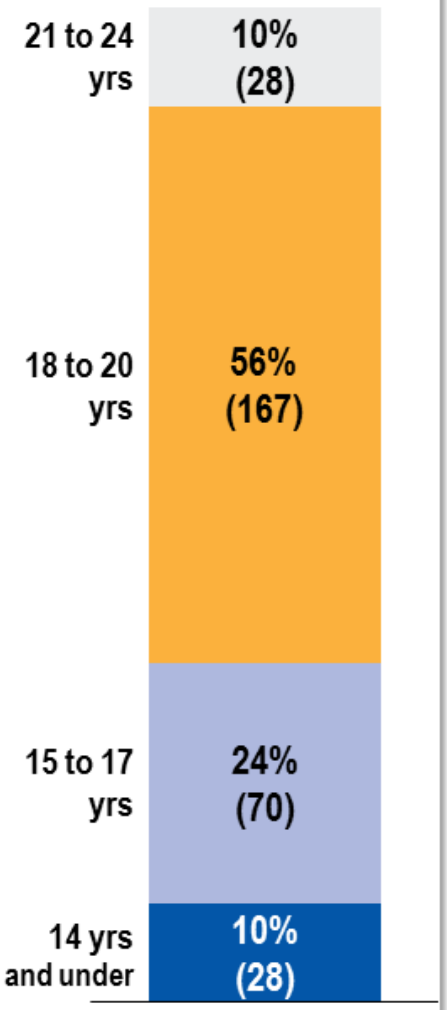
20 attended appts

OUTCOMES OF ATTENDED APPTS

29	Waitlist	8
5	Diverted	6
5	Enrolled	6
0	Not Appropriate	0
0	Refused Shelter	0

Youth Count by Age

Homeless and unstably housed youth by age.



Youth on BNL

Activity on the By Name List (BNL) for FY17

YOUTH INDIVIDUALS
Added to BNL
28

YOUTH FAMILIES
Added to BNL
8

OUTFLOW FROM BNL
(regardless of date added)

9	Housed	3
13	Unable to Contact	7
16	Other	13

Existing Youth-Specific Housing Resources

Under 18 Crisis Beds	18-24 Crisis Beds	Transitional Housing	Rapid Rehousing	Supportive Housing
0	0	5	~6 *(Start program)*	0

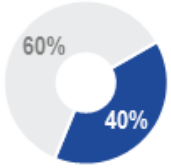
Southeast CAN

376
YOUTH

CAN Appointments

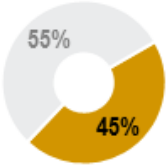
Unduplicated Youth CAN Appointments in FY17

YOUTH INDIVIDUALS
139 scheduled appts
Attended · Not Attended



55 attended appts

YOUTH FAMILIES
99 scheduled appts
Attended · Not Attended



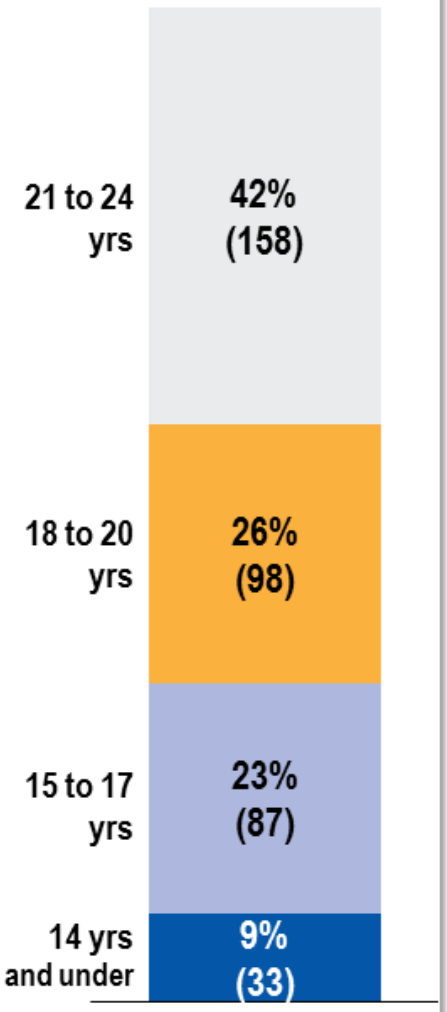
45 attended appts

OUTCOMES OF ATTENDED APPTS

13	Waitlist	1
12	Diverted	35
27	Enrolled	9
0	Not Appropriate	0
3	Refused Shelter	0

Youth Count by Age

Homeless and unstably housed youth by age.



Youth on BNL

Activity on the By Name List (BNL) for FY17

YOUTH INDIVIDUALS
Added to BNL
29

YOUTH FAMILIES
Added to BNL
12

OUTFLOW FROM BNL
(regardless of date added)

25	Housed	6
1	Unable to Contact	0
4	Other	0

Existing Youth-Specific Housing Resources

Under 18 Crisis Beds	18-24 Crisis Beds	Transitional Housing	Rapid Rehousing	Supportive Housing
0	10	24 *(YA parents with children)*	~3 *(Start program)*	2

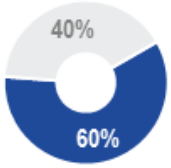
Meriden/Middlesex Wallingford CAN

225
YOUTH

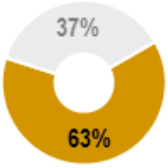
CAN Appointments

Unduplicated Youth CAN Appointments in FY17

YOUTH INDIVIDUALS
131 scheduled appts
Attended Not Attended



YOUTH FAMILIES
49 scheduled appts
Attended Not Attended

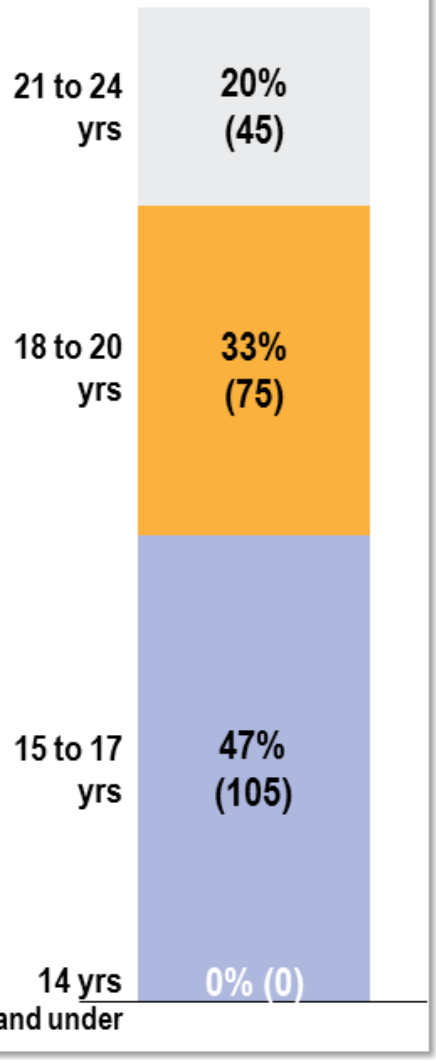


78 attended appts **OUTCOMES OF ATTENDED APPTS** **31** attended appts

64	Waitlist	25
3	Diverted	6
11	Enrolled	0
0	Not Appropriate	0
0	Refused Shelter	0

Youth Count by Age

Homeless and unstably housed youth by age.



Youth on BNL

Activity on the By Name List (BNL) for FY17

YOUTH INDIVIDUALS
Added to BNL
29

YOUTH FAMILIES
Added to BNL
7

OUTFLOW FROM BNL
(regardless of date added)

13	Housed	3
10	Unable to Contact	1
5	Other	0

Existing Youth-Specific Housing Resources

Under 18 Crisis Beds	18-24 Crisis Beds	Transitional Housing	Rapid Rehousing	Supportive Housing
0	0	6	~4 *(Start program)*	0

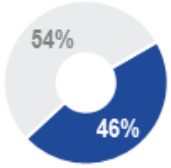
Fairfield County CAN

763
YOUTH

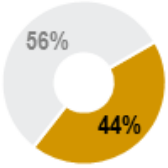
CAN Appointments

Unduplicated Youth CAN Appointments in FY17

YOUTH INDIVIDUALS
390 scheduled appts
Attended Not Attended



YOUTH FAMILIES
214 scheduled appts
Attended Not Attended

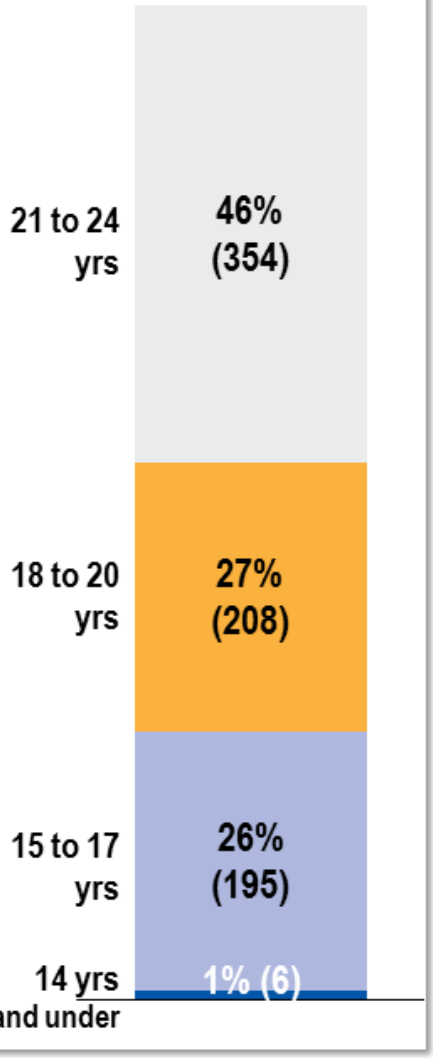


181 attended appts **OUTCOMES OF ATTENDED APPTS** **94** attended appts

140	Waitlist	73
21	Diverted	16
10	Enrolled	1
8	Not Appropriate	4
2	Refused Shelter	0

Youth Count by Age

Homeless and unstably housed youth by age.



Youth on BNL

Activity on the By Name List (BNL) for FY17

YOUTH INDIVIDUALS
Added to BNL
84

YOUTH FAMILIES
Added to BNL
39

OUTFLOW FROM BNL
(regardless of date added)

76	Housed	24
26	Unable to Contact	26
81	Other	33

Existing Youth-Specific Housing Resources

Under 18 Crisis Beds	18-24 Crisis Beds	Transitional Housing	Rapid Rehousing	Supportive Housing
16	20	0	~33 *(Start program)*	16

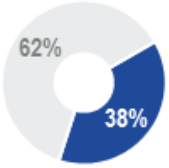
Greater New Haven CAN

769 YOUTH

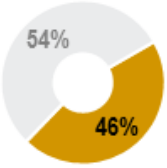
CAN Appointments

Unduplicated Youth CAN Appointments in FY17

YOUTH INDIVIDUALS
329 scheduled appts
Attended · Not Attended



YOUTH FAMILIES
259 scheduled appts
Attended · Not Attended

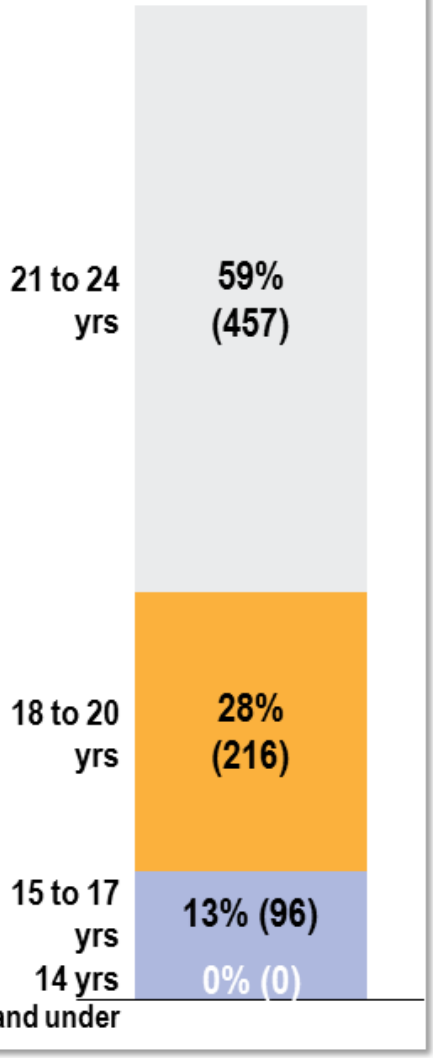


126 attended appts **OUTCOMES OF ATTENDED APPTS** **118** attended appts

58	Waitlist	70
19	Diverted	45
20	Enrolled	2
10	Not Appropriate	1
19	Refused Shelter	0

Youth Count by Age

Homeless and unstably housed youth by age.



Youth on BNL

Activity on the By Name List (BNL) for FY17

YOUTH INDIVIDUALS
Added to BNL
139

YOUTH FAMILIES
Added to BNL
31

OUTFLOW FROM BNL
(regardless of date added)

23	Housed	13
45	Unable to Contact	31
49	Other	16

Existing Youth-Specific Housing Resources

Under 18 Crisis Beds	18-24 Crisis Beds	Transitional Housing	Rapid Rehousing	Supportive Housing
4	6	10 *(for 16-24 year olds)*	4 and ~8 *(Start program)*	17

APPENDIX D – GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION STEPS:

GOAL A: IDENTIFY ALL UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Objectives and Action Steps	Subgroup Lead (s)	Responsible Partners	Estimated Deadline
A.1. Ensure each region is utilizing coordinated, comprehensive outreach, in-reach, multiple data sources, and other methods to identify and enumerate all unaccompanied youth.			
A. 1.1. Each CAN will have a coordinated outreach plan for youth. Guidance, including template, provided at YETI learning collaborative meeting and beyond by DOH & CCEH. Plan to include, but not limited to: ● **Identification of existing outreach resources (partially completed)** ● **Identify and address outreach limitations (such as cuts to mobile crisis units weekend and night hours) to ensure all geographic areas include weekly outreach and in-reach efforts at times when youth tend to need assistance the most.** ● **Creative solutions to expand outreach/in-reach efforts, such as utilizing college students, existing non-homeless mobile outreach, etc.**	YETI Collab; Coordinated Access	DOH, YETIs, local outreach teams, YAH, **CCEH**	Summer 2018

A.1.2. Put together training, webinar and educational materials for YYA and adult outreach providers on how to find and engage YYA experiencing homelessness (relying on existing informational resources and tips from local youth providers). ● **Connect with successful outreach programs nationwide, such as Larkin Street Youth Services, to help inform training materials.** ● **Ensure that materials are explicitly inclusive of LGBTQ YYA.**	YETI Collab and Coordinated Access Subgroup	**CCEH**, DMHAS, True Colors	Winter (January 2018)
A.1.3. Raise awareness of 211 for YYA through social media. ● **211 has created an Instagram account and is setting up a Tumblr account as recommended by YAH.**	Coordinated Access in partnership with the Youth Collaboration Subgroup and YETI Collab	**United Way, YAH**, YYA Workgroup	Summer 2018
A.1.4. Discuss strategies, such as targeted service approaches and review of data, for "dual status" or "crossover youth" (i.e. JJ and CW involvement) given their risk of future housing instability.	Systems Subgroup	**PSC with CCA**, DCF, CSSD	Spring 2018
A. 2. Ensure all regions are conducting outreach and in-reach on a regular basis, including at least weekly outreach to known locations or other areas where youth who are unsheltered may be located, and at least weekly in-reach to drop-in centers, shelters, and other homeless assistance programs. Outreach and in-reach strategies should include proactively looking for youth that are newly experiencing homelessness. All elements below to be included in outreach plan.			
A.2.1. Update existing CAN maps of common local hotspots at least annually as identified by youth providers, youth who formerly experienced homelessness, police, etc. Ideally done in coordination with the 2018 Youth Count and future Youth Counts.	YETI Collab	**CCEH,** Youth Count leads, youth with lived experience,	December 2017 and annually (ongoing)

A.2.2. Assign outreach coverage for common local hotspots to assure consistent and comprehensive coverage.	YETI Collab	YETIs in partnership with PATH, HOT, RHY, McK-V, local outreach **CCEH**.	Summer 2018 to be updated at least annually
A.2.3. Develop efficient strategies to ensure that all unaccompanied young people being served in the homeless service sector, particularly those in adult shelters, are connected with youth homeless services locally (through shelter staff and youth navigators if possible).	YETI Collab	Navigators, shelter staff, local outreach, PATH, RHY, facilitated by **CCEH** and DMHAS	Summer 2018
A.2.4. Explore automatic HMIS email outreach alerts to local outreach teams for any youth entering the system through 211, with accompanying protocol to contact prior to appointment to ensure transportation and assistance as needed.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**	Fall 2018
A.2.5. Increase statewide coordinated outreach for LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness, unstable housing, or at risk of homelessness. Work through partnerships with True Colors CT, schools, including Gay-Straight Alliance groups, child welfare, youth providers, and young people to improve awareness of resources and enhance prevention efforts and early intervention strategies.	Coordinated Access in partnership with the Systems Subgroup and the YETI Collab	**CCEH,** True Colors, YAH	Spring 2018
A.3. Create outreach strategies tailored to the unique needs of particularly vulnerable youth, including pregnant and parenting youth and their families, LGBTQ youth, youth under the age of 18 (minors), youth involved in juvenile justice and foster care systems, and victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation			
A.3.1. Include local outreach strategies to special populations in CAN outreach plans. • **Utilize YAH communications plan that includes specified outreach to vulnerable populations - raising awareness of where to seek assistance.**	Coordinated Access in partnership with System Changes, FWC Workgroup and YETI Collab	**CCEH**, YETIs, DMHAS, PSC, YAH, CCA in partnership with the following: (In I&R subgroup)	YYA and Subgroups compile strategies by Spring 2018.

		Minors (including DCF youth) - DCF, Schools, Juvenile Justice LGBTQ - True Colors, local LGBTQ service providers (i.e. Triangle Community Center), Trafficked Youth - CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence, DCF HART program, Love 146 Juvenile Justice - PSC, CCA, Tow Institute on Juvenile Justice, DCF F.R.E.E. program YETIs and their partners to determine how to implement locally and to expand upon.	YETIs' plan by Summer 2018
A.3.2. Coordinate efforts with the RH Health and Housing Workgroup and RH Families with Children Workgroup to build on existing assessments and emerging national best practice to develop standardized assessments of housing instability for external systems including child welfare, healthcare, and behavioral health sectors.	Systems Subgroup in partnership with FwC and Health and Housing WGs	CSH, CCEH, **PSC**, DCF, CSDE, RH	Fall 2018

A.3.3. Explore opportunities for data sharing with other mainstream systems (including child welfare, criminal justice, healthcare, behavioral health) to support identification and assessment of high-need youth and young adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness and data-driven targeting for housing interventions.	Systems Subgroup	CSH, CCEH, **PSC**, DMHAS, DCF, DOH, DOC, DSS	Winter 2017/2018
A.3.4. Promote use of the School Engagement Packet in more schools and across other mainstream systems (ie: child welfare, juvenile justice, etc.). ● **Create method to track usage, incorporate information on Youth Count participation, and suggested protocols for improving identification methods in schools (and other systems).**	YETI Collaborative and Coordinated Access	**CCEH** in partnership with CSDE, YYA Workgroup, YETIs, DOH, CCA and YAH, HHS WG, and FWC WG	ongoing with concerted effort for school participation in November 2017, 2018, 2019, and beyond (Hunger and Homelessness Week
A.3.5. Incorporate outreach, coordinated entry, and housing solutions that address the unique needs of trafficked youth and young adults. ● **Explore housing solutions for trafficking victims with child welfare.**	Coordinated Access and Systems Subgroup	**CCEH** for outreach/CE and pilot in DCF Region **CCA w PSC** for child welfare	Winter 2018/2019
A.3.6. Explore existing/potential protocols for schools to check-in with students who show signs of potential homelessness (erratic attendance and tardiness, wearing same clothes for multiple days, etc.) for refinement. ● **Create checklist for schools to assist in guiding them in best practices.** ● **Share best practices in school outreach and responses as potential models for schools (such as food pantry, opening up early to allow youth to shower, etc.)**	Coordinated Access and/Education and Employment Subgroup	CSDE, **CCEH**, and YETIs	Fall 2018
A.3.7. Develop strategy for sharing best practices in school outreach and responses as potential models for schools (such as food pantry, opening up early to allow youth to shower, etc.)	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**/CSDE in partnership with YYA Workgroup	Winter 2018

A.3.8. Work with CSDE, coordinating efforts with the FWC WG, to compile and disseminate to schools toolkit on best practices in identifying students experiencing housing instability.	Coordinated Access and YETI Collaborative, Family Workgroup	**CCEH**/CSDE in partnership with YYA	Fall 2018
A.3.9. Coordinate outreach strategies for young adult families with the FWC WG.	Coordinated Access with FWC WG	**CCEH**, CCA	Ongoing
A.3.10. Continue to educate youth stakeholders on DCF eligibility and services.	Systems Subgroup in partnership with YETI Collab.	**CCEH,** DCF	Ongoing
A.3.11. Ensure that each YETI has a regional DCF representative participating in meetings.	YETI Collab	**CCEH**	Summer 2018
A.3.12. Collaborate with DCF, the Trafficking in Persons Council and others to provide training on the signs and services for sex trafficking survivors to homeless youth providers. • **CCEH hosted a preliminary training in 2016 on human trafficking and homeless and unstably housed youth.**	Coordinated Access	**CCEH,** DCF, Love 146, CCADV, Salvation Army	Fall 2018
A.3.13. Educate regional YETIs, CAN intake staff, and homeless providers about handling active cases and referrals for additional support from anti-trafficking providers when appropriate.	YETI Collab and Coordinated Access	**CCEH,** CCADV, YETIs, DCF, YAH	Fall 2018
A.4. Ensure all providers and resource staff are connected to coordinated entry.			
A.4.1. Identify homeless youth service providers that are not connected to coordinated entry (CE) process to work with them toward integration into the process. (including Start program and Interagency on Supportive Housing youth units)	Coordinated Access in partnership with the YETI Collab	YETIs/CANs, CCEH, **DOH**	Full identification by Spring 2018

A.4.2. Develop resources to educate providers that are not engaged with CE and for adult providers unfamiliar with youth specific CE.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH,** YETIs, DMHAS	Fall 2017
A.4.3. Continue to encourage providers across CT to place 211 logo and link on website homepage.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**,YETIs	ongoing
A.4.4. Develop regional capacity to identify, assess the needs and outreach to minors and reduce barriers for minors to access services. • **Connect minors with individualized, client-centered, trauma-informed, personalized and advocacy services.**	YETI Collab in partnership with Coordinated Access	**CCEH,** RHY providers, YETIs	Fall 2018
A.4.5. Improve integration of HHS funded youth transitional housing into coordinated entry process	Coordinated Access	**DOH**, CCEH, HHS providers	Summer 2018
A.5. Foster participation of key partners in identifying YYA experiencing homelessness.			
A.5.1. Continue to encourage more schools and other key partners to participate in 2018 Youth Count and future Youth Counts.	YETI Collab in partnership with the Education and Employment Subgroup	**CCEH**, YETIs, CSDE	ongoing with concerted launch in Nov 2017 and 2018 Youth Count in January 2018
A.5.2. Expand upon current checklist of how schools can participate in the effort - disseminate through same channels.	Education and Employment Subgroup	**CCEH**, YETIs, CSDE	ongoing with concerted launch in Nov 2017 and 2018 Youth Count in January 2018
A.5.3. Empower YETIs (and potentially student groups through the YETIs) to advocate for increased involvement from local schools by providing them with local data, checklist on how schools can more proactively participate in the effort, and other informational materials.	YETI Collab	CSDE,**CCEH**,PSC,YETIs, YAH	Project start fall 2017, ongoing. Local RESC meetings scheduled for late 2017/early 2018.

A.5.4. Develop data to understand who is exiting the child welfare and juvenile justice systems and experiencing homelessness (identifying high risk factors) and be able to address those gaps.	Systems Subgroup	**PSC,** DCF, CSSD	Spring 2018
A.5.5. Strengthen school identification, engagement, and service delivery through school-community partnerships, training, and youth leadership.	Coordinated Access, YETI Collab in partnership with Education and Employment	**CCEH,** CSDE, YETIs, CCA	Ongoing
A.5.6. Create strategies to ensure school faculty is trained on identifying youth experiencing housing instability	Education and Employment	**CCA,** SDE	Spring 2019
A.6. Ensure community has literally identified every unaccompanied youth who is unsheltered or sheltered in homeless program			
A.6.1. Review unsheltered Youth Counts to gauge effectiveness of outreach and assist with identifying areas of need.	Core Vision Team & YYA Workgroup	DMHAS, **CCEH**, YETIs, DOH, PSC	March 30, 2018
A.6.2. Create outreach list in addition to BNL to follow-up with YYA who do not attend initial CAN assessment appointment.	Coordinated Access	DOH, **CCEH**, CAN Leaders, YETIs	Spring 2018
A.6.3. Continue to research parental consent requirement for putting minors on by-name list	Core Vision Team	**CCA**	Summer 2018
A.7. Statewide and regionally coordinate a comprehensive set of strategies, spanning schools, the child welfare system, the justice system, drop-in centers, hotlines and 2-1-1, and other youth-serving agencies and programs to identify unaccompanied youth who are doubled up or couch surfing and considered to be experiencing homelessness under any federal definition.			
A.7.1. Building on already-existing service infrastructure (such as youth service bureaus, DMHAS access centers), ensure all CAN regions have (LGBTQ inclusive) drop-in center,	Coordinated Access in partnership with	**CCEH,** DMHAS, YSBs, YETIs, YAH	Summer 2018

coordinated access site, or other resource for YYA with crisis response capacity for youth who are experiencing homelessness under any federal definition.	YETI Collaborative		
A.7.2. Establish transparent and standardized guidelines for identifying and serving unaccompanied youth who are doubled up or couchsurfing with child welfare, schools, faith-based organizations, and the criminal justice sector. ● **Partner with these sectors to build capacity for coordinated responsiveness for unaccompanied youth who are doubled up or couch-surfing.**	Systems Subgroup in partnership with the Coordinated Access and FWC WG	Child Welfare - DOH/DCF, **CCA** Criminal Justice - PSC/**CCEH** for DOC and CSSD, JJ-**PSC**/CCA Schools - CSDE/**CCEH**/YYA/CCA FWC WG- to ensure consistency	Fall 2018
A.7.3. Research, develop, and implement improved access to crisis response system for all youth in rural areas. ● **Work with the northern, more suburban/rural regions of the state to determine whether a mobile drop-in center is needed/feasible similar to the Synergy Project in Pennsylvania. Staff from the Synergy Project have already shared their insight into building such a program with us.**	Coordinated Access	**DOH**	Fall 2018
A.7.4 Explore potential for pop-up, drop-in centers in areas where continuous drop-in isn't feasible. (Similar to the concept used by the youth of Advocates for Richmond Youth.)	Coordinated Access & YETI Collaborative	**DOH, YAH**, PSC	Summer 2018
A.7.5. Build upon and refine our base of research and data to fully understand the scope and nature of juvenile justice and homelessness involvement to effectively target interventions.	Systems	**PSC**	Spring 2019

A.8. Use HMIS as main data system to track youth effort and determine how to comply with confidentiality requirements for minors and domestic violence clients while implementing a coordinated system.			
A.8.1. Determine need for additional data fields for YYA not currently captured in HMIS. (also determine what fields YHDP programs track)	Core Vision Team and YHDP Team	**CCEH**	Winter 2017/ 2018
A.8.2. Investigate expanded use of/entry of data into HMIS to providers outside of homeless system.	Core Vision Team	**CCEH**	January 2018
A.8.3. Refine data dashboards to track relevant fields to measure success toward ending youth homelessness.	Core Vision Team a YHDP Team	**CCEH/DOH**	Spring 2018
A.8.4 Continue participation in national efforts to align data and dashboards to enhance statewide learning (ie: A Way Home America Data Dashboard, MANY Data Dashboard). ● **Explore regionalization of data dashboards with AWHA.**	Core Vision Team	**CCEH/DOH**	ongoing/Fall 2017
A.8.5. Train and ensure all coordinated entry staff, homeless service/youth providers follow CT's CE DV protocol for young people who are victims of domestic violence or trafficking.	YETI Collaborative	**CCEH,** CCADV, DOH	January 2018
A.8.6. Ensure providers are using procedure to comply with confidentiality of minors.	Core Vision Team in partnership with YETI Collab	**CCEH**	Fall 2018
A.8.7. Upgrade HMIS to collect information on sexual orientation of youth to more accurately track through data the number of LGBTQ youth in our homeless response system and their connection to services.	Core Vision Team	**DOH**	Winter/Spring 2018

A.9. Ensure all providers using HMIS or other data systems are sharing data for coordinated list. Ensure collecting data on all youth they encounter.			
A.9.1. Include data entry elements into standards of practice for YYA providers.	Core Vision Team in partnership with DEN	**PSC**	Spring 2018
A.9.2. Identify any providers that are not currently entering data into HMIS and encourage them to do so. If not entering into HMIS, determine alternates for data sharing	YETI Collab w/ DEN	**CCEH**	Summer 2018
A.9.3. Explore data matching and data integration with school districts, including possibility of schools entering data into HMIS - similar to Waco pilot.	Core Vision - with Coordinated Access w/ Education/Employment	**PSC**-DEN	Spring 2019
A.10. Maintain current active list of youth experiencing homelessness			
A.10.1. Continue to research into feasibility of By-Name List (BNL) for minors, including consent issues and integrating data sources outside HMIS. • **Establish system for local sharing between providers and other relevant parties to enable them to case coordinate for minors experiencing homelessness.**	Systems Subgroup in partnership with the Coordinated Access & Core Vision	**CCA**	Summer 2018
A.10.2. Maintain young adults BNL in current adult BNL, with implementation of review protocol to ensure list is active and updated regularly.	Coordinated Access in partnership with the YETI Collab	**CCEH/DOH,** YETIs/CANs	Ongoing
A.11. Clarify written procedures for BNL and housing matching meetings that protect confidentiality.			

A.11.1. Review current BNL/housing matching procedures to ensure confidentiality. • **Determine how best to provide case conferencing for minors while maintaining appropriate confidentiality.**	Core Vision & Coordinated Access	**CCEH**	Summer 2018
A.12. Ensure have updated numbers on youth experiencing homelessness.			
A.12.1. Develop system for reflecting current number of minors experiencing homelessness in each CAN region so providers/stakeholders can case coordinate around each youth as a community (a By-Name list equivalent for minors within the local YETI).	Core Vision w/ YETI Collab; Coordinated Access	**CCA**-develop method for releases **Coordinated Access** - develop protocol for YETIs CSDE, DCF, DOH, **PSC** to facilitate data sharing between agencies	Fall 2018
A.12.2. Continue to work with YYA providers to enhance data quality, ensuring timely and accurate data.	Core Vision Team w/ DEN	**DOH**	Ongoing
A.12.3. Work with CSDE to develop standardized method of determining and updating "homelessness status" throughout the school year.	Coordinated Access in partnership with Education and Employment Subgroup	CSDE, DOH, **CCEH,** YYA	Summer 2018

A.12.3. Develop and publish monthly dashboards (beyond the new BNL report).	Core Vision and YHDP Team	**CCEH/DOH**	Spring 2018
A.12.4. Obtain data on young adults discharged or at risk of discharges to homelessness in DOC and CSSD.	Criminal Justice Taskforce	**CCEH**	Spring 2018

GOAL B: USE SHELTER DIVERSION STRATEGIES WHENEVER POSSIBLE AND PROVIDE IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO LOW-BARRIER SHELTER TO ANY YOUTH WHO NEEDS AND WANTS IT

Objectives and Action Steps	Subgroup Lead (s)	Responsible Partners	Estimated Deadline
B.1. Implement comprehensive prevention and diversion strategies to help youth experiencing homelessness avoid shelter.			
B.1.1. Continue to utilize CAN youth intake staff for diversion and supplement with youth navigators funded through YHDP. Diversion conversation at every CAN intake appointment.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**, Local CAN intake staff, YHDP Team	ongoing, Navigators to potentially onboard in 2018

B.1.2. Utilize YHDP funding to create CT BOS area diversion fund for youth. ● **Work with FFC YETI to determine their need for additional funding and how to secure it.**	YHDP Grant Implementation Team	**DOH**	Fall 2017-Summer 2018
B.1.3. Train all youth Coordinated Entry staff, youth navigators, and front end contacts, including 211, to understand, practice, and implement trauma-informed, strength-based, youth-specific shelter diversion.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**	January-March 2018
B.1.4. Expand system capacity to deliver shelter diversion and other types of housing assistance through training and sharing best practices with school system, child welfare, DOC, CSSD, and JJ.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**	Spring-Fall 2018
B.1.5. Ensure that prevention strategies, crisis response system, and housing interventions incorporate best practices for LGBTQ subpopulation, including linkages to support resources.	Coordinated Access and YHDP Grant Management Team	**CCEH,** YAH, True Colors	Summer 2018
B.1.6. Coordinate existing youth-serving agencies to create seamless network of care in each CAN region, including RHY providers, child welfare, homeless services, schools, and youth-serving organizations.	Coordinated Access and YETI Collab in partnership with Systems	**CCEH**	Fall 2018
B.2. Ensure all regions are working to connect or reunify youth with family and/or other natural supports to stay or return home when appropriate.			
B.2.1 Continue implementation of STRIVE family mediation as part of CAN/DCF services on a small scale, potentially expanding. ● **Providers trained in STRIVE in each CAN are working to serve 5 families each to be qualified to train others. Train new Youth Navigators in STRIVE**	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**, DCF, YETI/CANs, Strive Mediators, YHDP Team	Fall 2017-Summer 2018

B.2.2. Work with schools to train school counselors how to utilize STRIVE family mediation model.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**, CSDE	Spring 2018
B.2.3. Research into scope of Medicaid coverage for family mediation to ensure families are connected to these resources.	Health and Housing Workgroup	**CCEH**, PSC, CSH, HHS WG, Youth Providers, FWC WG	January 2018
B.2.4. Train juvenile justice providers on educational legal rights of students experiencing homelessness to ensure students remain in school and receive all necessary supports.	Education and Employment Subgroup & Systems Subgroup	**CCA**	Spring 2019
B.2.5. Ensure family coordinated access system incorporates family reunification/mediation for young parents when safe and appropriate.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**	Winter 2019/2020
B.2.6. Continue training and technical assistance with RHY providers and other local partners serving minors, including child welfare case workers and school staff. Given that many youth under 18 years old are leaving their homes due to family conflict, we are working to expand family mediation services within each CAN.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**, DCF	ongoing
B.2.7. Identify alternatives to shelter, such as Job Corps, that can be a resource for DOC and CSSD clients.	Criminal Justice Taskforce	**CCEH**	Summer 2018
B.3. Keep key stakeholders updated on prevention and diversion strategies and protocols for youth.			
B.3.1. The Coordinated Access subgroup will keep key stakeholders updated through the YYA workgroup and YETI and CAN leadership meetings, among other communications	Coordinated Access; Systems for system involved youth	**DOH/CCEH**	Ongoing

B.4. Establish and sustain capacity to immediately provide youth who are unsheltered, fleeing an unsafe situation or are experiencing a housing crisis with access to developmentally appropriate temporary housing and emergency assistance.			
B.4.1. Expand crisis bed options for YA with YHDP funding.	YHDP Grant Implementation	**DOH**	Summer 2018
B.4.2.Review DOH's Section 8 and RAP visitor policies to explore lowering barrier for minors to temporary stay with non-guardian with parental consent. ● **Consider policies that may expand visitor length of stay for YYA leaving institutional care.** ● **Engage PHAs in this work.**	Systems Subgroup	**DOH,** PSC	Summer 2018
B.4.3. Continue DOH shelter capital funding opportunity, and encourage applications, to make physical changes to youth specific shelter, adult shelters to better serve young adults and transgendered individuals.	YETI Collab	**DOH**	Ongoing
B.4.4. Include extra points in the DOH shelter rebid for shelters that accommodate young adults through policies, programming, safety protocols, and/or physical structure, including shelter that applied for the DOH shelter capital improvement funding to modify their space to better serve youth by providing privacy in the bed, shower and bathroom areas, secure storage, etc.	Core Vision Team	**DOH**	2018
B.4.5. Develop evaluation/monitoring/feedback system to gauge youth experience in DOH funded adult shelters.	Coordinated Access	**DOH**, YAH	Fall 2018
B.4.6. Provide TA/assistance to adult shelter providers to address need for youth-friendly practices (ie: staffing schedules, programming, procedures) and remind providers of the "Reimagining Shelter Space Webinar."	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**, DOH	Fall 2018 Develop training Winter 2018 Training begins

B.4.7. Work with CANs to ensure family shelters within their region are keeping families intact, including adolescent boys with their parents.	FWC WG in partnership with YYA WG	CCA, **DOH**, CCEH, 211	Ongoing
B.4.8. Use CDBG-Small Cities funding to create additional crisis housing for young adults (create funding priority, streamlined application, ranking materials, advertise at bidders conference and elsewhere)	Core Vision Team	**DOH**	Winter 2017/2018
B.4.9. Advocate for flexibility within the RHY Basic Center program - extending the federal 21-day RHY shelter limits when other housing options are unavailable.	YYA WG	**PSC, CCA**	2018-2019
B.4.10. Explore additional creative solutions and potential funding (i.e. HUD TH-RHH model) to fill the identified gaps in crisis housing for youth and young adults	Core Vision Team w/ Funders Collab	**DOH**, Melville	Fall 2018
B.4.11. Continue to monitor the use of the under 18 protocol to refer minors to services.	Coordinated Access	211, CAN/YETIs, RHY providers, DCF, **CCEH**	Ongoing
B.4.12.Create an inventory of existing crisis housing resources dedicated to families in each region to better coordinate these resources and identify the gaps (utilize SWAP). Discuss family shelter prioritization protocol.	FWC Workgroup in partnership with the YYA Workgroup	**DOH** (inventory) **CCEH** (prioritization)	Summer 2018
B.4.13. Advocate for expanding RHY Basic Center programs to allow youth 18 and over to access services.	Core Vision Team	**PSC**, CCA	Fall 2018
B.4.14. Work with DCF and other partners to create crisis housing options for minors in CANs without RHY beds.	Coordinated Access w/ Systems	**CCEH**	February 2018
B.4.15. Create young adult shelter protocol to prioritize beds for most in need.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**	April 2018
B.4.16. Determine how to more accurately track crisis housing needs by CAN region.	Coordinated Access w/ YETI Collab	**CCEH with DOH**	Summer 2018

B.4.17. Review and discuss adult shelter protocol (prioritization)	Coordinated Access w/ CAN Leadership	**CCEH,** CANs, YETIs, DOH	Spring 2018
B.5. Ensure low-barrier access to shelter options.			
B.5.1. Review current intake policies of existing YYA crisis housing programs for suggested refinements. ● **Train YYA shelter and continue to train adult shelter providers in harm-reduction and low-barrier protocols.**	Core Vision Team in partnership with the Coordinated Access	DOH, **CCEH**	Fall 2018
B.5.2. Identify and utilize a tool (ie: Housing First Assessment Tool) to help providers implement and promote Housing First practices and policies in accessing shelter.	Coordinated Access in partnership with the Core Vision Team	DOH, **CCEH**	Spring 2018 and then ongoing
B.6. Confirm that youth crisis response system reflects a positive youth development framework and a trauma-informed approach to service delivery.			
B.6.1. Ensure staff at all YYA access points are trained in PYD and TIC	Coordinated Access	DOH, **CCEH,** DMHAS	Spring 2018
B.6.2. Continue to broadly offer trainings on TIC and PYD through in-person and online training	Coordinated Access	**CCEH,** DMHAS	ongoing
B.6.3. Review current CE process to confirm it is consistent with PYD and TIC practices and view any changes to the process through a PYD and TIC lens	Coordinated Access	**CCEH,** YETIs, YAH	Begin Fall 2018

B.6.4. Integrate consistent feedback mechanism in each CAN/YETI to help identify gaps in service and needs within communities in order to communicate and advocate for additional resources, changes in policy, and/or changes in local, regional, or state practices.	Coordinated Access in partnership with Core Vision Team	**CCEH,** YETIs	Fall 2019

GOAL C: USE COORDINATED ENTRY PROCESSES TO LINK ALL YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS TO HOUSING AND SERVICES THAT ARE TAILORED TO THEIR NEEDS

Objectives and Action Steps	Subgroup Lead (s)	Responsible Partners	Estimated Deadline
C.1. Implement coordinated entry for youth that operates in close coordination with mainstream system.			
C.1.1. Finalize and pilot Young Adult protocol for 18-24 year olds through 211 and initial screening for access to mainstream systems.	Coordinated Access, Retooling	**CCEH,** Young Adult Sites	Winter 2017-18
C.1.2. Develop a coordinate entry protocol for minors in regions that lack a RHY provider.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH,** DOH, DCF, CSDE, YAH	Ongoing

C.1.3. Work with partners to create streamlined/expedited access to mainstream systems for youth experiencing homelessness.	Coordinated Access in partnership with Systems Group	**CCEH**, DCF, DMHAS, DSS, DDS, DOH, YETIs	Fall 2018
C.1.4. Utilize YAH research recommendations to ensure 211 services are developmentally appropriate for youth.	Coordinated Access	211, **YAH**	Fall 2018
C.1.5. In testing phase of using chat on YYA 211 webpage, considering expanding to texting as well as potentially personalizing with staff pictures/details consistent with YAH research recommendations.	Coordinated Access	211, **YAH**	Winter 2018
C.1.6. A minimal percentage of young adults experiencing homelessness in CT are Veterans. Continue to assess and serve them through Veteran system, but review whether additional protocols are necessary to ensure they are connected to any other appropriate services.	Veterans Workgroup in partnership with the Coordinated Access	**DOH**, VA	Spring 2018
C.1.7. Increase safety measures at first access point as well as developing and supporting efforts to increase awareness of the specific vulnerabilities and increased risk factors at the front door to housing resources, specifically, through refining protocols for 211 call specialists, young adult coordinated entry sites, drop-in centers, and other first contact entities.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**	Spring 2018
C.2. Use assessment tools that are adapted for youth and appropriate for their circumstances.			
C.2.1. Continue to promote and train providers on the use of the Next Step Tool.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**, DOH	Quarterly
C.2.2. Monitor and ensure NST is universally being used as the common assessment tool for YA singles	Coordinated Access	DOH, **CCEH**	Ongoing

C.2.3. Explore development and/or use of more comprehensive assessment tool, such as the Youth SPDAT. • **Identify key youth-specific criteria for dynamic prioritization of resources to highest-need youth.**	Coordinated Access	DOH, **CCEH**	Spring 2018
C.3. Streamline access and referrals to a range of tailored housing and services solutions aligned with individual needs and strengths, and driven by youth choice.			
C.3.1. Launch piloted Young Adult protocol statewide.	Coordinated Access w/ YETI Collab	**CCEH,** YETIs/CANs	Spring 2018
C.3.2. Work with partners to expedite admissions review and intakes for youth experiencing homelessness with relevant agencies	Systems Subgroup and Coordinated Access	**PSC,** CCA, DCF, DMHAS, DDS, DSS	Fall 2018
C.3.3. Create youth-specific criteria to dynamically prioritize available resources to be offered to youth and young adults with highest needs - creating new housing prioritization standards that follow a progressive engagement approach	Coordinated Access w/ CAN Leadership	CSH, PSC, **CCEH**, **DOH**	Spring 2018
C.3.4. Develop method for youth navigators/CAN staff to track how quickly and how well youth are linked to support services, including education, healthcare,etc.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**, DOH	Spring 2018
C.4. Ensure coordinated entry processes, housing option and services are trauma-informed, age and developmentally appropriate, and culturally and linguistically responsive for youth.			
C.4.1. Ensure YETI's have youth involvement with ability to give input into CE processes/practices. • **Create regional Youth Advisory Boards in each CAN.**	YETI Collab with Youth	**CCEH**, **YAH** YETI leads, schools	Ongoing, January 2018

	Collaboration Subgroup		
C.4.2. Train coordinated entry staff, youth providers, and youth navigators on trauma-informed practices, cultural competence, and harm reduction.	Coordinated Access w/ YHDP grant implementation team	**CCEH**, DMHAS, CSH, DOH	Ongoing, new staff fully trained by Fall 2018
C.4.3.Refining youth and young adult protocol, including review of 211 initial screening questions for possible additions and consider youth specific training for call specialists.	Coordinated Access	211, I&R Subgroup, YAH, **CCEH**	Spring 2018
C.5. Establish processes and partnerships in place to address the needs of subpopulations of youth experiencing homelessness that are particularly vulnerable			
C.5.1. Review coordinated entry for families to determine what adjustments need to be made for YYA headed families (pregnant/parenting youth).	FWC Workgroup in partnership with the YYA Workgroup	**DOH/CCEH** w/FWC WG	January 2018
C.5.2. Conduct Youth Count and utilize results on an annual basis to determine need for specialized services for subpopulations.	Core Vision Team	**CCEH,** YETI Collab, DOH	Ongoing
C.5.3. Ensure all CE forms are affirming and appropriate for LGBTQ YYA.	Coordinated Access	I&R, YAH, 211, **CCEH**, True Colors	January 2018

C.5.5. Further identify and address geographic gaps in emergency services for minors.	Coordinated Access in partnership with the Systems Subgroup	RHY providers, YYA, DOH, **CCEH**, DCF	Ongoing, focus on CANs with no RHY providers - Fall 2017-Spring 2018
C.5.6. Implement By-Name-List for minors.	Core Vision Team, YETI Collab	**CCA**-establish process **CCEH-implement**, DOH, YETIs	Fall 2018 for process Spring 2019 for implementation
C.5.8 Continue to work with state agencies to encourage earlier identification and assistance for housing placement, aftercare support, and policies to ensure measures in place to prevent youth discharges to homelessness.	Systems Subgroup	DOH, YYA, **PSC**, CCEH, CCA	Fall 2017 and ongoing
C.5.9. Increase coordination between juvenile justice providers and the homeless system's CANs through YETI membership. Ensure other key stakeholder such as regional DCF staff are each YETI	YETI Collab and Systems Subgroup	**CCEH**	Ongoing
C.6. Ensure all regional coordinated entry processes for youth provide fair and equitable access to housing options and services, reflecting a positive youth development framework.			
C.6.1. Continue to review housing placement/exit protocols as system evolves for possible shifts in prioritization.	Core Vision Team in partnership with the Youth Collaboration Subgroup	YYA, **DOH**, YAH, **CCEH**	Ongoing

C.6.2. Implement review process to assure that coordinated entry and housing placement is equitable regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, gender orientation, or sexual preference.	Core Vision w/ Coordinated Access	**CCEH**	Begin quarterly review in Spring 2018
C.6.3. Ensure coordinated entry staff are trained in positive youth development and cultural competence to assure all youth have choice and equitable access to housing resources.	Coordinated Access w/ YHDP Team	**CCEH**, DMHAS, CSH, DOH	Ongoing, All CE staff trained by Fall 2018
C.6.4. Train, monitor, and enforce best practices. • **Expand training for shelter providers, rapid-housing case managers, and other homeless service agencies to include topics such as Fair Housing and "Safe Shelter for Transgender Youth" and "LGBTQ Cultural Competency."**	YETI Collab	**CCEH**, DOH	Ongoing
C.7. Sustain an adequate supply of housing and services programs that use screening and selection processes that affirm the acceptance of youth regardless of their sobriety or use of substances, completion of treatment, and participation in services.			
C.7.1. Continue to promote housing first and voluntary services among existing providers and state agencies	Systems Subgroup	YYA, **PSC**, DOH, CCEH, CCA	Ongoing, with training in Housing First for youth agencies by March 2018
C.7.2. Ensure state funded and YHDP homeless YYA providers follow housing first/voluntary services principles.	YHDP Grant Implementation Team and DOH	**DOH**, CT-BOS	Ongoing, with monitoring in Housing First for youth agencies by January 2019
C.7.3 Utilize a tool (ie: Housing First Assessment Tool) to promote Housing First policies and practices in access to housing.	Coordinated Access in partnership with	DOH, **CCEH**	Ongoing, with universal use of tool in Housing First for youth

	the Core Vision Team		agencies by January 2019
C.7.4. Work with CoCs, CAN Leadership, and Interagency on Supportive Housing to ensure sufficient non-time-limited housing resources are allocated to YYA to meet the need	Core Vision Team w/ Affordable Housing Workgroup	**DOH**	Ongoing
C.7.5. Fill the gaps in the housing continuum so that youth have access to safe housing at all times and do not fall victim to sex trading for housing or trafficking.	Core Vision w/ YHDP Team	**DOH**	Ongoing

GOAL D: ACT WITH URGENCY TO SWIFTLY ASSIST YOUTH TO MOVE INTO PERMANENT OR NON-TIME LIMITED HOUSING OPTIONS WITH APPROPRIATE SERVICES TO SUPPORT

Objectives and Action Steps	Subgroup Lead (s)	Responsible Partners	Estimated Deadline
D.1. Ensure youth experiencing homelessness are efficiently connected to permanent or non-time-limited housing and services aligned, whenever possible, with youth choice, while utilizing Housing First and low-barrier approaches.			

D.1.1. Develop and deliver training and tools for homeless services providers and non-homeless system providers in principles of Housing First and low-barrier approach.	Coordinated Access	DOH, **CCEH**	Spring 2018
D.1.2. Review YYA protocol and training to ensure it follows housing first and low-barriers principles and develop a mechanism to ensure that CAN process adheres to Housing First and low-barriers principle.	Coordinated Access	DOH, CAN/YETIs, **CCEH**	Spring 2018
D.1.3. If a youth under 18 is at risk for homelessness or experiencing homelessness, develop capacity within each CAN to provide immediate assistance to stabilize the youth in a safe and healthy environment.	Coordinated Access and Systems Subgroup	**CCEH,** PSC**,** CCA	Ongoing
D.1.4. Develop dynamic prioritization approach to incorporate best available information about YYA (including cross-system data if available) to identify cohorts with highest need/vulnerability and streamline their access to housing solutions that meets their needs.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH, DOH**, CSH	Spring 2018
D.2. Ensure solutions include appropriate strategies for addressing the safety concerns and services needs of youth in unsafe situations, including those fleeing child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, sexual violence, or trafficking, or those with other significant risk factors/vulnerabilities.			
D.2.1. Ensure all youth providers/youth CE staff within each CAN are trained on current law of mandated reporting of abuse/neglect. Refine this training to include additional information on DCF response/to address specific issues related to youth experiencing homelessness.	Coordinated Access, YETI Collab, Systems	DCF, **CCEH,** YETIs, CANs, DOH, CCA	Fall 2018
D.2.2. Continue discussions with DV providers to clarify which youth qualifying as homeless under HUD category 4 should receive the warm handoff to DV providers and which should be served by youth providers. United Way (211) already working with DV providers to confirm the differing eligibility for services within each CAN.	Coordinated Access	CCADV, **CCEH**, DOH, United Way	Winter 2017/2018
D.2.3. Draft clarified protocol regarding youth experiencing homelessness under HUD category 4 and disseminate as well as update existing Young Adult protocol.	Coordinated Access	DOH, HUD, **CCEH**	Spring 2018

D.3. Swiftly connect youth living in time limited safe and stable housing options (ie: transitional living programs) to permanent or NTLSH when youth express a desire to do so.			
D.3.2. Review current protocols for TH to NTLSH for consideration. • **Develop transparent and standardized criteria for eligibility and process by which youth would transfer from TH to NTLSH.**	Coordinated Access in partnership with the Core Vision Team	DOH, **CCEH,** CANs, YYA	Spring 2018
D.4. Ensure processes and protocols are in place to prevent unnecessary delays in connecting youth to housing and services.			
D.4.1. Train youth-serving programs on expectations around document-readiness, CAN referral process, and follow-up measures to ensure youth are rapidly connected to housing and services. • **Data to be reviewed by Core Vision on regular basis.**	YETI Collaborative	**CCEH,** YETIs	Summer 2018
D.4.2. Create youth-specific data tracking that measures length of time homeless and linkages to services for state, region, and program. • **Data to be reviewed by Core Vision on regular basis. Troubleshoot in programs/regions that have prolonged delays in linking youth to housing and services.**	Core Vision Team	**DOH, CCEH,** YETIs, CANs, CCA	Spring 2018
D.4.3. Enhance the Young Adult protocol to include immediate linkages to services and supports for LGBTQ youth who indicate an interest in these connections.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**, YETIs, True Colors, 211	Winter 2017/2018
D.4.4. Create statewide definition of ending youth homelessness including benchmarks such as length of time homeless.	Core Vision	**PSC**	Fall 2017

D.5. Ensure youth experiencing homelessness are connected to education supports, health and behavioral health care, positive community organizations, mentors, peer groups, and/or other supportive services that promote sufficiency and long-term housing stability.			
D.5.1. Finalize Young Adult CE guidelines/protocol and pilot. This protocol provides service linkages that will begin the service/supports process. Utilize this initial step to build on existing community and other support services.	Coordinated Access Subgroup	**CCEH**	Fall 2017
D.5.2. Conduct employment program asset mapping exercises (which includes eligibility criteria) in each CAN region to improve partnerships and identify gaps & barriers.	Education and Employment Subgroup	**CCEH,** CCA	Winter 2018/2019
D.5.3. Explore possible opportunities to partner using SNAPs Education & Training funding.	Education and Employment Subgroup	**PSC**	Fall 2017
D.5.4. Develop method for monitoring programs to assess how well and how quickly youth are connected to education supports, job supports, healthcare, mental health, and other services.	Core Vision Team	**DOH**, CCEH, CCA	Spring 2018
D.5.5. Ensure students experiencing homelessness have access to school uniforms. Review requirements statewide. Provide sample policies and disseminate best practices.	Education and Employment	**CCA,** SDE	Summer 2018
D.5.6.Ensure schools have plans for alternative credits and credit recovery for homeless youth to graduate high school. This currently happens in California. Provide sample policies and disseminate best practices.	Education and Employment	**CCA,** SDE	Fall 2018
D.5.7. Word with youth employment organizations to ensure youth who are certified as homeless have access to transportation to attain and maintain employment, such as free bus passes (this is in statute for secondary education, but not employment).	Education and Employment	**CCA**	Fall 2018

D.5.8. Address statutory processes in state law to ensure homeless students have access to education including burden of proof in residency & enforcing immediate enrollment provisions.	Education and Employment	**CCA**	Spring 2018
D.5.9. Research to determine the need to waive aid fees for homeless youth.	Education and Employment	**CCA**	Fall 2018
D.5.10. Ensure that students are made aware of McKinney-Vento Laws- include in handbook.	Education and Employment with Coordinated Access	**CCEH,** CCA	Winter 2017 through Spring 2018
D.5.11. Continue to raise awareness of coordinated entry protocols and increase collaboration between probation, parole, and housing service providers to prevent shelter "drop-offs"	Criminal Justice Taskforce	**CCEH,** CSSD, DOC, PSC	Summer 2018
D.5.12.Partner with CSSD and DOC to develop guidelines for working with young adults who are at risk or experiencing homelessness.	Criminal Justice Taskforce	**CCEH,** CSSD, DOC, PSC	Fall 2018
D.5.13. Provide trainings for CSSD and DOC working with young adults on Coordinated Entry and Shelter Diversion	Criminal Justice Taskforce	**CCEH**, CSSD, DOC	January 2018
D.6. Track and Evaluate outcomes (stable housing, permanent connections, education and employment, and well-being) for youth in time-limited safe and stable housing options as well as permanent or non-time-limited housing options.			
D.6.1. Determining how to best track and evaluate these four outcomes for YYA programs funded through YHDP.	YHDP Grant Implementation	**DOH**, YAH	January 2018

D.6.2. Explore feasibility of expanding these outcome measurements to other youth-serving housing programs (including DOH new NTL housing).	Core Vision w/ DEN	**DOH**	Winter 2018/2019

GOAL E: ENSURE RESOURCES, PLANS AND SYSTEM CAPACITY ARE IN PLACE TO CONTINUE TO PREVENT AND QUICKLY END FUTURE EXPERIENCES OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG YOUTH

Objectives and Action Steps	Subgroup Lead (s)	Responsible Partners	Estimated Deadline
E.1. Project the number of youth who may need shelter and services, and dedicate sufficient resources to ensure those needs are met and that future experiences of homelessness among youth are rare and brief.			
E.1.1. Continue to utilize data from Youth Counts, SDM, HMIS and other sources to estimate current need along the housing continuum for each CAN, tracking progress and identifying evolving gaps. Working off of Abt Tool estimations.	Core Vision Team	**DOH**	Ongoing
E.1.2. Monitor closely how changes to the system - shift to dynamic prioritization (for young adult system and slowly in older adult system), changes made based on SWAP findings, SDM etc. - impact need for certain housing interventions and address accordingly.	Core Vision Team	**DOH**	Ongoing

E.1.3. Utilize YHDP funding to provide funding for identified gaps in housing services and work with CT BOS to renew programs	YHDP Grant Implementation	**DOH**, CT BOS	2017- 2020
E.1.4. Continue to refine and implement annual Homeless Youth Count.	YYA Workgroup in partnership with YETI Collaborative	**CCEH**, YETIs, CSDE,	January 2018, January 2019, January 2020
E.1.5. Pursue using HOME funding to expand rapid rehousing for young adults (obtain HUD approval, draft Action Plan language, review regulations, draft materials for compliance, meet with contractor to discuss implementation and how to mix with other subsidies, etc.)	Core Vision Team	**DOH**	Fall/Winter 2018
E.1.6. Advocate for revisions to QAP for additional points for affordable/supportive housing for young adults experiencing homelessness.	Affordable Housing Workgroup w/ Core Vision Team	**CSH**, PSC, DOH	Ongoing
E.1.8. Continue to explore how best to support shared housing, similar to current adult models in New Haven and SE CT. • **Obtain material from OrgCode shared housing workshop in November 2017, including tool developed to match people. Start program is helping pilot, possible extension to youth navigators.**	Core Vision Team	YYA Workgroup, DOH, **CCEH**	Fall 2017 and ongoing
E.1.9. Strengthen current efforts to promote participation of PHAs in the effort by creating a summary of the need and possible ways to participate for dissemination to all PHAs in CT with local follow-up.	Affordable and Supportive Housing WG	CSH, **PSC**, DOH, CCA, CHC, HUD	Outreach to PHAs begins 2018, ongoing
E.1.10. Coordinate with FWC workgroup to conduct needs assessment for young families. Review lessons learned from SWAP to assist with this.	FWC w/ Core Vision Team	DCF, United Way, **DOH**	Winter 2017-18

E.1.11. Draft clarifying protocols for CANs and providers on DOH's new tenant-based Housing Choice Voucher preference for young adult HOH families who are exiting housing assistance program but still need financial support.	Core Vision Team	**DOH**	Spring 2018
E.1.12. Advocate to maintain youth homelessness program in state budget.	Core Vision Team	**PSC**, CCEH, CCA	Ongoing
E.1.13. Engage external systems and public-private partnerships in sustaining and increasing resources to meet the need.	Funders Collaborative	**Melville**	Spring 2018
E.1.14. Preserving current state funding for housing continuum & advocating for additional funding (flexible or specific).	Core Vision Team	**PSC**	Ongoing
E.1.15. Explore a potential pilot related to maintaining housing for minors in public housing with juvenile records.	Systems Subgroup	**PSC**	Spring 2018
E.2. Ensure community has comprehensive plans and partnerships in place, as well as the system capacity to continue to, whenever possible, prevent or divert youth from experiencing homeless through substantial partnerships with schools (including postsecondary education), child welfare, justice, employment, physical and mental health, other youth serving systems.			
E.2.1. Partner with child welfare to prevent youth from exiting child welfare into homelessness at any time through monitoring of discharge planning, emphasizing education, working and independent living skills through case planning, and enhancing permanency teaming capacity for all adolescents in care.	Systems Subgroup	**PSC** with CCA	Fall 2018
E.2.3. Explore with DCF implementing a Housing First approach for youth in care, including those in danger of being discontinued from care.	Systems Subgroup	**CCA**	Fall 2019
E.2.4. Work with DCF and the Judicial Department to mandate training for all child welfare and juvenile justice staff, and contracted agencies, on open and	Systems Subgroup	**PSC** with CCA	Fall 2019

affirming policies to ensure the needs of LGBTQ youth are served in all child welfare and juvenile justice locations.			
E.2.5. Investigate options for assessing future homelessness among youth exiting child welfare.	Systems Subgroup	**PSC, CCA**	Winter 2018
E.2.6. Work with DCF to ensure re-entry follows a low-barrier approach.	Systems Subgroup	**PSC,** CCA	
E.2.7. Review Coordinated Entry protocol to ensure that homeless youth are being assessed for eligibility for DCF re-entry and that DCF Careline/Regional Re-entry prioritizes these youth in a timely manner and their requirements are clearly defined. Ensure DCF Re-entry options are well-known to youth and providers	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**	Fall 2018
E.2.8. Monitor CT specific NYTD data regarding homeless experiences of youth who exited foster care.	Systems Subgroup	**PSC, CCA**	Fall 2017
E.2.9. Launch Single Points of Contact at higher education institutions.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**/CSCU, PSC and CCA on legislative agenda for SPOC	SPOC launch December 2017, SPOC Youth Count Jan. 2017, SPOC Event Spring 2018
E.2.10. Explore the pathways from DCF to DMHAS and the risk factors for youth who fall through the cracks into homelessness. Develop strategies and protocols to improve successful transitions and ways to track DCF/DMHAS homelessness.	Systems Subgroup w/ Health & Housing WG	**CCA**, CSH, **PSC**	Summer 2018
E.2.11. Partner with child welfare (DCF) to ensure homeless services and child welfare delineate services.	Systems Subgroup	**PSC with CCA**	Winter 2019
E.2.12. Work with CSSD and DOC to integrate homelessness prevention into pre-release work, identifying clients as early as possible who might need assistance in	Criminal Justice Taskforce and Systems Subgroup	**CCEH**, CSSD, DOC, PSC	Summer 2018

obtaining housing prior to release - ensure youth are connected to other services as well and have identification upon exit.			
E.2.13. Research into how to improve discharge planning for housing needs immediately upon system entry to ensure youth aren't discharged to homelessness or to unstable housing situations	Systems Subgroup in partnership with Coordinated Access and Criminal Justice Taskforce	**PSC, CCA,** CCEH	Fall 2018
E.2.15. Include housing solutions in the plans and recommendations of the state's JJPOC.	Systems Subgroup	**PSC**	Spring 2018
E.2.16. Explore with DCF Licensing how to create more flexibility in the licensing process for emergency housing and host homes.	Systems Subgroup	PSC, **CCA**	Summer 2018
E.2.17. Work with DCF to determine safe and developmentally appropriate housing solutions for minors without requiring legal commitment or involvement in DCF care	Systems Subgroup	**PSC, CCA,** CCEH	Fall 2018
E.2.18. Research into waivers for college applications for all homeless youth.	Education and Employment	**CCA**	Spring 2018
E.2.19. Increase set aside training programs for youth who are experiencing homelessness.	Education and Employment	**CCA**	Fall 2018
E.2.20. Colleges/universities responsible to house homeless youth/students during the summer, including DCF youth (Housing, E/E);	Education and Employment	**TBD**, CCEH, CCA	Spring 2019
E.2.21. Ensure DCF re-entry is low-barrier and adheres to principles of Housing First- (youth ineligible if participated in two post-secondary education or employment training programs; proof of an educational plan or employment, including transcripts, certificates, report cards, proof of enrollment or acceptance or start date letters; youth shall be encouraged to complete substance abuse assessment & treatment prior to re-entry)	Systems Subgroup and Coordinated Access	**PSC,** CCA, CCEH	January 2019

E.2.22.Create tax credit program employers to incentivize hiring homeless youth.	Education and Employment	**CCA (TBD)**	Winter 2019
E.2.23. Co-create best practices on housing young adult sex offenders and disseminate to RRH providers, CSSD, DOC, and other stakeholders.	Criminal Justice Taskforce	**CCEH, PSC**	December 2018
E.3. Connect youth experiencing homelessness to appropriate and choice-driven crisis housing and services options.			
E.3.1. Develop protocol for presenting youth with housing and service choices, ensuring available services and housing interventions are reviewed and young person is empowered to lead in their own support choices.	Coordinated Access in partnership with the Youth Collaboration and Core Vision Team	**YAH,** CCEH	Spring 2018
E.4. Connect pregnant and parenting youth to early care and education programs (ie; Head Start & child care).			
E.4.1. Coordinate with early childcare to provide home visitation services in shelters.	FWC Workgroup	OEC, **PSC**, **CCEH,** Child First, Head Start	Fall 2018
E.4.2. Prioritize eligibility and access to all child care and early care, education programs that receive federal and/or state funding, e.g., preschool programs, child care subsidies like Care-4-Kids, after-school programs, home visiting programs, etc. for children and pregnant women who are experiencing literal homelessness.	FWC Workgroup	**PSC**	2017-2018 Advocacy and Legislative Agenda Ongoing
E.4.3. Provide a 90-day grace period for obtaining health documents and other documentation required by state licensing regulations.	FWC Workgroup	**PSC**	2017-2018 Advocacy and Legislative Agenda

			Ongoing
E.5. Swiftly move youth into permanent or NTLSH with the appropriate services and supports.			
E.5.1. Refine landlord engagement toolkit for YYA providers. • **Support regions with suggested strategies to attract and maintain relationships with landlords.**	Affordable and Supportive Housing Workgroup	**CHC,** PSC	Spring 2018
E.6. Ensure sufficient permanent or non-time limited supportive housing options are currently available or will become available over the next 12 months.			
E.6.1. DOH to continue NTL rolling admissions funding round. Anticipate funding first project Winter 2017.	Core Vision Team	**DOH**; with review team - CCA;, DCF; DMHAS; and CSH advisory	Ongoing
E.6.2. Finalize conversations regarding broadening availability of existing youth PSH units to non-system youth and integrating into CAN referral process.	Core Vision Team	**DOH**	February 2018
E.6.3. Work with CSSD/DOC to launch a RRH pilot.	Criminal Justice Taskforce	**CCEH, PSC**	Fall 2018
E.6.4. Develop statewide dynamic prioritization policies and guidelines to ensure equitable allocation of housing resources across homeless populations, objective criteria for prioritizing highest-need people for available resources, and smooth transitions between time-limited and non-time-limited resources as appropriate.	Core Vision Team in partnership with Crisis Response WG	**DOH, CCEH**, CSH, PSC	Spring 2018
E.6.5. Confirm eligibility criteria to DMHAS YAS for residential vs. rental assistance support.	Systems Subgroup w/ Coordinated Access	**PSC, CCEH**	Summer 2018
E.7. Implement strategies to promote long-term housing stability of youth who have exited homelessness			

E.7.1. Explore implementation of a 3-month follow-up protocol systemwide for YYA discharged from homeless programs, similar to new CT follow-up protocol for Veterans. Follow-up would be subject to youth choice.	Core Vision Team	**DOH**	Fall 2018
E.7.2. Initiate asset mapping process to determine employment gaps on a regional basis - beginning in FFC and New Haven. ● **Review regional employment needs and plans to address gaps.**	Education and Employment Subgroup	**CCEH, (TBD)**	Asset mapping in Fairfield County to be completed by Fall 2018, other CAN/YETI regions, Winter 2018/2019
E.7.3. Expand upon YA protocols for connecting YYA effectively with medical and behavioral resources.	Coordinated Access, Health and Housing WG in partnership with the Systems Subgroup	**CCEH with PSC**	Spring 2018
E.7.4. Collaborate with the Health and Housing Stability WG to explore strategies for building SOAR capacity across the state.	Health and Housing WG in partnership with Systems Subgroup	New Reach, **CSH**, DMHAS, PSC	Winter 2017/2018
E.7.5. Work to expand Fostering Connections Act to serve more youth.	Systems Subgroup	**CCA with PSC**	Spring 2019
E.7.6. Provide SOAR training to appropriate YYA providers to enhance YYA financial stability.	Coordinated Access in partnership with Systems Subgroup	**DMHAS**, DOH, CSH, New Reach	January 2019
E.7.8. Review findings from YAH/ICR's Start study to inform other programming: ● **Assessing the impact of the Start Program on young adults' long-term vulnerability/risk and housing stability over the program period and one year afterwards.**	YYA Workgroup	**YAH, ICR, Melville**	January 2019 but interim reports before then

• **Identifying the components of the program that drive outcomes; and** • **Examining the effects (both detrimental and beneficial) of young adults' social networks on individuals' mental health and housing stability.**			
E.7.9. Advocate for a juvenile justice record erasure law in order to help prevent youth from experiencing collateral consequences of juvenile court involvement	Systems Subgroup	**PSC with CCA**	Spring 2018 or 2019 during legislative session
E.8. Provide non-housing crisis response options to youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness, including: emergency financial assistance, safety services, transportation, health and oral health services, behavioral health, and legal services.			
E.8.1. Launch Young Adult protocol pilot that includes non-housing crisis response connection guidance for young adult coordinated entry staff in 4 YETI regions. Will include client feedback and staff feedback process to refine before statewide launch and integration into HMIS.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH**	Fall 2017
E.8.2. Launch Young Adult protocol statewide.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH,** YETIs/CANs	Spring 2018
E.8.3.Work locally with drop-in centers, RHY providers, schools, and child welfare case workers, and juvenile justice/criminal justice re-entry programs to ensure non-housing crisis services are utilized consistently and in timely manner for youth at risk for or experiencing homelessness. (Expansion of Young Adult protocol).	Coordinated Access in partnership with Systems subgroup	**PSC with CCEH**	March 2018
E. 8.4. Training regarding laws about minors' access to mental health treatment and substance abuse. • **Ensure awareness of medical coverage for transgender transitions (CT Insurance Commissioner requires this)**	Systems Subgroup	**PSC, CCA, DPH**	Spring 2019

E. 8.5. Support efforts for comprehensive sexual health education in schools due to increased risk of pregnancy among homeless youth. (NARAL Pro-choice Connecticut)	Systems Workgroup	**CCADV**	Winter 2017 and ongoing
E.8.7. Ensure Medicaid continuity to 26 for DCF involved	Systems Subgroup	**CCA,** PSC	Spring 2019
E.8.8. Ensure minors' access to Medicaid without parental consent ● **Planned parenthood/DV-confidentiality for EOB to parents**	Systems Subgroup	**CCA**	Summer 2018
E.8.9. Strengthen linkages to substance abuse treatment programs/facilities/services for youth.	Systems Subgroup	**CCEH,** DMHAS	Spring 2019
E.8.10. Training to ensure best practices re: consistent treatment of transgender people.	Coordinated Access	**CCEH, YAH,** True Colors	Summer 2018

Acronym/Glossary

CCEH-Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness

PSC- Partnership for Strong Communities

YETIs- Youth Engagement Team Initiatives, sub-group of providers, youth, schools and other stakeholders in the Coordinated Access Network that are collaborating to end youth homelessness in their region.

Coordinated Access- Information and Referral Subgroup was tasked to review, develop and implement in our statewide system to engage homeless and young adults and connect them with housing and related services.

RHY- Runaway and Homeless Youth

McK-V- McKinney Vento Liaison

DMHAS- Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

YAH- Youth Action Hub

PATH- Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness

HOT- Homeless Outreach Team

DOH- Connecticut Department of Housing

CE- Coordinated Entry

DECD- Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development

YYA- Youth and Young Adult

YYA WG- Reaching Home Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Workgroup

FWC/FWC WG- Reaching Home Families with Children Workgroup

CAN- Coordinated Access Network

CSDE- Connecticut State Department of Education

YHDP- Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program

CCADV- Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence

DDS- Connecticut Department of Developmental Services

DCF-Connecticut Department of Children and Family Services

SPOC-Single Point of Contact

CCA-Center for Children's Advocacy

CSCU-Connecticut State Colleges & Universities

NYTD- National Youth in Transition Database

FFC-Fairfield County

YA- Young Adult

MCT- Melville Charitable Trust

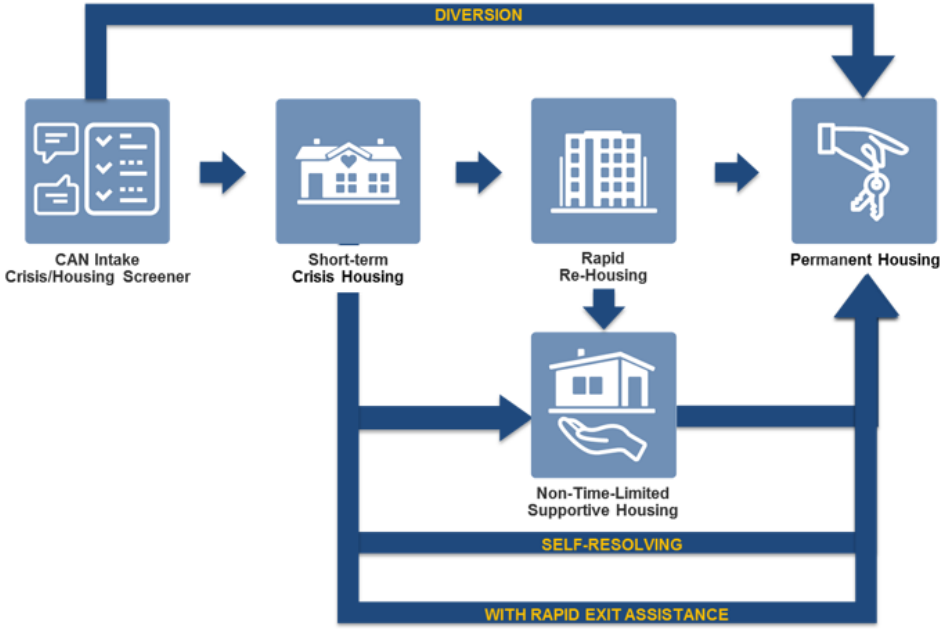
DECD- Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development

HHS/HHS WG- Health and Housing Stability Workgroup

NTLSH- Non-Time Limited Supportive Housing

Housing Interventions Projected Need Percent and Time Assumptions

Note: We are striving to reduce the length of stay in short-term crisis housing below the estimated 60 days noted in the chart but are being realistic in the short-term. There are data quality issues with our shelters that we are addressing. In FY17, there were 564 young adult individual entrances, but only 176 exits (just 30%). The average length of stay for those who exited is over 65 days. The average length for stayers (no exit marked) is over 108 days. The average length of time for young adult individuals from CAN intake to housed through RRH over the past two fiscal years is approximately 4 months.



Service Strategies	Young Adults		Project Types				
	Overall Strategy	Detail Strategy	Diversion	Crisis Housing	Rapid Exit	Rapid Re-Housing	NTL Supp. Housing
	%	%	Slots	Av. Mo/ person	Slots	Av. Mo/ person	Units
Diversion Assistance (no financial assistance)	30%	17%	1				
Diversion Assistance (with financial assistance)		13%	1				
Crisis Housing Only	35%	18%		2			
Crisis Housing w Rapid Exit Assistance		18%		2	1		
RRH	35%	28%		2		9	
Non-Time-Ltd Supp Hsng (DyPri w/ RRH)		6%		2		12	1
Non-Time-Limited SH (via CH)		1%		2			1
TOTAL	100%	100%					

APPENDIX F – GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE:

Workgroup/Subgroup	Purpose	Members
Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Workgroup (YYA WG)	• The statewide Reaching Home workgroup that coordinates and manages the effort to end youth homelessness in CT through the Reaching Home Campaign. • Approves the Coordinated Community Plan • Oversees the implementation of the Plan's Action Steps, ensuring ongoing accountability, effective communication and coordination. • Sets overarching benchmarks and timelines for achieving objectives and tracks progress. • Determines the budget for ending youth homelessness in CT.	• Center for Children's Advocacy • Partnership for Strong Communities • CT Department of Housing • CT Coalition to End Homelessness • Melville Charitable Trust • CT Balance of State • Opening Doors Fairfield County • The Connection Inc. • CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services • CT Department of Children and Families • U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development • Youth Action Hub • CT State Department of Education • Institute for Community Research • Court Support Services Division of the Judicial Branch • Department of Public Health • Supportive Housing Works (ODFC) • New Reach (CT BOS)
Core Vision Team	• YYA WG Subcommittee • Aligns & manages work of the YYA WG. • Marshalls resources on behalf of WG. Dives into topics to develop recommendations for WG consideration.	• Center for Children's Advocacy • CT Department of Housing • CT Coalition to End Homelessness • Melville Charitable Trust • Institute for Community Research

	• Review of data dashboards & liaises w Data & Estimate Needs Workgroup of RH to improve YYA data quality.	
YHDP Grant Management Team	• Is a limited-time (through length of grant), sub-committee of both CT BOS and the YYA Workgroup with decision-making authority on planning and implementation of grant. • Manages the administration of the YHDP grant. • Makes final decisions on all YHDP funding allocations with YAH collaboration and sign off & considering recommendations from YYA WG and CT BOS. • Drafts and approves the Coordinated Community Plan. • Updates and receives input from CT BOS and YYA Workgroup on monthly basis. • Ensures continuous quality improvement of YHDP funded projects in partnership with CT BOS. • DCF has a representative on the YHDP Team and on the YHDP project application evaluation team. DCF also approves the Coordinated Community Plan. • Members of the YHDP project application evaluation team include select members from CT BOS, DCF, YHDP Team, YAH and the YYA workgroup.	• CT Department of Housing • Center for Children's Advocacy • CT Coalition to End Homelessness • Youth Action Hub • Partnership for Strong Communities • Melville Charitable Trust • U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – Hartford Field Office • CT Balance of State (Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services) • Opening Doors Fairfield County (Supportive Housing Works) • Institute for Community Research • CT State Department of Education

	• Administrative support provided by Reaching Home Campaign.	
YETI Collaborative	• YYA WG subgroup • Discusses how best to implement statewide strategies to end youth homelessness at the regional level through each of the 8 YETIs. Identifies regional challenges, needs, and successes. This assists in informing the work of other subgroups. • Helps coordinate the Youth Count. • Shares best practices and learning re YYA.	• CT Coalition to End Homelessness • Department of Housing • The Connection Inc. • Youth Continuum • New Reach, Inc. • Journey Home • Women and Families Center • Supportive Housing Works • Torrington Public Schools • StayWell Health Center • Community Health Resources • New Britain Public Schools • Noank Community Services • Thames River Community Service, Inc. • Windham No Freeze Shelter
YETIs/CANs	• Each YETI leads the effort to end youth homelessness at a regional level. • CANs manage the implementation of the homeless response system regionally.	• YETIs are comprised of YYA, McKinney-Vento liaisons, RHY and other youth providers, regional child welfare, mental health and juvenile justice staff/organizations, among other youth stakeholders • CANs consists of local providers, regional state agency staff, among others
Youth Collaboration Subgroup	• YYA WG Subgroup • Assists in aligning youth collaboration throughout YYA structure. • Supports/provides TA to YETIs regarding youth collaboration in the regions.	• Institute for Community Research • Youth Action Hub • Opening Doors Fairfield County YAB.

Youth Action Hub	• Serves as the youth advisory board for the YHDP Team & YYA WG, advising and collaborating on the implementation of the YHDP grant • YAH has a representative on the YHDP Team and is part of the YHDP project evaluation team. • Approves the Coordinated Community Plan. • Approves all YHDP funding allocations. • YAH serves on the YYA Workgroup, subgroups, and leads the Youth Collaboration Subgroup.	• Youth Action Hub
Coordinated Access (aka I & R) Subgroup	• YYA WG Subgroup • Combines knowledge of Retooling the Crisis Response System WG and YYA WG to enhance existing coordinated access and exit systems to be developmentally appropriate for YYA. • Develops identification strategies & connection to coordinated entry. • Implements quality control mechanism for CE. • Connects mainstream services to YETIs.	• CT Coalition to End Homelessness • CT Dept. of Housing • Center for Children's Advocacy • CT Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services • Supportive Housing Works • Youth Continuum • Thames River Community Services • Windham No Freeze Shelter • Noank Community Support Services • New Reach • CT State Dept. of Education • CT Department of Children and Families • Institute for Community Research • Youth Action Hub • 211 • United Way of Connecticut

Engaged Systems to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness	• YYA WG Subgroup • Addresses prevention of homelessness through systems collaboration. • Implements data matching with systems. • Implements interventions across systems.	• CT Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services • CT Dept. of Children and Families • CT Juvenile Justice Alliance • Center for Children's Advocacy • NAFI CT • CT Junior Republic • Voices for Children • CSSD • CCEH • CT Dept. of Housing • Partnership for Strong Communities
Employment and Education Subgroup	• YYA WG Subgroup • Provides guidance and model practice examples to support integration of homeless YYA into school districts, higher education and employment. • Collaborates with YYA WG to determine additional appropriate Action Steps as well as executes and tracks them.	• CT State Dept. of Education • School Districts • Center for Children's Advocacy • Community Colleges and State Universities • Melville Charitable Trust • CT Coalition to End Homelessness • Dept. of Labor
Funders Collaborative	• YYA WG Subgroup • State, community and private funders supporting and accelerating efforts to prevent/end youth homelessness in CT. • Identifies funding and collaboration opportunities in the Coordinated Community Plan and engaging new funding partners in the work.	• Melville Charitable Trust • HUD • DMHAS • DOH

	• Collaborates with YYA WG to determine appropriate Action Steps.	
CT Balance of State Continuum Steering Committee	• A coordinated, comprehensive and strategic organizational structure mandated by HUD to receive homeless assistance funding. Within the CoC, community service providers, public housing authorities, non-profit organizations, and local and state governments form a consortium to address local homelessness and housing issues. • Each year, the CT Balance of State Continuum of Care accepts applications for new supportive housing projects to be funded through the HUD McKinney Vento Competition. The Steering Committee established requirements and priorities for new applications. • Approves the Coordinated Community Plan • Provides support in the YHDP grant implementation process • Members of CT BOS will be included on the YHDP project application evaluation team • Assists with implementing and monitoring YHDP projects.	• DOH • DMHAS • New London CoC (Thames River Community Services) • Middlesex CoC • CHFA • New Britain CoC • CSH • CCEH • Partnership for Strong Communities • Danbury CoC • Danbury Housing Authority • Aids CT • Litchfield CoC • Manchester CoC • Dept. of Education • DCF • New Haven CoC • Waterbury CoC • Greater Hartford • CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence • Hartford CoC • New Reach • Columbus House • Rushord Center • HUD • ODFC • Housing Innovation • Veterans Affair

Reaching Home Families with Children Workgroup	• The statewide workgroup that coordinates and manages the effort to end families with children homelessness in CT. • Co-chair of the Families with Children workgroup serves on the YHDP Grant Management Team, the Coordinated Connections Subgroup, and the Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Workgroup. • Implements strategies that address the needs of parenting youth and young adults.	• Center for Children's Advocacy • Child First Inc. • CT Birth to Three System • CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence • CT Coalition to End Homelessness • CT Department of Labor • CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services • CT Department of Public Health • CT Department of Social Service • CT Dept. of Children and Family • CT Dept. of Housing • CT Head Start Association • CT Housing Finance Authority • Journey Home • Melville • New Reach • Office of Early Childhood • Partnership for Strong Communities • DCF Region 4 Manager • State Department of Education • The Connection, Inc • U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development • United Way of Connecticut • Wheeler's Clinic • CT Commission on Women, Children & Seniors • Access Agency • Christian Community Action Inc. • Thames River Community Service, Inc. • Always Home

Reaching Home Health and Housing Stability Workgroup	• Coordinates and manages the effort to reduce the medical vulnerability and frequent use of health care systems among people experiencing homelessness and severe housing instability. • Implements housing-based approaches to align health reform goals of prevention, access, quality, lower cost. • Integrates primary, behavioral, and mental health care with homelessness and housing programs. • Addresses the intersection between health and housing needs of young and young adults. • Manages the work of the Criminal Justice Task Force that is looking at strategies for the 18 to 24-year-old population as it relates to improving access to care, housing and community supports. CCEH serves as the liaison between this Task Force and the YYA workgroup • Leads the Opioid Task Force which is looking at the Opioid epidemic in relationship to housing instability and how it impacts health outcomes. • CSH serves as the liaison between the Health workgroup and YYA subgroups.	• CT Judicial Branch • CT Community Providers Association • Supportive Housing Works • Supportive Housing Works • Community Health Resources • Corporation for Supportive Housing • StayWell Health Care, Inc. • Open Arms • CT Dept. of Public Health • New Reach • Yale New Haven Hospital • Columbus House, Inc. • Community Health Network of CT • National Alliance on Mental Illness, CT • Journey Home • CT Dept. of Social Services • CT Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services • Family and Children's Agency • Melville Trust • Community Health Center • CT Dept. of Social Services • AIDS-CT • CSH • Hands on Hartford • Alliance for Living • CT Office of Policy and Management • Family Centers • Reliance Health • Partnership for Strong Communities(SIF) • New London Homeless Hospitality Center

Reaching Home Data & Estimated Needs Workgroup	• Develops statewide data dashboard of high level performance measures. • Improves data quality re youth and young adults. • The Core Vision Team works directly with DEN on youth data needs.	• CT Coalition to End Homelessness • CSH • CT Dept. of Housing • CT Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services • Partnership for Strong Communities
Reaching Home Affordable and Supportive Housing Workgroup	• Works to create the permanent housing resources necessary to meet the goals of the Reaching Home Campaign • Advances strategies related to landlord engagement, connection with Public Housing Agencies, researching housing models and interventions that are most appropriate for young families. • Works to increase the number of LIHTC and CHAMP developed units that are connected to the CANs. • The Partnership for Strong Communities serves as the liaison between the Affordable housing and YYA workgroups.	• *Women's Institute for Housing and Economic Development* • *Immaculate Conception Housing and Shelter Corp.* • *Webster Bank* • *DeMarco, Miles & Murphy* • *CT Dept. of Housing* • *Housing Authority of the City of New Haven* • *CSH* • *Journey Home* • *Mercy Housing* • *Westport Housing Authority* • *CT Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services* • *John D'Amelia & Associates* • *CT Housing Finance Authority* • *My Sisters' Place,* • *The Connection, Inc.* • *Supportive Housing Works* • *Bridgeport Neighborhood Trust* • CT Housing Coalition • *Greater New Haven Community Loan Fund* • *Partnership for Strong Communities*

Reaching Home Retooling the Crisis Response System	• Works to create a coordinated homelessness response system • Supports the housing stability • Youth Focus every other month to connect the work of the YETIs with the CANs. • Coordinated Connections meeting co-chairs and some YETI leads will attend to coordinate with the CANs	• *CCEH* • *CSH* • *Melville Charitable Trust* • *DOH* • *Always Home* • *CCDAV* • *United Way* • *Family and Children's Agency* • *St. Vincent De Paul Middletown* • *DMHAS* • *New Reach* • *Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Hartford* • *PSC* • *Covenant Shelter* • *New Opportunities* • *Journey Home* • *Mercy Housing* • *Columbus House* • *Youth Continuum* • *AIDS CT* • *SDE* • *New London Homeless Hospitality Center* • *DCF* • *OPM* • *Bethsaida Community, Inc.* • *Safe Futures* • *Supportive Housing Works*
Reaching Home Coordinating Committee	• Coordinates and directs the Reaching Home Campaign effort, provides guidance to Reaching Home	• *AIDS CT* • *Center for Children's Advocacy* • *CSH*

	Workgroups, and supports the Steering Committee. • Membership includes the chair of each workgroups, high level community, state and federal partners designees, and representatives from the CT BOS and ODFC. • Monitors the effort to prevent and end youth homelessness. • Meets monthly to review progress. • YYA Workgroup reports back to the Coordinating Committee as new projects and ideas develop.	• *CT Coalition to End Homelessness* • *CT Dept. of Children and Families* • *CT Dept. of Housing* • *CT Dept. of Mental & Addiction Services* • *CT Housing Coalition* • *CT Housing Finance Authority* • *CT Office of Policy and Management* • *Melville Charitable Trust* • *National Alliance on Mental Illness-CT* • *Partnership for Strong Communities* • *U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development* • *United Way of Connecticut* • *CT Balance of State Continuum of Care* • *Opening Doors Fairfield County Continuum of Care*
Reaching Home Steering Committee	• Broad-based coalition working across systems as well as sectors. • Advises on policy changes related to the activities of the Reaching Home Campaign. • Provides the support needed to develop the necessary coalitions at the local, regional and state levels to accomplish the goal of ending homelessness in Connecticut.	• *Thames River Community Service Inc.* • *CT Dept. of Housing* • *United Way of CT* • *CSH* • *CT Dept. of Social Services* • *St. Vincent De Paul Middletown and Middlesex Coalition on Housing and Homelessness* • *Chrysalis Center, Inc.* • *Alpha Home/Shore Area CDC*

	• Advances key strategies that provide the focus for the Working Groups. • Meets regularly to review the progress of the Reaching Home Campaign. • YYA Workgroup reports back to the Steering Committee on a regular basis.	• *Yale-New Haven Hospital* • *Columbus House, Inc.* • *CT Dept. of Mental Health & Addiction Services* • *The Connection, Inc.* • *Housing Authority of the City of New Haven* • *North Central Regional Mental Health Board, Inc.* • *Melville Charitable Trust* • *CT Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)* • *Community Solutions* • *CT Legal Rights Project* • *CT Office of Policy & Management* • *National Alliance on Mental Illness CT* • *CT Office of Early Childhood* • *CT Association for Human Services* • *CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence* • *CT Housing Finance Authority* • *CT Dept. of Social Services* • *Community Health Center* • *AIDS-CT* • *Operation Hope* • *Journey Home* • *NeighborWorks New Horizons* • *Liberty Bank Foundation* • *CT Housing Finance Authority* • *My Sister's Place* • *U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs*

		• *U.S. Dept. of Housing & Urban Development* • *CT Dept. of Public Health* • *Community Health Center Association of CT* • *United Way of Connecticut* • *Supportive Housing Works* • *CT Judicial Branch* • *Gallo & Robinson* • *CT Dept. of Education* • *Inspirica* • *CT Voices for Children* • *Office of Policy and Management* • *CT Dept. of Children and Families* • *CT Coalition to End Homelessness* • *Charter Oak Communities* • *Office of Lieutenant Governor* • *CT Housing Coalition* • *Center for Children's Advocacy* • *Partnership for Strong Communities* • *New London Homeless Hospitality Center*