

BYLAWS and Governance Charter

Reaching Home Campaign's Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Workgroup

Special Note: Throughout this document, the pronouns she/he or his/her have been replaced with "they" or "their" to ensure gender neutrality and inclusiveness.

Article I – Name

1: The name of this association shall be the Reaching Home Youth and Young Adult (YYA) Homelessness Workgroup.

Article II – Mission and Vision

Section 1: The mission of the Reaching Home YYA Workgroup, a united coalition of community and state systems and youth and young adults with lived experience, is to end homelessness amongst youth and young adults in Connecticut by the end of 2020.

Section 2: The vision of the Reaching Home YYA Workgroup (RH YYA Workgroup) is 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.

Article III – Purpose

Section 1: The RH YYA Workgroup shall coordinate the statewide effort to end youth homelessness and manage the implementation of the Coordinated Community Plan (aka "Opening Doors for Youth 2.0"), including tracking progress and revising the plan with support from its subgroups, taskforces, and relevant key stakeholders.

- A. The RH YYA Workgroup covers: all the cities and towns in the state of Connecticut.
- B. The RH YYA Workgroup serves as a working group under the Reaching Home Campaign, the campaign to build the political and civic will to prevent and end homelessness in Connecticut. The Campaign has established working groups that are tasked with retooling the crisis response system, expanding affordable and supportive housing opportunities, creating economic security, integrating housing and health care, addressing the needs of unaccompanied homeless youth

Version 8- Adopted on February 15,2018

Revised on May 24th, 2018

and families with children, and ending homelessness among Veterans. The RH YYA Workgroup is the statewide workgroup that

- a. coordinates and manages the effort to end youth homelessness in CT through the Reaching Home Campaign.
- b. Oversees the implementation of the Coordinated Community Plan and its Action Steps, ensuring ongoing accountability, effective communication and coordination.
- c. Sets overarching benchmarks and timelines for achieving objectives and tracks progress.
- d. Determines the budget for ending youth homelessness in CT.
- e. Reports to the Reaching Home Coordinating/Steering Committees on innovative programs, ideas, and legislative and funding priorities to be adopted within the Campaign.

Section 2: Backbone Organization

A. The backbone organization for the RH YYA Workgroup is the Partnership for Strong Communities (PSC). PSC provides leadership, coordinates and engages partners in workgroups, communicates and builds public will for the campaign efforts, mobilizes funding and advances policy goals through legislative advocacy and administrative policy work, and provides staff support to the RH YYA Workgroup.

Article IV – Membership

Section I: Composition of the RH YYA Workgroup

- A. Membership is comprised of the co-chairs of each subgroup of the RHA YYA Workgroup, (2) Youth Engagement Team Initiative leads, representing both the Balance of State and Opening Doors of Fairfield County Continuums of Care, (2) Youth Action Hub/Youth Advisory Board representatives, (1) organization representing LGBTQ youth, (1) member at large, and representatives from state and federal agencies concerned with the development and coordination of youth homeless assistance programs.
 - a. Representatives serving on the RH YYA Workgroup are appointed by their respective organizations.
 - b. Subgroup chairs, in coordination with the Core Vision Team, will recruit members for each subgroup and will ensure that all membership requirements set forth in the governance charter are met, including representation of certain populations and certain organizations.
 - c. If a member wishes to resign, the member shall promptly submit written notice to the RH YYA Workgroup Chair.

Article V – Subgroups (please refer to Appendix F in the CT Youth Plan 2.0:

http://www.pschousing.org/files/Opening_Doors_For_Youth_Plan_2.0.pdf).

The RH YYA Workgroup shall have the following subgroups/associated groups:

- Core Vision Team
- YHDP Grant Management Team
- YETI Collaborative
- Youth Collaborative

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- Coordinated Access
- Engaged Systems to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness
- Employment and Education
- Funders Collaborative

The RH YYA Workgroup liaises with the following committees:

- Families with Children Workgroup
- Health and Housing Stability Workgroup & its Criminal Justice Taskforce
- CT Balance of State & Opening Doors Fairfield County Continuums of Care
- Data and Estimated Needs
- Retooling the Crisis Response System Workgroup

Article VI: The Workgroup and Subgroups

Section 1: Rights of Workgroup and Subgroups. Members are entitled to:

- Have voting rights (one vote per agency).
- Receive letters of support for grants indicating length of membership and level of participation.
- Receive information and updates via e-mail or meeting notes on decisions made.

Section 2: Expectations of Workgroup and Subgroup Members:

- Be present and active participants in Workgroup and/or subgroup meetings.
- Actively participate in Workgroup activities, correspondence, subgroup, and/or ad-hoc committees/taskforces.
- Follow the bylaws and RH YYA Workgroup Code of Conduct.
- Attend meetings and contribute to inform dialogue on actions the group undertakes.
- Participate in the activities of the Workgroup, including strategic planning, public education efforts and other related initiatives.
- Seek input from, and report back to, the constituency they represent on key issues and strategies.
- Take notes at each meeting. Adopt previous meeting notes during Workgroup and subgroup meetings to ensure that discussions are accurately represented. Where the Workgroup or subgroup does not have formal support, this will be done whenever possible.

Section 3: Workgroup and Subgroup Voting

- The RH YYA Workgroup operates by consensus whenever possible. When a vote is necessary, each member shall have one vote upon any motion.
- No member shall vote on any issue where there could be a conflict of interest. (Refer to Conflict of Interest section (Article VIII & Appendix I).)
- As needed, Roberts Rules of Order will govern procedural questions during RH YYA Workgroup Meetings.

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D. A simple majority vote of members present will be used to settle issues that reach an impasse, unless otherwise stated herein.

Section 4: Workgroup Meetings/Attendance

- A. The RH YYA Workgroup shall meet, at a minimum, 6 times per year.
- B. Upon a request by at least three members of the RH YYA Workgroup, a special meeting can be called by the Chair at any time.

Section 5: Quorum at Workgroup & Subgroup Meetings

- A. A simple majority (50% + 1) of members at a RH YYA Workgroup meeting constitutes a quorum.
- B. Two-thirds majority is needed to:
 - (a) change RH YYA Workgroup bylaws and Governance Charter, and
 - (b) elect an Interim Chair/Chair.

Section 6: Workgroup and Subgroup Chairs

- A. Selection of a Chair/Interim Chair shall be filled upon the recommendation of the Reaching Home Campaign Executive Director, with input from the RH YYA Workgroup and Core Vision Team, and will take place in the instance where the Chair resigns, is not able to perform their duty due to illness and/or leave of absence.
- B. Election of the Chair/Interim Chair will be by two-thirds majority vote of RH YYA Workgroup.
- C. The Chair is authorized to represent the RH YYA Workgroup in all matters not requiring a quorum.
- E. The Chair shall call, preside over all Workgroup meetings, and set agendas for all RH YYA Workgroup meetings and inform the subgroup meetings. The Chair can call special meetings of the youth work.
- F. Immediate Past Co-Chairs may assist and advise the Interim Chair, upon their request, in the performance of their duties.
- G. Selection of new Subgroup Chairs/Co-Chairs shall be determined by the RH YYA Workgroup in consultation with the Core Vision Team.

Article VII – Consultant Functions

- A. When necessary, a Consultant shall be hired to help the RH YYA Workgroup with writing new funding applications and/or other Workgroup related activities. The Consultant will be vetted by the Core Vision Team and be selected by, and report to, PSC.

Article VIII – Conflict of Interest & Code of Conduct

Section 1: The RH YYA Workgroup and subgroup members must conduct themselves at all times with the highest ethical standards. Members are required to follow the RH YYA Workgroup Code of Version 8- Adopted on February 15,2018
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Conduct. Conflicts of interest, as defined in 24 CFR §578.95, must be avoided and any appearance of conflict must be disclosed and discussed.

Section 2: All individuals and representatives of organizations who have, are seeking, or considering seeking funds under the endorsement of the RH YYA Workgroup must adhere to the following, unless otherwise required pursuant to state and/or federal law:

- A. They shall disclose to the RH YYA Workgroup any conflict or appearance of conflict which may, or could be reasonably known to, exist.
- B. They may participate in policy and strategic discussions to inform the members of a proposed idea/project. They shall not vote on any items(s) that would create a conflict and shall leave the room for discussion specific to voting on the award of a grant or other financial benefits to the organization that the member represents.
- C. Where there exists a competitive process and where decisions of the RH YYA Workgroup would directly impact that process, members cannot promote or discuss their own agency's project during RH YYA Workgroup discussions.
- D. They shall not lobby or seek competitive information from any other member of the Workgroup if such action would create a conflict.

Article IX– Nondiscrimination

Section 1: The members, officers, and persons serving on RH YYA Workgroup and its subgroups shall not be discriminated because of race, color, religious creed, age, marital status, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, intellectual disability, or physical disability.

Article X- Amendments

Section 1: These bylaws may be vetted by the Core Vision Team and amended by a two-thirds majority vote at a meeting of the RH YYA Workgroup, provided that the proposed amendment(s) shall have been submitted in writing to each member at least 3 business days before action is taken by the RH YYA Workgroup.

Appendix I: RH YYA Workgroup Code of Conduct

This RH YYA Workgroup Code of Conduct represents the Workgroup's commitment to high standards. The following standards should be regarded as minimum expectations for conduct. Members will act in accordance with, and maintain the highest standards of, professional integrity, impartiality, diligence, creativity and productivity. Workgroup meetings will be conducted in a manner that reflects the highest standards and in accordance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

1. Compliance with Policies

- A. Members will conduct the Workgroup business in accordance with the bylaws of RH YYA Workgroup including conflict of interest and information management policies.

2. Conflict of Interest

A. Members must act in the best interests of the overall youth effort and avoid situations where their personal interests or relationships interfere with acting in good faith on behalf of the RH YYA Workgroup.

B. Members may not engage in activities that are in conflict with the interests of the RH YYA Workgroup or that may negatively impact the reputation of the RH YYA Workgroup.

C. Members are required to follow Article VIII of the RH YYA Workgroup bylaws regarding conflict of interest and code of conduct.

3. Confidentiality

A. Members must maintain the highest standards of confidentiality regarding information obtained directly or indirectly through their involvement with the RH YYA Workgroup when necessary. This includes, but is not limited to, information about members and their organizations and funded agencies. Members must also avoid inadvertent disclosure of confidential or draft information through casual or public discussion, which may be overheard or misinterpreted.

4. Impartiality

A. Member agencies shall act impartially and with integrity. Members will:

- Not knowingly be a party to or condone any illegal or improper activity.
- Not directly, or indirectly, seek personal gain which would influence, or appear to influence, the conduct of their duties.
- Not exploit RH YYA Workgroup professional relationships for personal or professional gain.
- Be alert to the influences and pressures that interfere with the professional discretion and impartial judgment required for the performance of members.

5. Fraud

A. The term fraud refers to, but is not limited to: intentionally entering false or erroneous information into electronic software systems; any dishonest or fraudulent act; forgery or alteration of any official document; misappropriation of funds, supplies, or Workgroup materials; improper handling or reporting of money or financial transactions; profiting by self or others as a result of inside knowledge; destruction or intentional disappearance of records, furniture, fixtures, or equipment; accepting or seeking anything of material value from vendors or persons providing services or materials to the Workgroup for personal benefit; or any similar or related irregularities.

B. Fraudulent acts will not be tolerated and may result in termination from Workgroup and subgroup(s).

6. Gifts or Honoraria

A. It is not permissible to offer or accept gifts, gratuities, excessive favors or personal rewards intended to influence the Workgroup decisions or activities.

7. Harassment

A. Harassment, interpreted as unwelcome conduct, comment, gesture, contact, or intimidating and offensive behavior likely to cause offense or humiliation, will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary measures up to and including removal from Workgroup or subgroup(s).

8. Laws and Regulations

A. Workgroup business will be conducted in a manner that reflects the highest standards and in accordance with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations.