



Western PA Continuum of Care
Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program
Draft Coordinated Community Plan
Submitted for HUD Review, April 21, 2022

Western PA CoC YHDP Coordinated Community Plan

STATEMENT OF NEED

BACKGROUND

In the One By One Western PA CoC, the need among youth and young adults experiencing and at risk of homeless is significant and goes beyond the need for housing if we are to truly support youth in building the future they envision for themselves. To inform this statement of need, the CoC used information from a variety of sources. Data sources were used to put forth a numerical estimate of need for this Plan. However, the CoC knows that these numerical estimates do not fully capture the depth and breadth of the needs among YYA in the CoC. As such, the CoC sought out additional qualitative and anecdotal data and input to help round out our understanding of the need in areas where quantitative data does not fully explain or encompass the needs of the youth and young adults in our community who experience or are at risk of experiencing homelessness.

The CoC used data from its own data system (the CoC's Homeless Management Information System or HMIS), along with National Homeless Education data, data from the PA Juvenile Court Judges' Commission, county Children and Youth Services offices, county Juvenile Probation Offices, and PA Department of Labor and Industry data. These data sources have helped the CoC in quantifying the need, to some degree.

Equally important has been the CoC's work to engage the youth in our system, along with stakeholders within the homeless system and other systems (child welfare, education, juvenile justice, domestic violence, in particular) to gather information that sheds light on needs that go beyond the number of housing units that need to be created. To gather this qualitative and anecdotal information, the CoC established a YHDP Core Team which included members of the Youth Action Board (YAB), Advocates for Change (A4C), engaged with the full YAB throughout the CCP development process, held five half-day community-wide YHDP stakeholder sessions, facilitated sector-specific stakeholder sessions (two with education stakeholders, one each with victim services providers, county-level Children and Youth Services Offices, and county-level Juvenile Probation Offices), held a listening session with the YAB, and disseminated two surveys – one for service providers and one for YYA - to gather input on the availability of housing and services and suggestions for systems improvement.

The information provided by YYA and stakeholders speak to the need to increase the availability, accessibility and effectiveness of housing AND supportive services, as well as community-based resources for YYA. There was also significant feedback on the need to strengthen the collaboration and coordination among systems that touch the lives of YYA who experience or are at risk of homelessness. This is especially important in One By One's 20-county region, which is largely rural with pockets of urbanization and suburban development. Stakeholders noted the challenges of working in such a large region, but also highlighted the opportunity to leverage the close-knit nature of many of the communities in the CoC in the effort to prevent and end youth homelessness.

The following sections describe the needs of youth in the CoC who are at risk of or experience homelessness across a variety of issues and subpopulations.

DATA SOURCES

Data sources used throughout the Statement of Need include the following:

- **Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Data.** Youth/young adults (YYA) who accessed the CoC Coordinated Entry (CE) System or accessed HMIS-participating housing projects. Reports used include the following:

- Estimates presented on housing need and related to the categories of “at risk” and “experiencing homelessness” are drawn from CE data. CE data was analyzed for FFY21 (10/01/2020-09/30/2021) & CY2021 (01/01/2021-12/31/2021) and includes breakdowns of CE data by household type, housing/services need, race, ethnicity, age, gender, outcomes, VI-SPDAT scores, county/regions.
- CE VI-SPDAT data – the VI-SPDAT is the CE common assessment tool used to assess need for those seeking housing/services through the CoC. VI-SPDAT response data is used to help inform the CoC’s understanding of housing and services needs. Data was analyzed for YYA who accessed CE during the FFY21 (10/01/2020-09/30/2021) time period. (Note that due to ongoing changes in HMIS software and reporting, data pulled for Parenting Youth who completed the Family VI-SPDAT was limited.)
- HMIS data on YYA who accessed housing projects participating in HMIS during the FFY21 (10/01/2020-09/30/2021) time period is used to help inform the CoC’s understanding of housing and services needs.
- APR data for youth served in CoC-funded projects operating in the CoC. Data from the CY21 (01/01/2021-12/31/2021) time period is used to help inform the CoC’s understanding of housing and services needs.¹
- **Education Data.**
 - National Homeless Education dataset provided to the CoC by the National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE). Dataset provides information on the number of children and youth identified as homeless by school districts within the CoC region for the 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years. Dataset includes breakdown of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth by school district and living situation.
 - Pennsylvania Dept. of Education Homeless Education Data. Data for the 2019-2020 school year was accessed to help develop estimates of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth data for each county.²
- **Juvenile Justice Data.** Data was drawn from the PA Juvenile Court Judges’ Commission 2020 Juvenile Court Annual report. The report provides county-level data on juvenile court dispositions and factors related to risks of homelessness and housing instability for youth exiting the juvenile justice system.³
- **County Provided Data.** The CoC solicited data from county Children and Youth Services offices (CYS, public child welfare agencies) and county Juvenile Probation Offices (JPO) to flesh out our understanding of need in the 20 counties that comprise the CoC. The data provided on a county-by-county basis is uneven, but has been considered in our understanding of the need among the county-level agencies that reported data.
- **Western PA CoC YHDP Community Input Surveys.** The CoC conducted two surveys as part of the YHDP process:
 - Community Needs Assessment – a survey for providers assessing availability of services related to housing, education, employment, and social and emotional well-being in their

¹ Western PA CoC HMIS APR Data for CoC-Funded Projects: Calendar Year 2021. Western PA CoC. Compiled for Western PA CoC YHDP CCP. https://www.dropbox.com/s/m8sxyba46m4415/WesternPACoC_APRData_Q27h-Q27i-Q13_CY21.pdf?dl=0.

² 2019-20 Pennsylvania EYEH Counts by County. Pennsylvania Dept. of Education Homeless Education Data. Accessed March 1, 2022 at <https://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Homeless%20Education/Pages/default.aspx>.

³ Commonwealth of PA Juvenile Court Data – 2020 Annual Report. Juvenile Court Judges Commission. Retrieved March 3, 2022, from: <https://www.icjc.pa.gov/Research-Statistics/Pages/DispositionReports.aspx>

county/community.⁴ Received 72 responses but not all respondents answered all questions.

- Youth and Young Adult Community Needs Assessment – a survey for youth/young adults regarding their general experiences regarding availability and effectiveness of services related to addressing their homelessness/housing instability and their suggestions for improving the system. Received 6 responses, 1 respondent skipped most questions.

NUMERICAL ESTIMATE OF NEED FOR UNACCOMPANIED & PREGNANT/PARENTING YOUTH AT RISK OF & EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

The numerical estimates of need presented here represent what the One By One CoC believes to be the low end of the need in the CoC. There are a variety of factors which could change this level of need over the coming years, such as implementation of YHDP-funded projects, implementation and/or expiration of COVID-19 recovery funding and protections, rising rental costs, rising costs of transportation, low unemployment, etc.

Using Coordinated Entry data only, the CoC estimates the following as the minimum annual need for housing and services in the CoC:

- Unaccompanied youth at risk of homelessness: 120
- Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness: 95
- Pregnant or parenting youth at risk of homelessness: 45
- Pregnant or parenting youth experiencing homelessness: 40

This data is based on the data for unaccompanied youth and pregnant/parenting youth presenting to the CoC's Coordinated Entry system during the 01/01/2021-12/31/2021 time period. These estimates follow HUD's defined categories of homelessness for determining estimates of "at risk" (Category 2) and "experiencing homelessness" (categories 1 and 4).

These estimates are likely to be low and represent a floor rather than a ceiling when it comes to need as the CoC is unsure what the true ceiling or level of need is in the community for many reasons. The CoC lacks data on the many youth experiencing homelessness and/or housing instability who do not access the CoC's Coordinated Entry system or homeless services in general for a variety of reasons (they do not know how to access services, they do not perceive their experience as homelessness, they do not feel the systems they would need to engage with are responsive to the needs of youth like them or able to help them, etc.). Additional complexity has been added by COVID-19 and its ongoing impacts on YYA, including increased rates of youth disengaged from school and/or work, negative impacts on mental health for youth, the suspension of various activities and programs that engage youth, etc.

We also note that these numbers only account for need among YYA 18-24 years old. While the CoC briefly had a host homes project (funded through the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth program) able to serve unaccompanied youth under 18, that program has since shuttered and there are very few viable options for serving minor youth through the homeless services system. Because of this, the estimate of need among youth under 18 years old is not well developed. To help address the gaps in our

⁴ Western PA Community Needs Assessment Survey Results. Western PA CoC. Compiled for Western PA CoC YHDP Coordinated Community Plan. Accessed at <https://www.dropbox.com/s/14uqovt73214vn4/Western-PA-Community-Needs-Assessment-Results-February2022.pdf?dl=0>

knowledge, the CoC has planned a Youth Count for later in 2022; the Youth Count was planned for 2020 but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the meantime, the CoC can draw from other sources to help further our understanding of the need. One such source is data from the education system, where data show there were 844 unaccompanied homeless youth reported by school districts operating in the CoC's 20-county region during the 2019-20 school year. This was consistent with prior years, with 840 unaccompanied youth reported in 2018-19 and 828 reported in 2017-18. This data can help us better understand the level of need among unaccompanied homeless youth still in school, most of them under 18 years old.

Education data reporting reflects the broader McKinney-Vento Act definition of homeless⁵ used by the Department of Education. As a result, most of the youth reported as homeless by school districts would not be considered as experiencing literal homelessness when applying HUD's definition of homelessness, but may be considered as at risk of homelessness or living with housing instability. Still, due to the precariousness of their housing situation, on any given night youth in these situations can all too easily experience literal homelessness. Living situations for the unaccompanied homeless youth reported in 2019-20 were as follows:

- **Doubled Up: 87.7%** (approximately 740 students). This category encompasses enrolled students who identified as living in doubled up or shared housing due to loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reasons.
- **Hotel/Motel: 2.2%** (approximately 18 students). This category encompasses enrolled students identified as residing in hotels/motels.
- **Sheltered: 7.8%** (approximately 66 students). This category encompasses enrolled students identified as residing in a shelter, transitional housing, or awaiting foster care placement. (Note youth residing in shelter or transitional housing would be counted as literally homeless.)
- **Unsheltered: 2.3%** (approximately 19 students). This category encompasses enrolled students identified as living in unsheltered situations (i.e., cars, parks, campgrounds, temporary trailers including FEMA trailers, abandoned buildings). (Note unsheltered youth would be counted as literally homeless.)

Based on 2019-20 general school enrollment data⁶ 47% of students in grades 7-12 in the 20-county region were female. Applying the state's teen birth rate of 12.6 births per 1000 teen girls,⁷ the CoC estimates that approximately 5 of the 844 unaccompanied homeless youth reported were parenting youth.

Factoring in the data on unaccompanied homeless youth reported by school districts to our earlier estimates, our estimate of need would increase to the following:

- Unaccompanied youth at risk of homelessness: 876
- Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness: 176

⁵ "The McKinney-Vento Definition of Homeless", National Center for Homeless Education, <https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento-definition/>

⁶ "Public School Enrollment Reports: Public School Enrollments 2019-2020", Pennsylvania Department of Education, <https://www.education.pa.gov/DataAndReporting/Enrollment/Pages/PublicSchEnrReports.aspx>, accessed 4 April 2022.

⁷ "Pennsylvania Data", Power to Decide, <https://powertodecide.org/what-we-do/information/national-state-data/pennsylvania>.

- Pregnant or parenting youth at risk of homelessness: 49
- Pregnant or parenting youth experiencing homelessness: 41

IDENTIFICATION, OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

As noted in the sections above, the CoC currently lacks data on many of the YYA in our community who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Many of these youth may be couch surfing or living in circumstances that lack safety and security. Stakeholders and YYA noted that the CoC lacks ways to engage with these youth, with little youth-specific outreach done in the CoC or youth-specific safe spaces, such as drop-in centers, operating where engagement with these youth could occur.

While education system partners work to identify youth in primary and secondary schools, there are limited resources to engage with youth who have graduated from or become disconnected from primary or secondary schools. Other systems that may engage with youth, such as the foster care system and juvenile justice system, often have limited resources as well and have expressed interest in working with the CoC to coordinate on identifying and engaging with youth who are at risk of homelessness.

In addition to the lack of outreach and engagement, YYA and stakeholders have noted that systems that provide services to YYA at risk of and experiencing homelessness are often siloed, difficult to access or navigate, and the availability of resources varies from county to county. As such, youth may often be unaware of resources, do not understand how to access resources even when they know what is available, and/or face roadblocks related to required documentation, eligibility, or other bureaucratic requirements. See Attachment A for a system map developed through a series of 2020 (pre-pandemic) Stakeholder sessions that the CoC conducted to gather input for the development of its YHDP application to HUD; this system map demonstrates the challenges youth face navigating existing systems in their search for help and support in exiting homelessness/housing instability.

Related to the above issues, the YYA and stakeholders engaged during the CCP development process identified the following specific needs:

→ Outreach/Engagement:

- ◆ Stakeholders identified a need to add youth-specific outreach programs, including the potential for mobile outreach given the CoC's large geographic area, and drop-in centers. Drop-in centers could be challenging to locate but it was noted that there are some more populated areas of the CoC where such centers could be sited. Because youth in more rural areas often face transportation challenges when trying to access services, a mobile outreach van was also identified as a potential solution as it would have the ability to travel to areas throughout the CoC.
- ◆ Both drop-in centers and outreach in the community directed specifically to serve youth would need to hire staff able to effectively engage with youth and would offer youth access to basic supplies, toiletries, and services; these strategies would help engage youth through a low-barrier approach that builds trust with youth and assists them in meeting their needs.
- ◆ The CoC recently supported funding for outreach/systems navigation in Westmoreland County, which could serve as a model. This project brings together 16 of the County's school districts to respond to the needs of youth who are unstably housed/ experiencing homelessness. In addition, the outreach specialist will ensure the school district is identifying all youth experiencing homelessness and connecting them to other county-level supports.

→ **Cross-Systems Coordination/Collaboration:**

- ◆ Stakeholders and YYA reported a need for systems that work with youth to coordinate and collaborate more closely so that YYA at risk of or experiencing homelessness can be quickly identified and supported.
- ◆ The CoC has initiated efforts through the YHDP process with county Children and Youth Services Offices (CYS) and Juvenile Probation Offices (JPO) and participants from both systems have indicated interest in continuing to meet to build relationships and deepen understanding of how each system operates, what resources they have available and where there are opportunities to partner to better serve YYA at risk of or experiencing homelessness or housing instability.
 - Specific, increased coordination is needed around discharge planning for youth who lack housing plans, and in the coordination of referrals/services for youth who may potentially be served by multiple systems.
- ◆ The CoC will also build upon existing relationships with those in the education system, particularly the Regional Coordinators for the Pennsylvania's Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Program that cover the CoC's counties/school districts. Both CoC and Education partners agree that continuing to share information on each system's available resources to support youth, definitions of homelessness used, and eligibility requirements for programs is essential to better supporting youth.
- ◆ The CoC will also look to deepen its engagement with other systems providing mainstream services and community-based resources that YYA access. This includes the mental health and behavioral health systems given that various stakeholders noted that many YYA entering the homeless system struggle with mental and/or behavioral health issues.
 - During stakeholder sessions, representatives from various counties noted that many of these partners already meet to coordinate and collaborate on service provision but homeless service providers are often not included in these collaborative efforts.

→ **Systems Navigation Support:**

- ◆ YYA and stakeholders expressed a need for support for YYA as they navigate systems to bridge the gap between referral to a program or project and YYA successfully engaging with or enrolling in those programs or projects. As the Attachment A System Map indicates, the paths that YYA seeking assistance must undertake are often circuitous, unclear, contradictory, and/or confusing. The various systems YYA engage with often use different and, at times, conflicting eligibility standards, duplicative documentation requirements, and their own jargon, processes, and timelines.
- ◆ Systems navigators were identified as a mechanism to improve engagement and outcomes for youth. Such navigation support would provide youth with a consistent point of contact familiar with the needs of each YYA they work with as well as the resources available in the community. Navigation support would provide continuity for YYA across systems and programs to help reduce the number of YYA who become disengaged even when eligible for assistance.

HOUSING

YYA in the One By One CoC have a range of housing needs, many of which relate to a lack of available housing options designed to meet the specific needs of unaccompanied and parenting youth. More

specifically, YYA and stakeholders consistently returned to the lack of crisis housing options for YYA in general and for youth under 18. Stakeholders also discussed the need for more flexible permanent housing options for which youth coming from varying circumstances would be eligible. The following is a synopsis of the housing needs identified:

→ **Coordinated Entry**

- ◆ While not specifically a housing intervention, it was noted among YYA and stakeholders that the CoC's CE system is not currently a youth-friendly system.
 - The system makes use of the TAY-VI-SPDAT for unaccompanied youth and the Family VI-SPDAT for parenting youth; the CoC is interested in exploring other options for a common assessment tool geared toward these youth.
 - CE marketing and outreach is not designed to engage with youth, either in terms of the content of the materials or the outreach methods used.
- ◆ The YAB has already identified a number of steps that could be taken to improve CE's ability to better serve youth. Key among these is training assessors to engage with youth appropriately, improving CE marketing and outreach to both YYA and other youth-serving organizations, conducting cognitive interviewing to ensure intake processes are youth-friendly, and ensuring that vulnerable youth are being prioritized for housing and services appropriately.

→ **Crisis Housing**

- ◆ YYA and stakeholders reported a lack of crisis housing for youth throughout the CoC. While there are emergency shelters available in the CoC, it was reported that youth are often reluctant to access these shelters as youth perceive many shelters to be not youth-friendly and many shelters in the CoC have yet to adopt a low-barrier approach.
 - 130 YYA aged 17-24 (118 Unaccompanied Youth, 13 Parenting Youth) were enrolled in emergency shelter programs reporting into HMIS during the 10/01/2020-09/30/2021 time period.
- ◆ Additionally, it was repeatedly noted that it is difficult to find crisis housing/shelter options for youth under 18 because of their age. Those working in the education system who work with minor youth are often in the position of scrambling to identify an appropriate emergency housing option, which is typically a hotel/motel stay, and the resources to pay for the accommodations.
 - Only 1 youth under 18 was enrolled in emergency shelter programs reporting into HMIS during the 10/01/2020-09/30/2021 time period.
- ◆ YYA and stakeholders identified a need for a wider range of crisis housing options designed to meet the specific needs of youth, such as:
 - Short-term crisis housing using a transitional housing model to provide a temporary supportive environment for youth to stay while work is done to identify longer-term/permanent housing. CoC stakeholders indicated that this could be either site-based, particularly for the CoC's more populated areas, or use a scattered-site approach so that youth could access this housing in more rural areas of the CoC.
 - Use of the CoC Program's Transitional Housing to Rapid Re-Housing Joint Component was also of interest in helping to bridge the gap in providing youth with crisis housing that could more easily transition to a permanent housing option.

- Use of hotel/motel rooms to meet the crisis housing needs of youth in the CoC's more rural areas given the often-limited supply of housing and the intermittent nature of the need in those areas.
- To better serve youth under 18, there was discussion of the need for crisis housing that provides an adequate and appropriate level of supervision on-site to support youth who are minors.

→ **Homelessness Prevention/Diversion/Short-Term Housing Assistance**

- ◆ Among YYA who accessed Coordinated Entry during Calendar Year 2021, 55% were assessed as being at risk of homelessness. This included 43 parenting youth (54% of all parenting youth accessing CE during 2021) and 118 unaccompanied youth (55% of all unaccompanied youth accessing CE during 2021). Using the CE common assessment tool, those designated as at risk of homelessness are flagged as needing homelessness prevention or another short-term housing/service intervention.⁸ (This was consistent with data run for the 10/01/2020-09/30/2021 time period, which indicated 51% in need of low intensity housing/services, 35% in need of medium intensity housing/services and 11% in need of high intensity housing/services.)
- ◆ 72 YYA aged 18-24 (49 Unaccompanied Youth, 23 Parenting Youth) were enrolled in homelessness prevention programs reporting into HMIS during the 10/01/2020-09/30/2021 time period. As homelessness prevention programs in the CoC are not youth-specific, these YYA were accessing services made available to anyone seeking assistance through the CoC. Homelessness prevention programs received additional funding during the 2020-2021 time period through ESG-CV and other Covid-specific funding and was critical to ensuring that households at risk of eviction were able to stay in their homes. With ESG-CV funds spent or expiring, the CoC may be less able to assist YYA households in need of homelessness prevention funds in the coming years.
- ◆ Diversion funding was also identified as a need within the CoC as a tool to assist YYA who may be able to return to a housing situation with limited financial assistance and/or other assistance, such as mediation.

→ **Rapid Re-Housing**

- ◆ Of the YYA who accessed CE in 2021, 37% (30 parenting youth, 76 unaccompanied youth) provided responses on the CoC's common assessment tool that indicated a need for medium-term interventions, such as Rapid Re-Housing (RRH).⁹ While RRH was seen as a need among stakeholders, it was noted that the CoC currently has three youth-specific RRH projects operating within the CoC. Two of these projects operate on a regional level, providing access to youth living in any county within the CoC. Together, the projects served 31 YYA households during the 10/01/2020-09/30/2021 time period:
 - Lawrence County Social Services' My First Place RRH project operates in the Northwest region. The project served 16 youth households during 2021 PIT count and 34 youth in total during CY2021. It is funded to serve 15 youth households at a point in time.
 - Lawrence County Social Services' CoC - TEAM RRH project operates in the Northwest region. The project served 7 youth households during 2021 PIT count and 9 youth in total during CY2021. It is funded to serve 6 youth households at a point in time.

⁸ Prevention Need: At risk of homelessness and not fleeing DV

⁹ Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) Need/Low-Medium Intensity Service Intervention: Literally homeless or fleeing DV and not prioritized for PSH/high intensity service intervention

- SPS Connect - Washington County's HomeTeam RRH project operates in the Southwest region. The project served 15 youth households served during 2021 PIT count and 22 youth in total during CY2021. It is funded to serve 10 youth households at a point in time.
- ◆ In addition to these youth-specific RRH projects, the CoC serves youth in general all ESG/CoC RRH projects based on project prioritization within the Written Standards. During the 10/01/2020-09/30/2021 time period, 73 YYA households (23 parenting youth and 50 unaccompanied youth) were served in these projects.
- ◆ Stakeholders indicated a need for youth-specific RRH projects that would allow youth to stay for up to 36 months, as this would allow the youth to gain stability and work on educational or employment goals without the time pressures of the CoC's regular RRH projects, in which participants are expected to exit within one year.

→ **Permanent Supportive Housing**

- ◆ 2021 CE data indicated the need for high intensity housing, such as Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) or non-time-limited supportive housing, for 9% of YYA (7 parenting youth and 19 unaccompanied youth).¹⁰
 - During the 10/01/2020-09/30/2021 time period, 29 YYA households (9 parenting youth and 20 unaccompanied youth) were enrolled in PSH. One parenting youth was enrolled in a PH- Housing Only project and two unaccompanied youth were enrolled in PH – Housing with Services (no disability required for entry) projects.
 - While there is a youth-specific PSH project operating in the CoC, the majority of project participants are now 25+ years old. While most participants entered the project while under 25 years old, many have aged out of the YYA age group. The project, Butler County Catholic Charities' PATH Transition Age PSH, operates in the CoC's Southwest RHAB and is funded to serve 10 youth households at a point in time, with 4 youth households being served during 2021 PIT count.
- ◆ As noted above, CoC housing providers noted during stakeholder sessions that there is not enough supportive housing for YYA, as most supportive housing requires that participants be chronic and most youth do not have a history of homelessness that meets the chronic definition. Still, providers felt there were many youth who needed the intensity of services provided through supportive housing, particularly related to support for mental and behavioral health issues.
 - This is supported by Calendar Year 2021 APR data for YYA served in CoC-funded youth projects, which show 71% (34 of 48) of unaccompanied youth and 46% (16 of 35) of parenting youth reported having a disabling condition at project exit.¹¹
- ◆ Additionally, stakeholders noted that youth may need access to different types of supportive housing. Input indicated that some youth may benefit from site-based PSH with communal living aspects (increased staff presence, communal meals, etc.) that provide more structure and sense of community while other youth may be more

¹⁰ Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) Need/High Intensity Service Intervention: Literally homeless or fleeing DV AND disabling condition AND VI-SPDAT score in upper range (8+)

¹¹ Western PA CoC HMIS APR Q27i: Disabling Conditions and Income for Youth at Exit, Data for CoC-Funded Projects: Calendar Year 2021. Western PA CoC. Compiled for Western PA CoC YHDP CCP. https://www.dropbox.com/s/m8sxnba46m4415/WesternPACoC_APRData_Q27h-Q27i-Q13_CY21.pdf?dl=0.

interested in scattered-site housing allowing them to live closer to friends/family and/or community-based services.

→ **Host Homes**

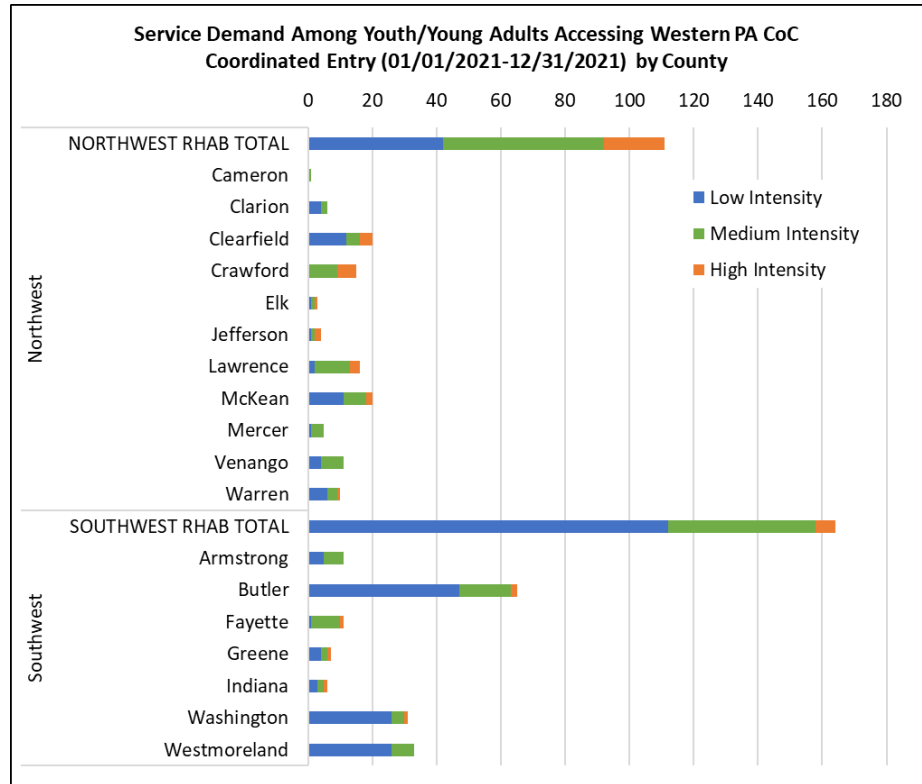
- ◆ In Pennsylvania, unaccompanied youth who are minors and are not parenting are unlikely to be emancipated and are therefore extremely unlikely to be able to execute a lease on their own. The need for housing among these youth is difficult to determine, as the CoC lacks the data to understand the extent of need, although this is raised as a pressing issue any time an unaccompanied minor youth is in need of housing. Through system mapping and conversations with YYA we learned that youth instinctively seek out friends and family for support rather than going to an agency to receive services. Youth requested that the CoC build capacity to support YYA by formalizing arrangements with these natural supports, while also helping them work towards permanency. Stakeholders and YYA indicated that host homes projects may be a good fit for meeting the needs of youth under 18 who are legally unable to live on their own, and may be the best option in a large rural geography where creating multiple shelters is impractical.
- ◆ The CoC worked with a provider to obtain funds for and set up a host homes project in 2018-2020, including engagement with CYS offices in various counties to help identify referrals. The project struggled to identify host home families and, ultimately, the Covid pandemic made it difficult for the project to operate. Additionally, the project was funded through an RHY Basic Center grant, meaning that that funding could only support the first month of the youth's stay. While unsuccessful, lessons were learned from this project and upon its dissolution, one county decided to start up their own host homes project to serve youth in their county with county-level funding. The program is coordinated by many agencies, including CYS. They primarily serve youth aged 16-18 who do not have an identified host. They have also struggled to identify hosts during the pandemic, but have hired YYA to help them to remarket the program.

→ **Shared Housing**

- ◆ Stakeholders and YYA expressed interest in shared housing models that would support youth in living with roommates to decrease living costs and to help offset the potential for loneliness and disconnection that may occur for youth living on their own. This is seen as potentially viable in RRH projects, in particular, although shared housing could also be used by youth who are unlikely to be prioritized for CoC housing projects and need to identify affordable housing options.

→ **Geography & Need**

In addition to reviewing the needs of youth presenting to CE by household type, the CoC also examined housing need by geography, including regions and counties. The CoC is divided into two geographic areas, the Northwest and Southwest Regional Homelessness Advisory Boards (RHABs). While



there are more counties in the Northwest RHAB, several of the counties in the Southwest RHAB have higher populations. The service demand reflects some of the differences in population and service capacity across the CoC’s counties and regions, as seen in the chart to the right. We call attention to this data because there are significant differences between the two RHABS in the housing and service needs of the YYA who accessed Coordinated Entry.

EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT

Education and employment were key concerns for YYA and stakeholders and are a cornerstone of the CoC’s effort to build a system that can meet the needs of youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

According to data provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Education for Children and Youth Experiencing Homelessness (ECYEH) Program, approximately 3,044 children and youth were identified as experiencing homelessness during the 2019-2020 school year in the counties making up the Western PA CoC. While this represented a decrease of 553 children and youth from the 2018-2019 school year, some of that change may be related to the impact of COVID-19 in identifying children and youth. Of that total, approximately 844 youth were identified as unaccompanied youth during the 2019-2020 school year.¹²

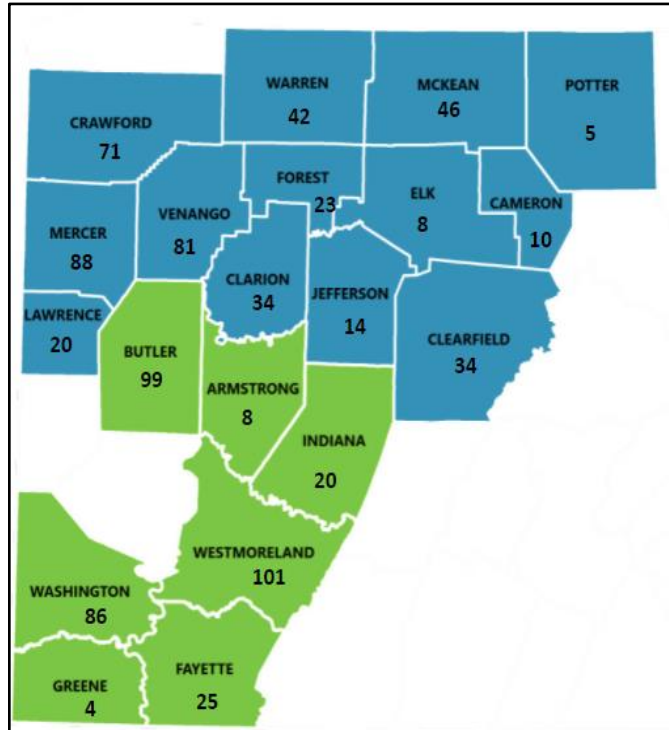
¹² 44 school districts reported a student count between 0 and 2 students. In such cases, the reported data is suppressed to protect student privacy. Therefore, there may be additional youth not included in the count above.

The map to the right shows the breakout by county (Northwest RHAB counties are shaded blue and Southwest RHAB counties are shaded green) and the breakout for the state's education regions is as follows:

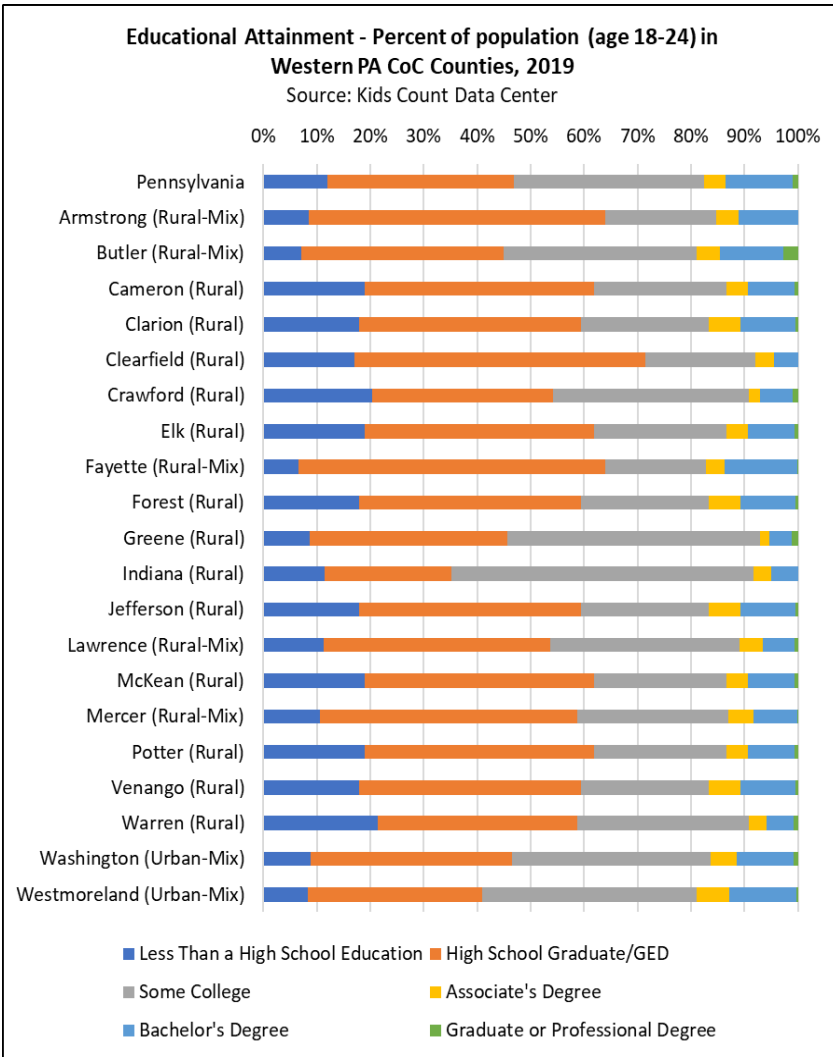
- 216 - Region 4: Fayette, Greene, Washington, Westmoreland
- 529 - Region 5: Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Forest, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Venango, Warren
- 99 - Region 6: Armstrong, Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Indiana, Jefferson, Potter

While not specific to YYA at risk of or experiencing homelessness or housing instability, data on the educational attainment of 18-24 year olds, shown in the Educational Attainment chart, indicates that the CoC's rural counties - with a few exceptions - tend to have a higher rate of YYA with less than a high school education and a lower rate of YYA with a Bachelor's Degree.¹³ YYA at risk of or experiencing homelessness or housing instability are less likely to be able to afford and continue with their education. YYA who participated in the CoC's YHDP process spoke at length about the challenges they face in attending school at all levels (primary, secondary and college), particularly YYA who had been in foster care.

Unaccompanied Youth Reported by Schools as Experiencing Homelessness During the 2019-2020 School Year by County in the Western PA CoC



¹³ Educational Attainment - Percent of population (age 18-24) in Pennsylvania. The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center. Retrieved April 6, 2022, from <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/5181-educational-attainment--percent-of-population-age-18-24?loc=40&loct=2#detailed/2/any/false/1729,37,871,870,573,869,1218,1049,995,932/614,643,1263,1264,1265,1266/11648>



There is a particular risk of young people becoming disconnected during the Covid-19 pandemic, with a recent research report indicating that, nationally, 10.7% of youth 16-24 are neither attending school nor working, a significant increase from prior years.¹⁴ The report also notes that 21.7% of disconnected youth ages 16 and 17 across the U.S. live apart from both parents, compared with 8.3% of connected youth. For unaccompanied youth, particularly those with a history of foster care, the risk of being disconnected from both school and work are seemingly much higher.¹⁵ This, in turn, may put these youth at a higher risk of living in poverty and experiencing housing instability and/or homelessness.

The need for income that will allow YYA to exit homelessness to stable and permanent housing options is underscored by data gathered through the CE common assessment tool from those seeking housing assistance through CE during the 10/01/2020-09/30/2021 time period. When asked, “Do you get any money from the government, an inheritance, an allowance, working under the table, a regular job, or anything like that?,” 62% (122) of the unaccompanied youth and 58% (52) of the parenting youth who completed the tool responded “No.” Additionally, data on youth served during Calendar Year 2021 in CoC-funded projects (includes Services Only, Transitional Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid ReHousing project types)¹⁶ show:

¹⁴ Lewis, Kristen. A Decade Undone: 2021 Update. New York: Measure of America, Social Science Research Council, 2021. Accessed April 6, 2022 at <https://ssrc-static.s3.amazonaws.com/moa/ADecadeUndone2021Update.pdf>.

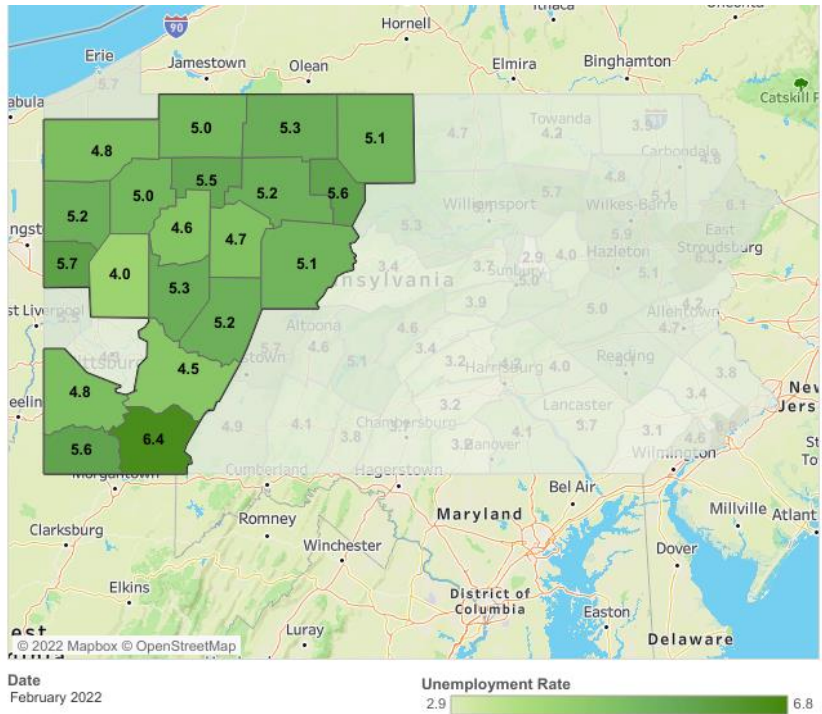
¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Western PA CoC HMIS APR Q27h: Client Cash Income Category - Earned/Other Income Category - By Start & Annual Assessment/Exit Status - Youth, Data for CoC-Funded Projects: Calendar Year 2021. Western PA CoC. Compiled for Western PA CoC YHDP CCP. https://www.dropbox.com/s/m8sxynba46m4415/WesternPACoC_APRData_Q27h-Q27i-Q13_CY21.pdf?dl=0.

- Upon entering the project (148 YYA): 58% (86) of youth reported no source of income, 21% (31) reported having only earned income, 18% (26) reported having on non-employment income, and 3% (5) reported having both earned and non-employment income.
- Upon exiting the project (78 YYA): 35% (27) of youth reported no source of income, 31% (24) reported having only earned income, 24% (19) reported having on non-employment income, and 9% (7) reported having both earned and non-employment income.

This indicates that identifying a source of income remains a challenge for many of the YYA who experience homelessness, even those enrolled in homeless assistance projects. Unemployment rates remain higher than the state average of 5.1% in half of the CoC’s counties, as shown in the map.¹⁷ Unaccompanied and parenting youth experiencing homelessness and housing instability may experience additional challenges in supporting themselves and any dependent children without being able to rely on significant financial support from family/friends as many other YYA do. Pennsylvania’s living wage stands at \$16.46/hour and accounts for a monthly housing cost of \$741.¹⁸ Similarly, the National Low Income Housing Coalition’s 2021 Out of Reach report indicates that average housing wage for someone seeking to afford a studio in the Western PA CoC region is \$11.22/hour, translating to an annual income of \$23,332.¹⁹

PA Labor Force Statistics, February 2022, County Rate



YYA who participated in the CoC’s YHDP process expressed that they experience conflict between their desire to continue with their education and improve their potential earning power in the future with their need to work in order to earn income to meet their basic needs. This input was provided during the education-specific stakeholder meetings, which included two general education stakeholder sessions and numerous in-person and virtual county-level or institution-specific meetings, that were held by the CoC to deepen our understanding of the education needs of youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

¹⁷Labor Force Statistics Dashboard. PA Center for Workforce Information and Analysis. Accessed April 6, 2022 at <https://www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/dashboards/Pages/Labor-Stats.aspx>.

¹⁸ Glasmeier, Amy K. Living Wage Calculator: Living Wage Calculation for Pennsylvania. 2020. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Accessed April 8, 2022 at <https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/42>.

¹⁹Out of Reach 2021: Pennsylvania. National Low Income Housing Coalition. Accessed April 8, 2022 at <https://reports.nlihc.org/oor/pennsylvania>.

Advocates for Change members also discussed the topic of education during a listening session that they held with the YHDP Core Team. Through these various input sessions, the following needs were identified:

- Educational institutions (K12 and higher education) indicated an increase in mental health needs, most of which are going unmet because schools lack the resources and community mental health providers are overwhelmed. They felt the mental health needs were related to the current climate in the country, isolation due to Covid, inner turmoil about the current political and race relationship landscape, etc. In addition, an increase in housing instability, and a lack of awareness around the resources available exacerbated these problems.
- Youth who experience housing instability and/or live in poverty do not see higher education as an option, and there is a lack of information on how they can access resources to help them see it as an option and the available resources to make it possible for them to attend an institution. Additionally, if they go onto higher education, they struggle to transition. Stakeholders reported a need for the creation of a warm hand-off process for youth coming from all systems, including K-12, CYS, JPO, etc. Stakeholders from some higher education institutions indicated that youth who are exiting care are “dropped off” without any supplies or an understanding of what to expect and how to navigate the educational system.
- Youth have stated there is a general lack of resources available for them in higher education for books, housing and other necessities. Even when resources are available they are not well advertised and services are siloed, making it difficult to access them.
- There is a lack of coordination between housing and education systems. This includes a lack of understanding from the education system on their role in the housing system and the housing needs of students with a history or experience of homelessness or housing instability.
- Youth have stated they need to choose between education and employment. They indicated they feel like they need to quit school and work full-time, even at a low-wage job, because they are so worried about being able to meet their basic needs and pay their bills. They would like communities to help meet those needs so they can see continuing their education as a viable option worth focusing on. Note, this affects youth who live in poverty and youth who are experiencing housing instability due to lack of money and natural supports. If a program is created, youth reported that it would be helpful for there to be an income guideline versus a housing guideline, as some youth continue to need support after exiting a homeless assistance project.
- Youth reported that affording college is difficult for various reasons. For example, scholarships are often not available to part-time students who need to work, youth are concerned about taking on large educational loans or cannot take out such loans because they do not have a cosigner.

Unfortunately, the CoC was unable to engage representatives of the workforce development system in the YHDP stakeholder sessions. However, 65% of providers did indicate through the CoC’s provider survey that there are employment supports for those who are currently experiencing or have previously experienced homelessness and housing instability (i.e., job readiness programs, job corp, WIOA, CareerLink) and that they are aware of them.

Given this, the CoC realizes that there is a significant need to build relationships with the workforce development partners in our region. While many YYA exiting homelessness and housing instability will benefit from continuing their education, it will be essential to identify employment opportunities for YYA that allow them to support themselves and meet their basic needs. The CoC has encouraged

providers and stakeholders who have engaged in the YHDP process to consider employing YYA with lived experience of homelessness in their own agencies, but this is just a start. More work must be done to truly develop a range of employment opportunities for YYA.

JUVENILE JUSTICE

Prior engagement or history with the criminal justice system is a risk factor for homelessness and housing instability. To better understand this risk for youth in the CoC, we examined data made available by the PA Juvenile Court Judges Commission in their Commonwealth of PA Juvenile Court Data - 2020 Annual Report²⁰ related to various potential risk factors:

- There were 2,122 delinquency dispositions in Western PA CoC counties in 2020. Of those 78% of youth lived with a parent, 6% with a relative, 0.5% with a foster family and 13% in some other living situation. Those youth with delinquency dispositions who were not living with their family may be at a higher risk for housing instability.
- 91.2% of youth were in school among delinquency dispositions (new allegations), with 6.2% reported as out of school. Those youth who were out of school may have a higher risk of facing housing instability upon release.
- In Western PA CoC counties in 2020, there were 256 new out of home placements, 727 placement reviews, 274 releases from placement. Youth who experience out of home placement and subsequently return home often face higher risk of homelessness and housing instability.
 - In 2020, the counties with the highest numbers of new out of home placements were: Westmoreland (73), Mercer (29), Washington (28) and Butler (21).
 - Placement reviews were highest in Westmoreland (252), Washington (71), Mercer (65) and Butler (55).
 - Placement releases were highest in Westmoreland (86), Washington (39), Mercer (34) and Butler (17).

The CoC held one session with county-level Juvenile Probation Office (JPO) staff and several county-level conversations with Mercer, Crawford and Westmoreland counties. During these sessions, stakeholders stated the following to be gaps they observed in their work with youth:

- A lack of mental health services available within school systems and in the community that provide care to prevent escalating behaviors that frequently lead, unnecessarily, into JPO care. Additionally, youth with mental health issues need alternative options and not necessarily JPO care.
- A lack of coordination between youth-serving systems results in a lack of case conferencing and working with youth to determine the next best steps with them. JPO feels that they have become the “catch all” for cases and are being stretched beyond their capacity. Additionally, they only have certain resources for youth, and due to being inundated with cases they are placing youth in situations that are unnecessary and not the appropriate solution.
- There is a lack of housing options for youth who are eligible to leave JPO care. They identified the following issues:
 - ◆ Some youth cannot go home because their family does not want them back or that is not an option based on their charges.
 - ◆ Some youth need a higher level of care and that is not available in the county.

²⁰ Commonwealth of PA Juvenile Court Data – 2020 Annual Report. Juvenile Court Judges Commission. Retrieved March 3, 2022, from: <https://www.jcjc.pa.gov/Research-Statistics/Pages/DispositionReports.aspx>

- ◆ Some youth want to be self-sufficient but lack independent living skills and/or a job or access to educational opportunities.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES

It is well established that youth with a history of engagement with public child welfare systems are at a greater risk of homelessness and housing instability. It is difficult to gather county-level data related to the number of youth aging out of foster care each year, or the number of youth aging out of foster care each year who experience homelessness, as this data is not made publicly available in a consistent manner. Results from the CoC's attempts to collect this data directly from counties were inconsistent. County-level data from 2018 indicate that the number of children of all ages placed out of home on a given day (9/30) for the CoC's 20 counties totaled 576 youth aged 13-20.²¹ Out-of-home placements include family foster homes, group homes, community-based placement, emergency placement, supervised independent living, and residential placement and youth in these placements may have a great risk of homelessness/housing instability.

The CoC accessed state-level data for Pennsylvania to help inform our understanding and planning around the needs of youth exiting the foster care system and the increased risk of homelessness and housing instability for youth exiting the foster care system.²² Below is Pennsylvania state-level data related to youth exiting foster care:

- Young Adult Outcomes by Age 21:
 - 63% of young adults exiting the foster care system have stable housing at age 21, while 37% have unstable housing.
 - 44% of young adults exiting the foster care system have full or part-time employment at age 21, compared to 57% of the state's general population.
 - 75% of young adults exiting the foster care system have their high school diploma/GED at age 21, compared to 92% of the state's general population.
 - 28% of young adults exiting the foster care system are parents by the age of 21.
- Pennsylvania's foster care population is older than the overall United States' foster care population: 33% (8,639) of Pennsylvania's foster care population is ages 14+, compared to 25% (171,162) of the United States' foster care population which is ages 14+.

To inform the CoC's understanding of the specific needs of youth who are served through CYS offices in the CoC region, the CoC held one CYS-specific stakeholder session and two county-level sessions with Washington and Crawford counties. During these sessions and others, stakeholders shared the following information regarding needs related the child welfare:

- There is a lack of services provided to youth who are signing themselves out of care or aging out of care.
- Stakeholders with experience in using HUD's Fostering Youth Independence (FYI) vouchers report that the maximum rental assistance allowed under the vouchers forces youth to identify

²¹ Foster Care - September 30 snapshot by age group in Pennsylvania. 2017-18 Data for Youth 13-20. The Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data Center. Retrieved April 6, 2022, from <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/8561-foster-care--september-30-snapshot-by-age-group?loc=40&loct=2#detailed/5/5381,5388,5390,5394-5395,5398,5402,5404-5405,5408,5410-5411,5415,5420-5421,5431,5439-5441,5443/false/37,871/4574/17264,17265>.

²² 2018 Pennsylvania State Profile: Transition-Age Youth in Foster Care. Retrieved April 3, 2022, from https://www.papartnerships.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Pennsylvania_StateProfile.pdf

units in areas that youth do not want to live because they are far from resources and/or not near family/friends.

- YYA who attended general stakeholder sessions and who responded to the youth survey reported that Independent Living programs made available to them through CYS offices were very helpful to them in providing a combination of housing and case management services that supported them as they transitioned out of care.
- Stakeholders across systems noted the need for more cross-systems coordination to ensure the needs of youth are being met appropriately. Concern was expressed that the various systems that engage with youth are working without adequate resources, which impacts their ability, capacity and/or willingness to engage with youth who may fall into other systems of care.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE/HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Western PA CoC has been fortunate to receive multiple DV Bonus projects through the CoC Program Competition in recent years, increasing the CoC's ability to serve those feeling domestic violence. Still, the CoC has found that few youth accessing services through the CoC indicate that they are fleeing domestic violence:

- For the Calendar Year 2021 time period: 1 parenting youth and 4 unaccompanied youth.
- For the 10/01/2020-09/30/2021 time period: 1 parenting youth and 5 unaccompanied youth.

In contrast to those numbers, responses to the CE common assessment tool gathered from youth for the 10/01/2020-09/30/2021 time period indicated that many youth report experiences of violence and/or abuse, along with risks of exploitation.

- Of the 198 Unaccompanied Youth for which there is data:
 - 44% reported that an unhealthy/ abusive relationship had contributed to their housing instability
 - 33% reported that violence at home between family members relationship had contributed to their housing instability
 - 26% reported a risk of some kind heightening their likelihood of exploitation
- Of the 89 Parenting Youth for which there is data:
 - 54% reported lack of stable housing due to relationship breakdown, unhealthy/ abusive relationship, or b/c family or friends caused eviction
 - 10% reported a risk of some kind heightening their likelihood of exploitation

Specifically related to the risk factors/vulnerabilities for human trafficking, national-level 2020 data gathered from victims of human trafficking accessing the The National Human Trafficking Hotline and reported by the Polaris Project indicate the following²³:

- Runaway/homeless youth status was the second highest reported risk factor/vulnerability for sex trafficking, reported by 16.4% of victims of sex trafficking. It was the fourth highest risk factor for overall human trafficking, reported by 8.4% of victims of all types of human trafficking.
- Unstable housing was the third highest risk factor for human trafficking overall, reported by 8.9% of victims, along with the third highest risk factor for labor trafficking (reported by 2.9% of victims) and sex trafficking (reported by 14.4%), and subsets.

²³ Polaris Analysis of 2020 Data from the National Human Trafficking Hotline. Polaris Project. Retrieved April 19, 2022, from <https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Polaris-Analysis-of-2020-Data-from-the-National-Human-Trafficking-Hotline.pdf>.

- Other highly reported risk factors/vulnerabilities among victims of sex trafficking include child welfare system involvement (9.1%), foster care (4.7%) and mental health concern (13.7%).

Other studies have also identified prior foster care/child welfare involvement a significant risk factor for human trafficking, to varying degrees.²⁴ Given the national data indicating a higher risk for human trafficking among YYA experiencing or at risk of homelessness, the CoC has identified the need to improve its understanding of the prevalence of human trafficking for the YYA it seeks to serve and to identify housing solutions targeted to meeting the unique needs of survivors.

To gather more information from victims services providers, the CoC held one DV-specific YHDP stakeholder session and numerous calls with regional and/or statewide DV agencies such as the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) and Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape (PCAR). The following information was reported to the CoC by those participating in those discussion in terms of gaps in the system pertaining to working with youth fleeing human trafficking:

- ⇒ DV agencies cannot serve survivors of trafficking unless they have blended funding. Most agencies in the Western CoC do not have blended funding.
- ⇒ DV agencies cannot serve youth under the age of 18. Cases are reported to county-level Children and Youth Services (CYS) offices, and in trafficking cases there is a lack of resources for survivors through CYS and the DV agencies. This leads to some youth returning to dangerous situations or being sent to receive services in other counties, normally Allegheny.

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

While safe, secure, affordable, and sustainable housing provides the foundation for YYA at risk of or experiencing homelessness and housing instability, the ability of YYA to access effective support services and community resources is essential to ensuring that they are able to build the future they envision for themselves. Understanding this, the CoC sought to better understand the needs of YYA related to issues that impact their social and emotional well-being.

Input was gathered directly from YYA through a Youth and Young Adults Needs Survey, a YHDP Core Team Listening Session facilitated by A4C members, and ongoing A4C participation in the CCP development process and in various YHDP stakeholder sessions. Data from CE common assessment tool responses was also analyzed to understand the range of challenges experienced by YYA who seek assistance from the CoC. Additional input was gathered from providers through the YHDP stakeholder sessions and the CoC's Community Needs Assessment Provider Survey. Feedback included the following:

- Through the YYA Needs Survey and A4C feedback, YYA reported that effective case management can be crucial to assisting youth in sustaining housing. YYA stated that they often lack some of the life skills needed to maintain their housing and positive relationships with others and to navigate complex systems. YYA reported that their preference would be for life skills to be included in case management rather than through classes. Several YYA indicated that the case management support provided through Independent Living programs or housing programs was very important in their efforts to move forward on their personal goals (i.e., continuing their education, finding employment or income sources, accessing other services, etc.).

²⁴ Why Youth in Foster Care Are Vulnerable to Human Trafficking and How Caregivers Can Protect Them. KVC Health Systems. 2021 Jan 11. Retrieved April 19, 2022 from <https://www.kvc.org/blog/foster-care-human-trafficking/>.

- YYA also pointed to the need for those providing services to be trained in approaches such as Positive Youth Development, Trauma-Informed Care, Housing First and other person-centered and evidence-based models, to ensure that staff have a better understanding of the challenges faced by YYA and ways to appropriately engage with YYA in delivering services. Working with A4C, the CoC also identified the need for continued training among CoC providers on adultism, power sharing and equity in order to more effectively collaborate with A4C and YYA who seek CoC services. Ensuring that YYA seeking assistance and the A4C members participating in the CoC's planning work feel heard, seen, and respected is a crucial aspect of improving their social and emotional well-being.
- The CoC analyzed responses to the CE common assessment tool gathered from youth for the 10/01/2020- 09/30/2021 time period to help inform our understanding of the social and emotional well-being of YYA seeking services from the homeless services system.²⁵ Overall, both unaccompanied and parenting youth seeking services through CE experience a range of challenging circumstances related to safety, physical health, mental health, income, legal issues, and housing stability. While not all youth experience all of the risk factors and challenges reported, it is important that the CoC be able to meet the unique needs of each youth.
 - Among the 198 Unaccompanied Youth who completed the assessment, the following experiences, needs and issues were identified:²⁶
 - 42% had been homeless two or more times in last three years: 9% Zero, 44% Once, 23% Twice, 19% 3+ times
 - In the prior six months: 21% stayed 1+ nights in in a holding cell, jail, prison or juvenile detention, 27% used a crisis service, 28% had been hospitalized as an inpatient, 48% received health care at ED/ER
 - 23% reported having been incarcerated while under 18 years old
 - 27% reported a risk of harm (been attacked and/or threatened to harm themselves/someone else)
 - 32% reported having legal issues
 - 26% reported a risk of exploitation
 - 62% reported no source of money
 - 44% reported a lack of planned activities that made them feel happy & fulfilled
 - Lack of stable housing due to: 52% - Family/Friends, 44% - Unhealthy/ abusive relationship, 33% - Violence at home between family members
 - 49% reported having a disabling condition
 - 30% reported an issue related to substances use
 - 19% reported having a chronic health issue
 - Trouble maintaining housing/kicked out of place they were staying due to: 20% - Mental health issue, 14% - Learning disability, developmental disability or other impairment
 - 32% avoid getting medical help when sick/not well
 - 22% reported not taking medication that a doctor said they should be taking

²⁵ The common assessment tool used by the Western PA CoC is the TAY-VI-SPDAT for unaccompanied youth and the Family VI-SPDAT for parenting youth.

²⁶TAY & Adult VI-SPDAT Responses (10/01/2020-09/30/2021). Western PA CoC. Data compiled for this CCP.

https://www.dropbox.com/s/3nwrpoc93hnui8n/Western-PA-CoC_YHDP-Data_FFY21-CES-VISPDAT-Adult%26TAY-Results.pdf?dl=0.

- Among the 89 Parenting Youth who completed the assessment, the following experiences, needs and issues were identified:²⁷
 - Number of year of housing instability: 13% - Zero, 18% - 1 Year, 10% - 2 Years, 17% - 3+ Years
 - In the prior 6 months: 9% received health care at ED/ER, 21% used a crisis service, 26% had been hospitalized as an inpatient, 28% talked to police
 - 18% reported a risk of harm (been attacked and/or threatened to harm themselves/someone else)
 - 33% reported having legal issues
 - 10% reported a risk of exploitation
 - 58% reported no source of money
 - 44% reported a lack of planned activities that made them feel happy & fulfilled
 - 54% reported lack of stable housing due to relationship breakdown, unhealthy/abusive relationship, or b/c family or friends caused eviction
 - 31% reported their homelessness was caused by abuse or trauma
 - 30% reported having a physical health issue
 - 11% reported an issue related to substances use
 - 18% reported having a mental health issue that impacted their housing
 - 14% reported not taking medication that a doctor said they should be taking, taking medication in a way not prescribed, and/or selling medications
- Feedback from providers and stakeholders indicated a particular need for available, accessible and effective mental health and behavioral health services for youth seeking housing assistance. Stakeholders repeatedly raised this issue and noted that their experience is that the pandemic has exacerbated the mental health issues that many YYA live with and that resources in the community are stretched thin.
 - This is supported by APR data for the three CoC-funded youth specific RRH projects, which show 54% of unaccompanied youth and 39% of parenting youth reported having a mental health disorder at project start.²⁸
- Additionally, providers who participated in the stakeholder sessions noted the need for life skills coaching and mentoring. Providers suggested tapping into volunteers from the community to work with youth on developing life skills and to provide additional positive adult relationships for youth.

Using the various input and data available, the CoC determined that to be able to meet the unique needs of each YYA at risk of or experiencing homelessness and housing instability, access to a wide range of support services and community resources should be available as not all YYA need exactly the same supports. Services that the CoC identified as being needed include:

- Legal services, such as direct representation for civil and criminal matters, record expungement and assistance obtaining an ID;

²⁷ Family VI-SPDAT Responses (10/01/2020-09/30/2021). Western PA CoC. Data compiled for this CCP. https://www.dropbox.com/s/4du9ilziopy8cux/Western-PA-CoC_YHDP-Data_FFY21-CES-VISPDAT-Family-Results.pdf?dl=0.

²⁸ Western PA CoC HMIS APR Q13a2: Number of Health Conditions at Project Start, Data for Youth-Specific RRH CoC-Funded Projects (PA0775, PA0900, PA0901): Calendar Year 2021. Western PA CoC. Compiled for Western PA CoC YHDP CCP. https://www.dropbox.com/s/m8sxynda46m4415/WesternPACoC_APRData_Q27h-Q27i-Q13_CY21.pdf?dl=0.

- Home-based services, such as counseling, activity groups and substance abuse prevention to keep youth with family;
- Respite care, such as planned or crisis interventions to provide a “break” for youth and family;
- Free effective mental and behavioral health care, such as individual & group counseling, suicide prevention, substance use treatment/recovery, and emotional wellness;
- Family support services for unaccompanied homeless youth, such as all-family counseling, home visiting, parenting assistance, and affordable/accessible childcare for young parent families;
- Mentoring services for unaccompanied homeless youth, such as on-going guidance and support from peers or adults, with an emphasis on healthy, long term relationships;
- Permanent connections services for those who are currently experiencing or have previously experienced homelessness and housing instability, such as family reunification, kinship care placements, legal guardianships, and/or supportive services to build long-term relationships with safe and caring adults); and
- Post-housing support services (aftercare services) for those who have previously experienced homelessness or housing instability, such as case management, counseling and referrals.

To better understand the scope and accessibility of those services across the region, one of the YHDP Core Team’s A4C members led a process to develop and share the Community Needs Assessment Provider Survey. The 46 provider responses recorded indicated the following:

| Services | I do not know | No there are no services available | Other - it's complicated | There are some services (There are - but eligibility might be an issue) | Yes there are available services (I know where to refer easily) |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Legal services | 37% | 17% | 4% | 28% | 13% |
| Home-based services | 26% | 6.5% | 6.5% | 28% | 33% |
| Respite care | 24% | 33% | 0% | 30% | 13% |
| Free effective mental health care | 33% | 11% | 2% | 28% | 26% |
| Family support services | 33% | 10% | 0% | 33% | 24% |
| Mentoring services | 33% | 28% | 2% | 20% | 13% |
| Permanent connections services | 37% | 4% | 2% | 37% | 20% |

A fairly consistent number of providers who responded to the survey reported not knowing whether the services asked about were operating within the counties in which they work, while other providers were aware of services and knew how to refer clients. A fairly high number of providers noted that some services are available but eligibility may be an issue. The variation in responses likely indicates the following issues:

- The availability and quality of support services varies across the CoC’s counties. Anecdotal input indicates that less populated counties are less likely to provide a range of services.
- Providers across systems and YYA are often unaware of the existence of resources that are available in their community.

These issues point to a need for the CoC to develop a better understanding of the services available in each county, the eligibility requirements for those services, and whether those services adequately address the needs of YYA. While the CoC has made efforts to develop lists of the resources available, it remains challenging to maintain this information across the CoC’s 20-county region and additional work will be needed to identify how to effectively advertise and share the availability of services.

In terms of the services needed by YYA in the CoC, the services included in the survey questions reflect the variety of services that the CoC has identified as needed to be able to support YYA at risk of or experiencing homelessness or housing instability. While safe and affordable housing provides the foundation for the YYA seeking assistance through the CoC, the ability of YYA to access services such as those included in the survey will be key to ensuring that they are able to build the future they envision for themselves.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

The CoC is working to advance its work on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and the CoC’s DEI Committee has developed a DEI Values & Truth Statements document to help guide the CoC.²⁹ Data on race, ethnicity and gender is available to provide insight into those seeking access to housing and services through the CoC.

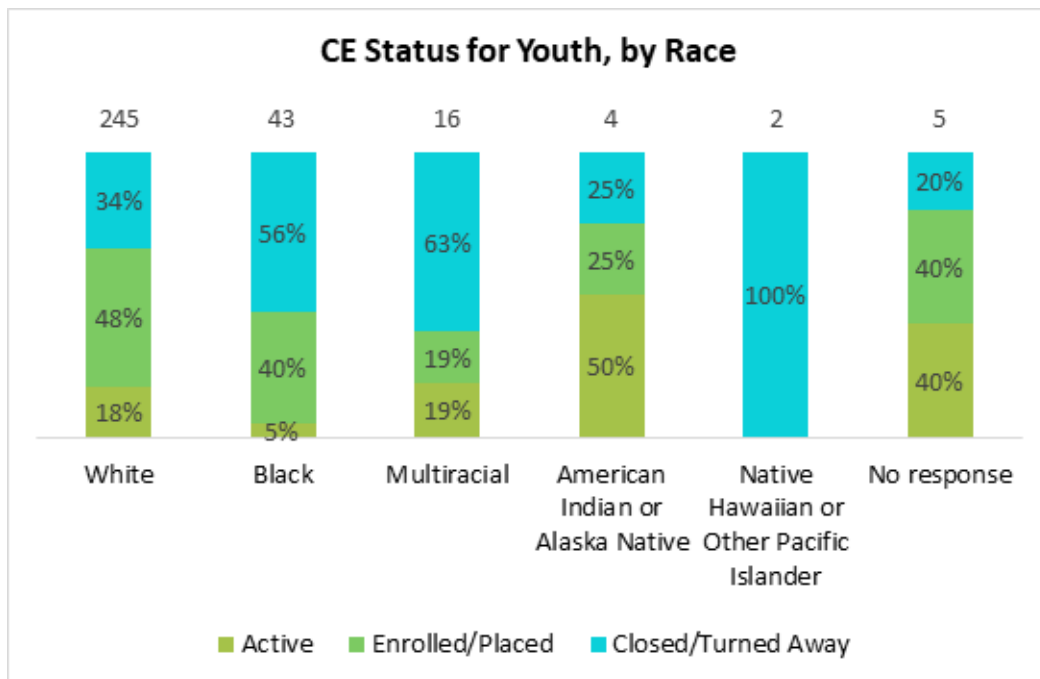
Race

Of youth who accessed CE during the 10/01/2020-09/30/2021 time period, the majority were white (78%), followed by 14% of youth who were Black or African American. 5% of youth were Multi-racial followed by small percentages of youth who identified as other races.

| Race | Total | % |
|-------------------------------------------|-------|-----|
| White | 245 | 78% |
| Black or African American | 43 | 14% |
| Multi-racial | 16 | 5% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 4 | 1% |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 2 | 1% |
| No response | 5 | 2% |

²⁹ Western PA CoC DEI Values and Truth Statements. Developed by the Western PA CoC DEI Committee. Available at https://www.dropbox.com/s/7d83qu64rgejq0n/Western-PA-CoC_DEI-Truths-Values.pdf?dl=0.

When reviewing CE outcomes by race, the CoC has identified disparities, which can be seen in the chart below (“CE Status for Youth, by Race”). Based on the data shown in the chart, which covers the 10/01/2020-09-30/2021 time period, white youth had the highest rate of enrollment/placement in housing (48% of 245 total youth assessed). Black youth had a lower rate of enrollment/placement in housing than white youth at 40% of 43 total youth assessed. In addition, black youth had a higher rate of being closed/turned away than white youth (56% vs. 34%). This presents a potential disparity within the CoC’s coordinated entry system for black youth that merits further investigation. The remaining groups of youth by race all had quite low rates of enrollment/placement; however, all of the other racial groups had low numbers of youth assessed (16 or fewer youth for each of the other groups) so it is difficult to assess potential disparities based on the small sample size.

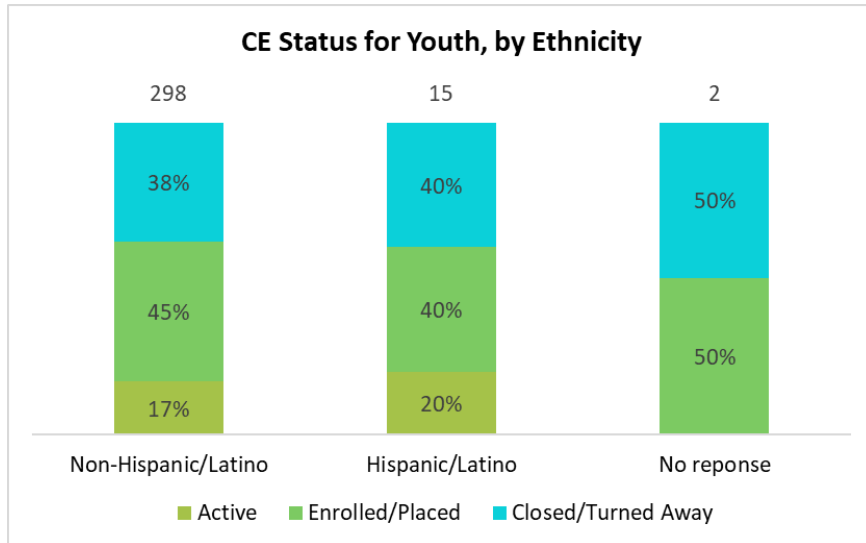


Ethnicity

The majority of youth (95%) accessing CE during the 10/01/2020-09/30/2021 time period were Non-Hispanic/Latino, and a small percentage 5% were Hispanic/Latino. Hispanic/Latino persons make up 8% of the general population within the CoC’s geographic area and Non-Hispanic/Latino persons make up 92% of the general population within the CoC’s geographic area.

| Ethnicity | Total | % |
|---------------------|-------|-----|
| Non-Hispanic/Latino | 298 | 95% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 15 | 5% |
| No response | 2 | 1% |

Although the CoC reviewed CE outcomes by ethnicity, it is difficult to assess potential disparities in outcomes based on ethnicity due to the fact that there were very few Hispanic/Latino youth assessed through CE (15 Hispanic/Latino youth assessed vs. 298 Non-Hispanic/Latino youth). The chart below shows outcomes by ethnicity for youth accessing CE during the 10/01/2020-09/30/2021 time period.



Gender

A little over half of youth accessing coordinated entry during the 10/01/2020-09/30/2021 time period identified as female (55%), followed by 44% who identified as male. Roughly half of the female youth accessing coordinated entry were parenting, and half were unaccompanied. The majority of males accessing coordinated entry were unaccompanied (85%), and a smaller percentage (15%) were parenting.

The coordinated entry system also served a small number of youth who identified as transgender and gender non-conforming. The CoC acknowledges that numbers for transgender and gender non-conforming youth may be underreported if youth self-report gender based on their gender expression and/or are not comfortable self-disclosing their gender minority status within the CE screening and assessment process; therefore, it is difficult to base conclusions on the services needs of gender minority youth using this data. Further work should be done by the CoC in identifying potential disparities in accessing services for gender minority youth. Additionally, the CoC and A4C have planned a Youth Count for fall 2022 to better capture the unique needs of youth within the CoC. This will include gathering data to better understand the prevalence and needs of transgender and gender non-conforming youth experiencing homelessness and housing instability.

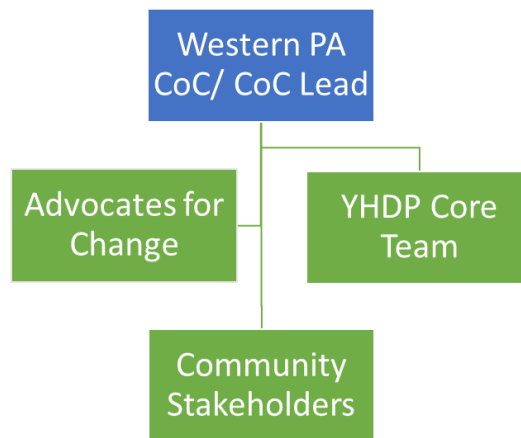
| Gender | # Total | % of Total | # Parenting | % Parenting | # Un-accompanied | % Un-accompanied |
|-----------------------|---------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|
| Female | 174 | 55.4% | 88 | 81% | 86 | 42% |
| Male | 137 | 43.6% | 20 | 19% | 117 | 57% |
| Transgender | 2 | 0.6% | 0 | 0% | 2 | 1% |
| Gender Non-Conforming | 1 | 0.3% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 0% |
| No response | 1 | 0.3% | 0 | 0% | 1 | 0% |

LGBQ Youth

The CoC does not currently collect sexual orientation information through CE or within the HMIS system. However, the CoC recognizes the importance of understanding the scope of needs of LGBQ youth within the CoC and of identifying potential disparities for LGBQ youth in accessing services. The CoC’s planned Youth Count will assist the CoC better capturing data on the unique needs of youth within the CoC, including the prevalence and needs of LGBQ youth.

Governance

To accomplish the established vision and outlined goals of this plan, Western PA will establish a YHDP Core Team, which will include A4C members, representatives of youth-serving organizations, funders and affordable housing providers, and health/mental health providers. The YHDP governance structure will specifically include the Western PA Continuum of Care (CoC)/CoC Lead, A4C, YHDP Core Team, and community stakeholders. Below is an organizational chart, followed by a table indicating the responsible party and description of the process for each of the roles/responsibilities/ and decisions during the YHDP planning and implementation process.



| Roles/responsibilities/decisions | Responsible Party | Description of Process |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Writing the Coordinated Community Plan (CCP) | CoC Lead, A4C, Stakeholders and YHDP Core Team | There will be five stakeholder sessions, and a cross-system session with each of the following sectors: education, domestic violence, juvenile probation and Children and Youth Services. In addition, there will be a survey released to the community and a second survey specifically for youth experiencing housing instability in the region and/or in youth dedicated CoC-funded programs. The CoC Lead and A4C members will take the information gathered to write the CCP, which will be reviewed and approved by the Core Team. |
| Reviewing and approving CCP | CoC Lead, A4C and YHDP Core Team | The CoC Lead will present the CCP to A4C and the YHDP Core Team for review and approval. The CCP will be presented to the stakeholder groups and the CoC Governing Board. |

| Roles/responsibilities/decisions | Responsible Party | Description of Process |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CCP New Project Lists | CoC Lead, A4C, and YHDP Core Team | The CoC Lead will create a list of eligible project types using the feedback from stakeholder sessions and recommendations stemming from the CoC’s system modeling. This information will first be presented to A4C for review and approval, followed by the non-conflicted YHDP Core Team members for review and approval. |
| Request for Proposals (RFP)/Application | CoC Lead, A4C and YHDP Core Team | The CoC Lead will create the RFP/application that aligns with the CCP, using input from A4C and stakeholder groups. The RFP/application will be presented to A4C for review and approval. The approved version will be presented to non-conflicted YHDP Core Team members for review and approval. Once approved it will be released to the community. |
| Reviewing and ranking the applications | CoC Lead, A4C and YHDP Core Team | The CoC Lead will receive and provide applications to A4C and non-conflicted YHDP Core Team members to review, evaluate and prioritize. All applicants will be notified if they were approved or rejected and will have the opportunity to appeal decisions. All appeals will be reviewed by A4C and non-conflicted YHDP Core Team members. The CoC Lead will facilitate the application review, selection and ranking process. |
| Continuous Quality Improvement | CoC Lead, A4C and YHDP Core Team | The CoC Lead and A4C will collaborate to create a CQI process. This will include: the creation of a monitoring tool, which will be shared with all YHDP grantees; review of HMIS and CE data; and create a survey tool for facilitating conversations with YHDP program participants. The data gathered will be shared with the YHDP Core Team to make recommendations, which will be shared with the YHDP grantees. |

The following chart outlines the entire list of partners involved in the larger planning process.

| Partner | Partners Name and Role | Involvement |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Youth Action Board | Advocates for Change (YHDP Core Team) | Two A4C members are being paid for 10 hours/week to support the YHDP process, including the writing of the CCP, and creation of the review/ranking process for applicants. In addition, all other A4C members will be engaged in reviewing/prioritizing all YHDP project applications and creating/ implementing a Continuous Quality Improvement process. |
| Public Child Welfare Agencies (PWCA) | McKean County Human Services, and numerous Children and Youth Services Agencies | McKean County Human Services (PCWA) is a member of the YHDP Core Team, whose responsibilities include: reviewing and approving the CCP; reviewing/ranking all project applications that are received; reviewing data gathered by A4C through the CQI process to ensure projects are adhering to HUD’s guiding principles; and assisting with creation and implementation of strategies regarding foster youth/child welfare. Additionally, numerous Children and Youth Service agencies have been attending stakeholder sessions and working with the CoC Lead to move identified strategies forward like, case conferencing with other youth-serving systems and applying for Fostering Youth to Independence Vouchers. |
| Continuum of Care and Emergency Solutions Grant Program Recipients | PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED); Westmoreland Community Action Agency (WCA) | As members of the YHDP Core Team, DCED and WCA roles include: reviewing and approving the CCP; review/ranking all project applications that are received (if non-conflicted); reviewing data gathered by A4C through the CQI process to ensure projects are adhering to the HUD’s guiding principles; and assisting with creation and implementation of strategies that will end youth homelessness. Additionally, Westmoreland County Community Action will be supporting A4C by |

| Partner | Partners Name and Role | Involvement |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | hosting meetings, facilitating training and supporting their personal and professional development. |
| Local and State Government | PA Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) | DCED serves on the YHDP Core Team whose responsibilities include: reviewing and approving the CCP; reviewing/approving applications that are received; reviewing data gathered by A4C through the CQI process to ensure projects are adhering to the HUD's guiding principles; and assisting with coordination between the Core Team, CoC Board and state/local government. |
| Health, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Agencies | UPMC Center for Social Impact | UPMC serves on the YHDP Core Team whose responsibilities include: reviewing and approving the CCP; reviewing/approving applications that are received (if non-conflicted); reviewing data gathered by A4C through the CQI process to ensure projects are adhering to the HUD's guiding principles; and assisting with creation and implementation of strategies regarding health. |
| Health, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Agencies | Crawford County Mental Health Awareness Program (CHAPS) | CHAPS serves on the YHDP Core Team whose responsibilities include: reviewing and approving the CCP; reviewing/approving applications that are received (if non-conflicted); reviewing data gathered by A4C through the CQI process to ensure projects are adhering to the HUD's guiding principles; and assisting with creation and implementation of strategies regarding mental health. Additionally, they will be coordinating with A4C by hosting meetings and supporting their personal and professional development. |

| Partner | Partners Name and Role | Involvement |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Juvenile and Adult Corrections and Probation | Westmoreland County Juvenile Probation, and numerous Juvenile Probation Agencies. | Westmoreland County Juvenile Probation is a member of the YHDP Core Team whose responsibilities include: reviewing and approving the CCP; reviewing/ranking all project applications that are received; reviewing data gathered by A4C through the CQI process to ensure projects are adhering to HUD’s guiding principles; and assisting with creation and implementation of strategies regarding juvenile justice. Additionally, numerous Juvenile Probation agencies have been attending stakeholder sessions and working with the CoC Lead to move identified strategies forward. |
| Affordable Housing Providers | Westmoreland Community Action Agency (WCA) | WCA serves on the YHDP Core Team whose responsibilities include: reviewing and approving the CCP; reviewing/approving applications that are received (if non-conflicted); reviewing data gathered by A4C through the CQI process to ensure projects are adhering to the HUD’s guiding principles; and assisting with creation and implementation of strategies for increasing affordable housing development. |
| Local and State Educational Agencies | Midwestern Intermediate Unit 4 (IU4) | IU4 serves on the YHDP Core Team whose responsibilities include: reviewing and approving the CCP; reviewing/approving applications that are received; reviewing data gathered by A4C through the CQI process to ensure projects are adhering to the HUD’s guiding principles; and assisting with creation and implementation of strategies regarding K-12 education. |

| Partner | Partners Name and Role | Involvement |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Institutions of Higher Education | The Pennsylvania State University; Slippery Rock University | The Pennsylvania State University is a member of the YHDP Core Team, whose responsibilities include: reviewing and approving the CCP; reviewing/ranking all project applications that are received; reviewing data gathered by A4C through the CQI process to ensure projects are adhering to HUD’s guiding principles; and assisting with creation and implementation of strategies around higher education. Additionally, Slippery Rock University has been helping to host education specific stakeholder sessions to gather feedback for the RFP, CCP and strategies. Additionally, they are leading training requested by A4C to support them personally and professionally. They are also leading the CoC's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee and ensuring that the voice of individuals with lived experience is incorporated throughout the plan. |
| Local Advocacy, Research and Philanthropic Organizations | The Westmoreland Community Foundation | The Westmoreland Community Foundation serves on the YHDP Core Team whose responsibilities include: : reviewing and approving the CCP; reviewing/approving applications that are received; reviewing data gathered by A4C through the CQI process to ensure projects are adhering to the HUD’s guiding principles; and assisting with creation and implementation of strategies around advocacy and connection to philanthropic organizations. |
| Continuum of Care Board and CoC Lead | The Western PA CoC Board | The Board will designate a lead staff to implement YHDP, and continue strategy development to support ongoing youth systems change throughout the CoC region. |

Project List

The Western PA CoC’s YHDP planning group proposes the following interventions to be utilized to make youth homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring in Western PA.

The process for picking the following interventions was conducted through five YHDP stakeholder meetings, two education specific sessions and one session for each of the following stakeholder groups: domestic violence; juvenile probation; and children and youth services; as well as a community provider survey and a youth-specific survey.

Diversity, equity and inclusion will be at the center for all projects to ensure that any special population (e.g. LGBTQ+, gender non-conforming, youth under 18, justice-involved and foster care-involved youth, as well as youth who have experienced sexual trafficking and exploitation) knows they can access and receive services. Additionally, all projects will be in alignment with the USICH core outcomes and HUD’s guiding principles.

| Joint Transitional Housing/ Rapid Rehousing | |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Summary | Interventions of this type are designed to allow for immediate emergency housing of youth while permanent Rapid Rehousing solutions are obtained. With the absence of sufficient (geographically limited) emergency shelter in the CoC, the joint TH-RRH programming is an excellent model to quickly provide crisis housing as needed (through Transitional Housing) while youth are being connected with appropriate permanent housing solutions. |
| Target Population | TH: Youth under age 24; RRH: Youth aged 18 -24 |
| Project Requirements | <p>Proposed project adheres to the Housing First model.</p> <p>Proposed projects will be targeting geographic areas of need.</p> <p>Proposed projects will have supportive services to meet each individual’s needs. This will be provided either through YHDP grant or connection to other services. YYA will determine the support services in which they will receive, including the service type, intensity and length of support.</p> <p>Proposed project provides enough rapid re-housing assistance to ensure that at any given time a program participant may move from transitional housing to permanent housing. (This is generally described as having twice as many RRH units available than TH crisis beds.)</p> <p>Projects may serve persons for up to 24 months total in each project component.</p> <p>Projects can utilize TH as crisis intervention, in cases of emergency (e.g. safety, lack of emergency shelter resources, etc), but should otherwise follow the Written Standards for filling units. When TH is used as emergency</p> |

| | |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <p>housing, youth must be assessed and added to the CES within 24 hours following enrollment.</p> <p>Proposed projects will house 100% of youth through CE for RRH.</p> |
| HUD Homeless Categories & HUD CoC Project Type | <p>Category 1, 2, & 4</p> <p>Joint Transitional Housing - Rapid Rehousing (TH-RRH)</p> |
| Innovation Opportunities | <p>A joint TH-RRH project could provide support to youth in higher education for gap housing (over winter and/or summer break) and/or year-round housing services.</p> <p>RRH portion could be in the youth’s own apartment or shared housing.</p> |
| USICH Core Outcomes | <p>Stable Housing</p> <p>Social-emotional well-being</p> |

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Coaching, Systems Navigation, Outreach Response, Support Services | |
| Summary | <p>(a) Services may be provided through coaching, peer support, outreach, systems navigators and/or a team-based approach, providing a primary point of contact for youth, supporting youth to navigate the homelessness system, and coordinating services as needed.</p> <p>(b) A system that supports and advocates for/with youth as they navigate through systems (housing, education, child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health, etc) within the county(ies). This includes establishing and implementing a long-term housing stabilization plan; building or rebuilding a family (biological or chosen; if desired); and community support networks.</p> <p>(c) Flexible funds available to provide youth, including but not limited to those pursuing education (postsecondary, GED, technical school - their chosen education pathway) and/or job training/workforce development with support. Note: find full list of YHDP flexibilities in Appendix D.</p> |
| Target Population | Youth 24 and under |
| Project Requirements | <p>Proposed project adheres to the Housing First model.</p> <p>Proposed projects will be targeting geographic areas of need.</p> <p>Proposed projects will have supportive services to meet each participant’s individual needs, either through YHDP grant or connection to other services. YYA will determine the support services in which they will receive, including the service type, intensity and length of support.</p> |

| | |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Proposed projects will assist youth from CE and/or community/agency referrals. |
| HUD Homeless Categories & HUD CoC Project Type | Category 1, 2, & 4 Supportive Services Only (SSO) |
| Innovation Opportunities | <p>Ensure quick identification of youth at-risk of or experiencing homelessness that would not generally present through the traditional homeless service entry points. Schools, mainstream service providers (e.g., health care, SNAPs, workforce programs, Head Start), law enforcement, and foster care and juvenile justice systems will work with the system navigator to connect youth to the coordinated entry system and/or prevention/diversion resources.</p> <p>Training in schools for teachers on identifying youth who may be at risk and connection to this resource.</p> <p>Training for law enforcement on youth cultural competency, trauma informed care, and how to identifying youth at risk of homelessness, and connecting to this program or other resources for youth who are at risk.</p> |
| USICH Core Outcomes | <p>Social-emotional well-being</p> <p>Permanent Connections</p> <p>Education/Employment</p> |

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Diversion | |
| Summary | This program will assist youth at imminent risk of homelessness with financial support and wraparound services. Youth remain connected to support systems, stabilize, and maintain current housing or connect to safe and supportive housing options. |
| Target Population | Youth 24 and under |
| Project Requirements | <p>Proposed project adheres to the Housing First model.</p> <p>Proposed projects will be targeting geographic areas of need.</p> <p>Proposed projects will have supportive services to meet each resident’s individual needs.</p> <p>Applicants will need to identify the staffing model for the delivery of diversion services. Staffing models may include coordinated entry workers, diversion specialists, shelter and street outreach workers, and/or system partners such as school liaisons or child welfare specialists.</p> |

| | |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| HUD Homeless Categories & HUD CoC Project Type | Category 1, 2, & 4 Supportive Services Only (SSO) |
| USICH Core Outcomes | Permanent Connections Social-emotional well-being |

| | |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Host Homes | |
| Summary | <p>Interventions of this type are to provide crisis housing in existing homes or recruited host homes with adult hosts for all youth ages 24 and under that are experiencing homelessness/housing instability. Host Home programming opens up housing options in rural communities where crisis options are extremely limited and creates the opportunity for youth integration into stable communities. The Host Home program model has worked effectively in parts of the CoC and should be as effective in all areas of the CoC.</p> <p>Host Homes also serve as a diversion from system placement in collaboration with Children Youth and Service, and other youth-serving agencies.</p> |
| Target Population | Youth 24 and under |
| Project Requirements | <p>Proposed project adheres to the Housing First model.</p> <p>Proposed projects will be targeting geographic areas of need.</p> <p>Proposed projects will have supportive services to meet each resident’s individual needs. This will be provided either through YHDP grant or connection to other services.</p> <p>Projects can utilize Host Homes as crisis intervention, in cases of emergency (e.g. safety, lack of emergency shelter resources, etc), but should otherwise follow the Written Standards for filling units. When Host Homes is used as emergency housing, youth must be assessed and added to the CES within 24 hours following enrollment.</p> |
| HUD Homeless Categories & HUD CoC Project Type | Category 1, 2, & 4 Supportive Services Only (SSO) |
| USICH Core Outcomes | Stable Housing Permanent Connections Social-emotional well-being |

| Rapid Rehousing, including Longer Term Rapid Rehousing | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Summary | <p>Programs assist youth experiencing homelessness to find a rental unit and execute a lease between the youth and landlord; financial assistance for rent and utilities; and housing stability services, which may include services such as education, employment, health/mental health services and life skills classes, etc.</p> <p>Rapid Rehousing projects funded through YHDP can provide assistance for up to 36 months.</p> |
| Target Population | Youth 18-24 |
| Project Requirements | <p>Proposed project adheres to the Housing First model.</p> <p>Proposed projects will have supportive services to meet each resident's individual needs. This will be provided either through YHDP grant or connection to other services.</p> <p>YYA will determine the support services in which they will receive, including the service type, intensity and length of support.</p> <p>Proposed projects will be targeting geographic areas of need.</p> <p>Proposed projects will house 100% of youth through Coordinated Entry.</p> |
| HUD Homeless Categories & HUD CoC Project Type | <p>Category 1, 2, & 4</p> <p>Rapid Rehousing (RRH)</p> |
| Innovation Opportunities | <p>RRH assistance may be provided for up to 36 months.</p> <p>Housing could be in the youth's own apartment or shared housing.</p> |
| USICH Core Outcomes | <p>Stable Housing</p> <p>Social-emotional well-being</p> |

| Permanent Supportive Housing | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Summary | Permanent supportive housing programs provide non-time limited housing assistance and supportive services for youth ages 18-24 with disabilities. |
| Target Population | Youth age 18-24 with disabilities. Note: youth do not age out at 24. |

| | |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Project Requirements | <p>Proposed projects adhere to the Housing First model.</p> <p>Proposed projects will offer supportive services to meet each resident’s individual needs. This will be provided either through YHDP grant or connection to other services.</p> <p>YYA will determine the support services in which they will receive, including the service type, intensity and length of support.</p> <p>Proposed projects will be targeting geographic areas of need.</p> <p>Proposed projects will house 100% of youth through Coordinated Entry.</p> |
| HUD Homeless Categories & HUD CoC Project Type | <p>Category 1, 2 & 4</p> <p>Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)</p> |
| Innovation Opportunities | <p>Housing could be in the youth’s own apartment or shared housing.</p> |
| USICH Core Outcomes | <p>Stable Housing</p> <p>Permanent Connections</p> <p>Social-emotional well-being</p> |

| | |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Coordinated Entry | |
| Summary | <p>The Coordinated Entry system identifies, diverts, assesses, prioritizes, and provides referrals to households experiencing homelessness in the CoC. All ESG/CoC-funded projects are required to enroll project participants using the Coordinated Entry prioritized housing list. YYA will be offered immediate access to safe, secure and stable housing without preconditions, including crisis housing. Youth will be informed of available housing options and will have choice regarding providers and interventions enrolled in.</p> |
| Target Population | <p>Youth aged 24 and under, including YYA experiencing unsheltered homelessness.</p> |
| Project Requirements | <p>Only the CoC’s Coordinated Entry Lead Agency is eligible to apply.</p> |
| HUD Homeless Categories & HUD CoC Project Type | <p>Category 1 & 2, 4</p> <p>Supportive Services Only - Coordinated Entry</p> |
| USICH Core Outcomes | <p>Stable Housing</p> |

| Direct Cash Transfers | |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Summary | Cash payments made directly to youth and young adults to ensure they do not experience homelessness/housing instability and/or can continue on their chosen educational or employment pathway. |
| Target Population | Youth aged 24 and under. |
| Project Requirements | This will not be YHDP funded, but the Core Team will work to find alternative funding to pilot this within the region. |
| HUD Homeless Categories & HUD CoC Project Type | Category 1 & 2, 4 Supportive Services Only |
| USICH Core Outcomes | Education/employment Social-emotional well-being |

| Drop-in Centers | |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Summary | Staff will engage with youth and will offer youth access to basic supplies, toiletries, and services; these strategies will help engage youth through a low-barrier approach that builds trust with youth and assists them in meeting their needs. Project will support youth in need of assistance with family engagement and/or other social/community integration activities. |
| Target Population | Youth aged 24 and under, with special outreach to YYA who are unsheltered. |
| Project Requirements | This will not be YHDP funded, but the Core Team will work to find alternative funding to pilot this within the region. |
| HUD Homeless Categories & HUD CoC Project Type | Category 1 & 2, 4 Supportive Services Only |
| USICH Core Outcomes | Permanent Connections Social-emotional well-being |

Vision, Guiding Principles and Goals

Vision

The Western PA CoC believes that everyone deserves a home that is safe, affordable, and stable. We envision a youth homelessness response and housing stability system that is:

- youth-driven,
- built on a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion,
- rooted in community,
- viewed through a trauma-informed lens, and
- easily accessible by Youth and Young Adults (YYA).

This system will meet YYA where they are and help them to make lasting and stable connections that guide them to success.

Proposed Core Outcomes

The Western PA's YHDP seven-month planning process uncovered strengths and gaps of the youth-serving system. The YHDP Core Team prioritized goals and project priorities by utilizing the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) Youth Framework to End Youth Homelessness which includes the following core outcomes:

1. Stable housing includes a safe place to call home;
2. Permanent connections includes ongoing attachments to families, communities, schools and other positive social networks;
3. Education/employment includes high performance in and completion of educational and training activities, especially for younger youth and starting and maintaining adequate and stable employment, particularly for older youth;
4. Social-emotional well-being includes the development of key competencies, attitudes, and behaviors that equip a young person to succeed across multiple domains of daily life, including school, work, relationships, and community.

HUD Guiding Principles

Additionally, the Western PA Core Team ensured that each goal aligns with HUD's guiding principles of Equity, Positive Youth Development, Trauma-Informed Care, Family Engagement, Housing First, Youth Choice, Individualized Client-Driven Supports, Social and Community Integration, and Coordinated Entry. Projects will be prioritized with these guiding principles in mind.

Equity

All projects will adhere to the CoC's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Values and Truths Statements (provided below).

We will:

1. Create and support an inclusive and affirming environment and culture.
2. Use respectful language that validates individuals' lived experience
3. Understand that the Western PA is not a "charity". We are here to serve, not to save. We recognize and respect the experience, expertise, and insights of youth and young adults and all colleagues.
4. Understand that all people could have trauma that we are not aware of.

We believe:

1. Everyone deserves a home.
2. Homelessness is often a consequence of systems of oppression and requires an ongoing and sustained commitment to understanding how structural and intersectional oppression and structural privilege contribute to and sustain experiences of homelessness.
3. We are an open, inclusive organization that seeks to build and support diversity and belonging.

Positive Youth Development

All projects will adhere to and implement the principles of Positive Youth Development (PYD). Western PA recognizes the importance of meaningful youth-adult partnerships in which youth and young adults (YYA) feel respected, valued, and trusted. We believe this is important to preventing and ending youth homelessness because when youth are supported on their chosen pathway, and in their development they will become contributing members of society. This will be integrated in all programs with the additional recognition that youth have the inherent ability to lead, learn, make decisions and should be supported both personally and professionally to implement their ideas in their own lives and in their communities.

Trauma-Informed Care

The CoC and all projects will recognize that the experience of homelessness and housing instability is often traumatic, regardless of the quality of/extent of resources. As such, the CoC's DEIB pillars include the following "we understand that all people could have trauma that we are not aware of". To address the effects of trauma from both disclosed and undisclosed experiences, all projects will provide trauma-informed care to youth and young adults engaged in youth dedicated programs, and all staff will be provided with trauma-informed supervision. To support the implementation of trauma-informed services, the CoC will provide training for staff at all levels involved in providing/supervising homelessness assistance programs in order to continue to integrate trauma-informed principles into every level of service.

Family Engagement

All programs will provide services directly or in collaboration with existing community partners for the development and strengthening of ongoing attachments to biological, chosen family, and/or other

positive social relationships. This will be done at the discretion of youth and young adults, as they are being supported to self-identify their own family and healthy boundaries; understanding they are the experts in their own lives and can define their own family. This is important because the youth and young adult leaders throughout the CoC indicated that family is not always defined as “blood”, and we will respect their voices in this process.

Housing First

The CoC wants youth homelessness to be rare, brief and non recurring. To meet this goal we first need to understand the gaps. With a lack of emergency shelters throughout the region all youth and young adults experiencing homelessness and housing instability should be able to access all other housing options swiftly, and receive assistance without preconditions and barriers to entry. All programs will adhere to the housing first principles, because removing barriers increases access to safe and stable housing. This allows youth to be supported to maintain housing stability and move towards permanency.

Youth Choice

All programs will promote youth choice in terms of the kind of housing youth and young adults state they need/want and the extent and nature of supports and services they access, and promote alternative options for youth and young adults based on their unique needs/wants. As autonomous youth and young adults, program participants will have the ability to develop their individual service plans.

Individualized Client-Driven Supports

With the understanding that youth are the experts in their own lives, all programs will provide supports that are individualized and driven by the clients identified goals/needs. All programs will support youth on their chosen pathway while incorporating their needs, being respectful of individuals’ rights to self determination, and voluntary. This approach allows youth and young adults to make choices/decisions in a controlled environment, where they have the support of staff if assistance is needed. This supports learning and self-sufficiency, which supports youth as they move into adulthood.

Social and Community Integration

All programs will offer meaningful opportunities for community involvement, engagement and leadership for youth, including access to community-based activities, neighborhood events, and volunteer opportunities. This is grounded in the CoC’s desire to support youth personally and professionally as they transition into adulthood. All programs will value youth’s expertise, autonomy and journey towards self-sufficiency as they integrate meaningfully into society/their community. The purpose of these types of connections is so youth feel connected and supported by natural, chosen and healthy individuals as they transition out of programs.

Coordinated Entry

All programs will be required to utilize the CoC’s Coordinated Entry (CE) System to link all youth experiencing homelessness to housing/services solutions that are tailored to their needs. Under contract with ICF, the Western PA CoC is currently engaged in a Coordinated Entry redesign effort, which includes planning around increasing access to youth and modifications to ensure the system incorporates youth-specific needs. CE will meet youth where they are, will be culturally appropriate and swiftly assist them to accessing housing and other resources/services. Additionally, the CE redesign will lead to data quality improvements and data-driven planning to identify systems-level gaps in resources.

Western PA CCP Goals

Advocates for Change and the YHDP Core Team used the above outlined USICH outcomes, HUD’s guiding principles, and feedback gathered from stakeholders to prioritize the goals listed below.

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| Goal 1: Strengthen cross-system partnerships to enhance the identification of youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness, reduce barriers to services, and increase resources across the CoC. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Objective 1.a: Identify opportunities for cross-system’s data sharing in order to better understand the number of youth experiencing housing instability and system-level gaps.<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Action Step 1.a.1: CoC Lead to pursue data sharing opportunities within existing MOU, allowing data sharing between state agencies. This includes opportunities to share or begin to collect data for special YYA populations, including LGBTQ+, gender non-conforming, youth under age 18, justice-involved and foster-care involved youth, and victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Objective 1.b: Increase awareness of and access to available resources; support and improve the coordinated referral and delivery of services to youth experiencing homelessness/housing instability.<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Action Step 1.b.1: Create a regularly updated directory of available resources across systems that can be accessed via an app for youth experiencing homelessness/housing instability as well as county-level providers, noting where resources target special youth populations.→ Action Step 1.b.2: Create a multi-system team within each county that will create policies for warm handoffs between systems. Include youth on the team to ensure youth choice and voice.→ Action Step 1.b.3: Expand access to Coordinated Entry for youth engaged in other systems. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Objective 1.c: Create a coordinated network with Domestic Violence (DV) and Children and Youth Services (CYS) to provide adequate interventions to youth and young adults that are survivors of trafficking.<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Action Step 1.c.1 Coordinate a convening of DV and CYS services→ Action Step 1.c.2 Establish protocols for referrals→ Action Step 1.c.3 Ensure that case conferencing covers survivors of sexual trafficking and exploitation. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Objective 1.d: Increase coordination between housing and legal services to lower barriers for YYA which may include records being expunged, getting necessary documentation, and removing barriers to accessing education. |

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| → Action Step 1.d.1: Engage the American Bar Association to provide training in several counties. | | | |
| Partner(s) Responsible: CoC Lead, CoC Board, A4C and YHDP Core Team, American Bar Association | | | |
| Timeline: January 2023 | | | |
| HUD Key Principles | | | |
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Development and Trauma-Informed Care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Unsheltered homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engagement <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing First <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Social and Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

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| Goal 2: All youth who experience homelessness have access to a continuum of safe and supportive housing options and any needed supportive services. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective 2.a: Expand the development of and access to needed/prioritized homeless assistance projects throughout the CoC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Action Step 2.a.1: Implement YHDP prioritized/funded projects. In addition to projects such as TH/RRH, RRH, and PSH, this may also include innovative projects such as: host homes; mobile outreach; master leasing; the creative use of motels, churches and other spaces; family engagement/reunification; and other flexibilities available through YHDP funding. → Action Step 2.a.2: Implement non-YHDP funded projects through alternative funding streams, including but not limited to Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY), which may include direct cash transfers and drop-in centers. → Action Step 2.a.3: To expedite permanent housing placement and increase youth choice, the CoC will implement a landlord engagement process. This may include: contingency funding to increase landlord participation; and incentives for landlords where it is needed to go above FMRs. → Action Step 2.a.4: Develop written standards specific to dedicated youth projects funded through ESG and CoC. → Action Step 2.a.5: The CoC will continue to refine how it measures equity and disparities, and how best to address the identified disparities. → Action Step 2.a.6: Consider regional projects where appropriate. Use past/current regional projects to gauge feasibility. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective 2.b: Increase YYA access to all homeless assistance projects, beyond those that are youth-dedicated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Action Step 2.b.1: The Coordinated Entry redesign will improve access to ESG/CoC and other CE-participating projects throughout the CoC. This includes to PSH projects for youth with disabilities and the CoC's DV Bonus projects, which will provide support to youth who have experienced domestic violence and/or sexual trafficking and exploitation. → Action Step 2.b.2: The CoC will provide training opportunities to all homeless assistance providers to ensure youth receive appropriate services, regardless of where they choose to be enrolled. This will include ongoing training on topics including: Housing First, Positive Youth Development; Trauma-Informed Care; family engagement; individualized and client-driven support; and social/community integration. | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective 2.c: Identify resources to expand access to affordable housing for YYA. | |

- Action Step 2.c.1: The CoC will seek out opportunities and apply for resources to continuously expand housing opportunities for youth.
- Action Step 2.c.2: Coordinate with Housing Authorities in the CoC to provide FUP/FYI Vouchers to any eligible youth. The CoC will support/ encourage additional PHAs to apply for FUP/FYI Vouchers to increase housing subsidies for youth experiencing homelessness and/or housing insecurity. In addition, Coordinated Entry and/or an alternative youth-friendly application process will support youth and PHAs to facilitate enrollment and increase the ease of accessing referrals/ vouchers.

Partner(s) Responsible: CoC Lead, CoC Board, A4C, YHDP Core Team, Housing Authorities

Timeframe: YHDP implementation by October 2022, All other objectives and action steps by January 2024

| HUD Key Principles | | | |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Equity <input type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Development and Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsheltered homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engagement <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing First <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input type="checkbox"/> | Social and Community Integration <input type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Goal 3: The system coordinates a comprehensive set of strategies that span the education, child welfare, and juvenile justice systems to identify and provide early intervention services to drastically reduce the number of youth who exit to homelessness and/or return to homelessness, with prevention and diversion resources made available whenever necessary.

- Objective 3.a: Ensure that no youth or young adult exits a system into homelessness.
 - Action Step 3.a.1: The CoC will participate in cross-systems work that identifies and develops housing opportunities for youth exiting systems that commonly discharge to homelessness.
 - Action Step 3.a.2: Fund diversion programs through YHDP
 - Action Step 3.a.3: The CoC will coordinate with children and youth services and juvenile justice to discuss referrals to diversion program.
 - Action Step 3.a.4: Incorporate prevention/ diversion resources into systems change work where youth are at risk of exiting to homelessness.

Partner(s) Responsible: CoC Lead, CoC Board, A4C and YHDP Core Team, youth-serving systems (child welfare, juvenile justice and education)

Timeframe: October 2023

| HUD Key Principles | | | |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Equity <input type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Development and Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsheltered homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engagement <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing First <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input type="checkbox"/> | Social and Community Integration <input type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Goal 4: All systems in all counties provide culturally competent and trauma-informed services to youth and young adults. All youth are connected to stable, caring, positive individuals who can guide and support them as they transition to adulthood.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective 4.a: All youth dedicated homeless assistance programs will receive training in cultural competency, trauma-informed care, positive youth development, and other best practices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Action Step 4.a.1: Create a training plan for all YHDP funded projects and support them in the implementation of the training principles. → Action Step 4.a.2: Work with existing youth-dedicated projects to identify the training needs to ensure best practices are utilized. → Action Step 4.a.3: Monitor projects on training attendance and the implementation of these principles. → Action Step 4.a.4: In recognition that youth are served in most homeless assistance projects, the CoC will also make youth-focused training available to all providers. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective 4.b: Ensure that all youth-serving systems are trained in cultural competency, trauma-informed care, and other best practices, and can implement those principles into their agencies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Action Step 4.b.1: Create county level learning collaboratives that bring together all youth-serving providers to strategically plan how to address gaps and facilitate systems change. → Action Step 4.b.2: Provide training to all homeless assistance providers to ensure cultural competency and trauma-informed care are at the center of service delivery for youth and all clients served. | | | |
| Partner(s) Responsible: CoC Lead, A4C, CoC Board, YHDP Core Team, Youth-dedicated homeless assistance programs | | | |
| Timeframe: Objective 4a by December 2023, Objective 4b by December 2022 | | | |
| HUD Key Principles | | | |
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Development and Trauma-Informed Care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Unsheltered homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engagement <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing First <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Social and Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

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| Goal 5: Ensure youth voice and experience/expertise is at the center of assessing, planning and implementing strategies to end youth homelessness. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective 5.a: Support A4C both personally and professionally as they continue to support systems change throughout the CoC. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Action Step 5.a.1: The Board will incorporate A4C into their strategic planning process. → Action Step 5.a.2: The Board will model authentic engagement by participating in training opportunities and engaging with A4C. → Action Step 5.a.3: The Board will continue to recognize A4C as a standing Committee of the CoC, and A4C will continue to have two seats on the Board. → Action Step 5.a.4: The Board will continue to increase resources available to support the participation of A4C members in the work of the CoC. This includes staff support, financial resources, and other identified needs. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective 5.b: Provide regular training on power sharing and creating spaces for enhanced collaboration with individuals who have lived experience with homelessness. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Action Step 5.b.1: Hold regular adulthood, equity and power sharing training for providers. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective 5.c: Implement the CoC's youth led CQI process. | | | |

- Action Step 5.c.1: Meet with the YAB to develop a CQI process, which will incorporate: evaluation of project-level outcomes, including data quality; client feedback surveys; and DEI practices.
- Action Step 5.c.2: Create a survey for youth exiting homeless assistance projects that assesses the project’s strengths and gaps.
- Action Step 5.c.3: The Board will enforce the recommendations of A4C through their Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process.

Partner(s) Responsible: CoC Board, CoC Lead and A4C

Timeframe: Second quarter 2023

| HUD Key Principles | | | |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Development and Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsheltered homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engagement <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing First <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Social and Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Goal 6: Ensure that principles of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging guides all planning, program implementation, and evaluation.

- Objective 6.a: Actively and consistently pursue an understanding of inequalities that YYA are experiencing and use this information to inform system-level change.
 - Action Step 6.a.1: YHDP-funded projects will incorporate/implement the action steps of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) strategic plan.
 - Action Step 6.a.2: Continue to provide DEIB training to CoC members and stakeholders.

Partner(s) Responsible: CoC Board, CoC Lead, A4C and DEIB Committee

Timeframe: Calendar year 2023

| HUD Key Principles | | | |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Development and Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Unsheltered homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engagement <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing First <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input type="checkbox"/> | Social and Community Integration <input type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Goal 7: All youth who experience homelessness have access to a full array of education and employment pathways. This will ensure they continue on their educational pathway to secure living wage employment that is meaningful and self-determined.

- Objective 7.a: Increase coordination between education and employment so youth and young adults do not feel they need to pick between their educational pathway, work and their basic needs being met.
 - Action Step 7.a.1: Housing services coordinate with educational institutions to ensure youth’s basic needs are being met so they can continue on their educational pathway.

- Objective 7.b: Leverage existing and new workforce development supports for youth experiencing homelessness.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Action Step 7.b.1: Strengthen partnerships with workforce development board youth programs (WIOA youth formula, career counseling and placement, career and technical education, postsecondary education reengagement, job training, etc.) → Action Step 7.b.2: Recruit additional employers, including providing incentives, as partners to train and employ youth experiencing homelessness. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Objective 7.c: Increase income for YYA experiencing and/or at risk of homelessness. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Action Step 7.c.1: Increase earned income among YYA enrolled in homeless assistance projects. | | | |
| Partner(s) Responsible: CoC Board, CoC lead, A4C, Workforce development boards, education systems, Chamber of Commerce | | | |
| Timeframe: December 2023 | | | |
| HUD Key Principles | | | |
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Development and Trauma-Informed Care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Unsheltered homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engagement <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing First <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Social and Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

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| Goal 8: All youth who experience homelessness have access to timely client-centered, culturally appropriate, and affordable or free services that support health and wellbeing. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective 8.a: All youth have access to needed mental health services in all counties. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Action Step 8.a.1: Improve access to and quality of virtual therapy/services. → Action Step 8.a.2: Provide direct cash transfers to young people to access these services, if needed. | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective 8.b: Cross-system partnerships with schools to provide education and prevention assistance to support youth at risk for dropping out, victimization, and other escalating behaviors that could lead to system involvement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Action Step 8.b.1: Provide information and resources to YYA and families including mental health literacy, health insurance enrollment, etc. → Action Step 8.b.2: Schools will be trained in what resources are in the community and work with these providers to offer prevention-based training and services. | | | |
| Partner(s) Responsible: CoC lead, A4C, YHDP Core Team, Mental health providers and education providers | | | |
| Timeframe: January 2024 | | | |
| HUD Key Principles | | | |
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Development and Trauma-Informed Care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Unsheltered homelessness <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engagement <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing First <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Social and Community Integration <input type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Appendix A: Western PA CoC Youth Homelessness System Map, created Spring 2020

System map was created based on input through a series of stakeholder events held in March 2020.

System map reflects challenges for youth experiencing homelessness and housing instability in accessing housing and services. System Map can be accessed at

https://www.dropbox.com/s/xk2cx6a2bdtcxm/WesternPACoC_YouthSystemMap-Challenges.pdf?dl=0



Appendix B: Western PA CoC Aspirational Youth Homelessness System Map, Spring 2020

System map was created based on input through a series of stakeholder events held in March 2020. This system map reflects CoC's aspirations for improving systems to better serve youth experiencing homelessness and housing instability. System Map can be accessed at

https://www.dropbox.com/s/vcro5eb3k5svz8r/WesternPACoC_YouthSystemMap_Aspirational.pdf?dl=0





Western PA Continuum of Care
Letters of Support for YHDP CCP



Western PA CoC Board of Directors:

- Amy Switalski
Co-Chairperson
- Janine Wytovich
Co-Chairperson
- Amanda Feltenberger
Co-Secretary
- Tammy Knouse
Immediate Past Member
- Dan Carney
- Michelle Faught
- Jennifer Johnson
- Vince Karabin
- Wendy Kinnear
- Cindy Lacom
- Lynn McUmbert
- Jason Nesbitt
- Anthony Taylor
- Jeremy Tidd
- Cheri McConnell
- Dan Giovannelli
- Natalie Pacy

Collaborative Applicant:

Brendan Auman
PA Dept of Community & Economic Development (DCED)
400 North St, 4th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17120
717-720-7397
www.dced.pa.gov

CoC Consultant:

Diana T. Myers & Associates (DMA)
7900 Old York Road
Suite 108-B
Elkins Park, PA 19027
(215) 576-1558
www.dma-housing.com

April 8, 2022

Dear U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development,

On behalf of the Western PA Continuum of Care Governing Board, we offer our support and approval of Western PA's Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness.

In 2017 the CoC set a goal to reduce youth homelessness by 50% by 2022. The CoC has worked diligently over the past five years to create a system that makes youth homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring. The CoC has prioritized youth and young adults with lived experience by authentically engaging them in this process at every level of the system, paying them for their time and expertise, and setting aside staff time to support them both personally and professionally.

The CoC was able to successfully apply for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) funds because of the work of the Youth Action Board (YAB), Advocates for Change (A4C). We will continue to support them as they continue system's change efforts in Western PA with YHDP funds and other identified strategies that are outlined in the Coordinated Community Plan.

Additionally, we agree to work collaboratively with other partners to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

Sincerely,

Amy Switalski
Co-Chairperson

Janine Wytovich
Co-Chairperson

MCKEAN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



April 8, 2022

**Administration
Office**

17155 Route 6
Smethport, PA
16749
(814) 887-3350 –
Phone
(814) 887-3228 –
Fax

Daniel J. Wertz
Administrator

**Russell W.
Linden**
Fiscal Director

**Mary L.
McCormack**
Adult Mental Health
Director

**Amanda R.
Reese**
Children's
Resources and
Programs Director

**Shawn D.
McAulay**
Children & Youth
Services Director

**Karen M.
Abbott**
Intellectual
Disabilities & Early
Intervention
Director

**Michele Alfieri-
Causer**
Solicitor

Re: Coordinated Community Plan – Western PA CoC

Dear U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development:

On behalf of Mckean County Department of Human Services, I offer my support and approval of Western PA's Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness.

In 2017 the CoC set a goal to reduce youth homelessness by 50% by 2022. The CoC has worked diligently over the past five years to create a system that makes youth homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring. The CoC prioritized the integration of youth-serving systems as they began to plan how to reach their youth-specific goals. I have been involved in the YHDP process specifically since September of 2021 through the YHDP Core Team.

I will continue to work collaboratively with the other 19 Public Child Welfare Agencies throughout the region to ensure that youth are exiting the child welfare system into safe, stable housing and that no young person is experiencing homelessness.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daniel J. Wertz".

Daniel J. Wertz
Administrator



April 7, 2022

Dear U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development,

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, we offer our support and approval of Western PA's Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness.

In 2017 the CoC set a goal to reduce youth homelessness by 50% by 2022. The CoC has worked diligently over the past five years to create a system that makes youth homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring. The CoC has prioritized youth and young adults with lived experience by authentically engaging them in this process at every level of the system, paying them for their time and expertise, and setting aside staff time to support them both personally and professionally.

We will continue to support the CoC as they work to change the youth systems in Western PA with YHDP funds and other identified strategies that are outlined in the Coordinated Community Plan.

Additionally, we will encourage partners and stakeholders to work collaboratively to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Angela Susten'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Angela Susten, Director
Center for Community & Housing Development

April 13, 2022

Dear U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development,

On behalf of Advocates 4 Change (A4C), the Western PA Continuum of Care's Youth Action Board (YAB), we offer our support and approval of Western PA's Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness.

In 2017 the CoC set a goal to reduce youth homelessness by 50% by 2022. The CoC has worked diligently over the past five years to create a system that makes youth homelessness rare, brief and nonrecurring. The CoC has prioritized youth and young adults with lived experience by authentically engaging us in this process at every level of the system, paying us for our time and expertise, and setting aside staff time to support us both personally and professionally.

We will continue to support systems change in Western PA with YHDP funds and other identified strategies that are outlined in the Coordinated Community Plan. Additionally, we agree to work collaboratively with other partners to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

Sincerely,

On behalf of the Youth Action Board,

Morgan Diesing

Morgan Diesing