

# **EASTERN AND WESTERN PA CONTINUUMs OF CARE (PA-509/PA-601) YOUTH HOMELESSNESS SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT GRANT (YHSI) FOR COORDINATED ENTRY CONSULTANT**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) FROM CONTRACTORS INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING THE EVALUATION OF THE EASTERN/WESTERN PA CONTINUUMS OF CARE'S COORDINATED ENTRY SYSTEMS TO IMPROVE YOUTH SERVICES**

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**RFP ISSUED: 08/19/2026**

**RFP RESPONSES DUE: 09/09/2026**

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) DESCRIPTION**

### **OVERVIEW**

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#### PROJECT SUMMARY

The Eastern and Western PA CoC's are soliciting a contractor to conduct an evaluation of the CoC's Coordinated Entry Systems (CES) with the goal of improving access and systems coordination for Youth and Young Adults (YYA) to better coordinate service delivery for this population. The evaluation will focus on five key elements of CES: identification, access, assessment, prioritization, and referral.

#### CONTEXT & BACKGROUND

The Eastern PA Continuum of Care (CoC website: <https://pennsylvaniacoc.org/balance-state/eastern-pa-coc>) and Western PA Continuum of Care (CoC website: <https://pennsylvaniacoc.org/balance-state/western-pa-coc>) are comprised of organizations and individuals working together to prevent & end homelessness across 53 counties in Eastern and Western Pennsylvania. The CoCs coordinate activities, advance systems change and expand resources to end homelessness in their respective regions.

In 2024, the Eastern and Western PA CoCs applied collaboratively for and were awarded funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Youth Homeless Systems Improvement Grant (YHSI) (HUD YHSI website: [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/comm\\_planning/yhsi](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/comm_planning/yhsi)). The projects funded under this award were advised by their Youth Action Boards (YAB), Advocates for Change (A4C), and a designated YHSI Planning Team. This grant initiative allows for the

creation of the Peer-to-Partnership (P2P) program, which will hire up to 10 YYA to work in pilot communities or with community partners to convene local stakeholders and establish collaborative goals that aim to increase system coordination and prevent youth from entering the homeless response systems, with an emphasis on continuous quality improvement of the program. Additionally, YHSI funds will be used to conduct a data mapping and matching initiative to better understand the number of YYA experiencing homelessness or housing instability, identify gaps and unmet needs for resource allocation and policy development, and hire a consultant to evaluate the Eastern and Western CoCs' CES.

## PROJECT DETAILS

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### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

#### **1. Coordinated Entry Evaluation**

The Eastern PA and Western PA CoCs each operate their own CE systems. Both CoCs participate in the multi-CoC PA Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which uses ClientTrack software. The CES evaluation presents an opportunity to understand how the current implementations of the CES for each CoC are or are not meeting the specific needs of the YYA population in accessing resources needed to prevent and end their homelessness. The selected contractor's evaluation will prioritize how to identify YYA who need services through system partner collaboration, how youth are currently accessing the system and recommend improvements to meet the needs of youth, analyze each CoC's CES assessment tools to determine if they are appropriately assessing the needs of YYA, and examine each CoC's CES prioritization and referral processes to ensure that YYA are being connected to the right resources and end their episode of homelessness or housing instability.

The evaluation will be achieved through a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis and may include reviewing each CoC's existing CES policies and procedures to improve system workflow, analyze CES/HMIS data for trends and gaps, conducting CES user experience testing with YYA and Advocates for Change regarding the workflow and intake process, conducting focus groups with the Coordinated Entry Staff and CES Committees of each CoC, evaluating the effectiveness of prioritizing youth for assistance in existing assessment processes, engaging with the P2P communities in case conferencing efforts, establishing policies for cross-system referrals to youth-dedicated resources outside of the CoC homeless response system, and increasing coordination between the Youth Homeless Demonstration Project funded system navigators and CE (applicable to the Western PA CoC only).

The contracted entity will work with various stakeholders to gather input on the design of and implementation of the evaluation. Specifically, the evaluator will be asked to:

- Collaborate directly with the CoC's YAB, Advocates for Change (A4C).
  - A4C is a group of youth and young adults with lived experience of homelessness and housing instability that coordinates with the Eastern and Western PA CoC to end homelessness. A4C covers a 53-county region that is largely rural (map available here: <https://pennsylvaniacoc.org/about-coc>).
- A4C's mission is to expand services for youth, creating and maintaining support systems that can meet youth where they are, reducing housing instability. A4C believes that systems change is only possible when the voices of people with lived experience are elevated and honored. They believe that ending homelessness is possible, that housing is essential to ending homelessness, and homelessness should not define those who experience it. Convene with additional CoC stakeholders, including:
  - Other consultants working on the YHSI project for data analysis and evaluation, Continuous Quality Improvement, and Training,
  - Agencies in the 10 pilot communities working to end homelessness for YYA,
  - CoC's Governing Board,
  - CoC's Coordinated Entry Staff
  - CoC's YHSI Core Team,
  - CoC, Framework Consulting, and DCED staff.

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## OVERVIEW OF YHSI PROJECTS

As noted above, the CES evaluation is designed to understand how the current implementations of each CoC's CES is or is not meeting the needs of the YYA population in accessing resources and incorporating YYA with lived experience to improve system response and coordination.

The YHSI project includes additional robust activities, including data matching initiatives, data analysis, hiring youth to establish local or regional systems collaboration to prevent youth entering the homeless system, and training/professional development for hired youth for long-term success. These activities will allow the CoC to create a baseline for measuring successes, establish datasets from which to prioritize for future P2P cohorts, and evaluate and conduct continuous quality improvement.

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## YHSI FUNDING

The CoC will pay for this work through HUD YHSI funds awarded to the CoC through the CoC's YHSI Planning grant. The recipient of the CoC's YHDP Planning project is the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). At the behest of the CoC's Governing Board (the "Board"), DCED contracts with various

entities to administer the work on behalf of the CoC. The United Way of Pennsylvania (UWPA) is the project's designated fiscal backbone support in this project, and the selected vendor shall contract to deliver the project through an agreement with UWPA with oversight from DCED, the YHSI Core Team, and the Board(s).

Funding currently available for the YHSI CES evaluation is \$112,000. Please note that \$7,000 of this funding is set aside to pay YYA to conduct user testing. Contractors interested in this award should submit their best offer to complete the work within this budget.

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#### EXPECTED PROJECT ACTIVITIES/DELIVERABLES

As noted earlier, each CoC operates its own CES but participates in a shared HMIS. Each CoC has its own CE Committee, CES staff, and CES funding. Additionally, the Western PA CoC has several CE-related Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) projects.

The contractor for the CES evaluation will be expected to conduct the following activities for each CoC's CES:

1. Review existing CES policies and procedures for the Eastern and Western PA CoCs.
  - a. For each CES, identify revisions to CES policies and procedures that may be needed to better support YYA moving through the CES system.
  - b. Policies and procedures shall establish a referral process to housing options offered that are not currently connected to the CoC's CES process (e.g., FYI, FUP vouchers).
  - c. Recommended changes shall be presented to each CoC's CE committee for review, feedback, and refinement before being presented to the board for adoption.
2. Conduct focus groups with YYA who have experienced homelessness or housing instability and conduct a user testing experience on accessing CES, assessment, and referral processes to identify areas of improvement, which will increase connections to housing resources.
  - a. YYA focus groups: Shall include representation from the YAB in addition to households who have recently accessed CES for a variety of perspectives and outcomes through the CES process. One YYA focus group shall be held for each CoC's CES (two in total).

- b. YYA CES user testing: The project budget includes \$7,000 in funds set aside specifically for this task. It is expected that five (5) YYA will be engaged as CES testers for each CoC (a total of 10 across the two CoCs), estimating 25-28 hours for each tester. YYA compensation will be approximately \$25/hour.
- 3. Conduct focus groups with CES staff who work daily within the existing CES structure.
  - a. One focus group shall be held for each CoC's CES staff. Two in total.
  - b. CES staff focus groups will be used to understand the gaps and barriers YYA face when interacting with the CES system from the CES staff perspective. This may include gaps/barriers related to identification and access, assessment, prioritization, and referrals that CES staff encounter or have identified based on engagement with YYA as part of their CES-related duties.
- 4. For each CES, evaluate the following to ensure the needs of YYA are addressed in assessment, prioritization and referral to the most appropriate resources: existing CES assessment tools for YYA and their implementation specific to YYA; prioritization processes for YYA and their implementation specific to YYA; referral processes for YYA and their implementation specific to YYA.
  - a. Determine and report on whether these tools and processes, or their implementation/are not effective in fairly and transparently assessing YYA's needs, prioritizing YYA for appropriate resources, and ensuring referrals to eligible/appropriate housing/services are made.
  - b. Develop recommendations for addressing areas where the tools, processes, and implementation are not effective in meeting the needs of YYA.
- 5. In the Western PA CoC, assess the coordination of YHDP-funded system navigators and CES staff and recommend a structure to effectively utilize the YHDP CE resources to improve outcomes for YYA.
- 6. Develop a final report for the CES evaluation for each CoC that describes the findings and recommendations from the activities described in 1-5 of the list above, along with an implementation plan.
  - a. Each CoC's report should include a high-level summary of key findings and recommendations to address issues and a detailed description of the findings and recommendations.

- b. Each CoC's report should include a suggested plan for the implementation of recommended changes.
7. Present findings, recommendations, and suggested implementation plan to the YHSI Core Team and YAB and to each of the CoCs.
  - a. This will include providing at least one presentation to: 1) the YHSI Core Team, 2) the YAB, 3) Eastern PA CoC stakeholders, and 4) Western PA CoC stakeholders. Stakeholders will likely include the CE Committees, CES staff, and Governing Board for each CoC.
  - b. Presentations will be conducted remotely.
8. If/as contract time allows, assist each CoC's CE Committee and/or CES staff in implementing recommendations.
  - a. Additional hours for assistance to each CoC in implementing recommendations may be offered. Consulting hours must be used by 7/1/2027.
9. Coordinate as needed with each CoC's Governing Board, the YHSI Core Team, and the YAB on oversight and project performance.
  - a. The Consultant will be expected to provide progress reports/updates at least every other month to the YHSI Core Team.
10. Participate as needed in reporting to/monitoring by the Department of Community and Economic Development or the Housing and Urban Development to ensure compliance with program implementation.
  - a. Consultant will contract with the United Way of PA (UWPA), which is serving as the fiscal backbone for this project. Consultant will need to coordinate with UWPA on invoicing and financial reporting.

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## TIMELINE

The CoC anticipates the following timeline related to this project:

| Date                | Activity                                                                                                             |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 08/19/2026          | RFP Released                                                                                                         |
| 08/19/26 - 09/04/26 | Questions about the RFP may be submitted during this period. The question period will close at 4:00pm on 09/04/2026. |

| Date       | Activity                      |
|------------|-------------------------------|
| 09/09/2026 | RFP Responses Due             |
| 09/17/2026 | CES Evaluator Selected        |
| 09/21/2026 | CES Evaluation Project Starts |
| 06/30/2027 | Project Closes                |

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## SELECTION

Selection of the consultant for this project will occur as follows:

- DECD staff and CoC consultants (Framework Strategies) will conduct a threshold review to ensure all applicants meet basic requirements.
- The CoCs' YHSI Core Team and YAB will be provided with access to all proposals for review and consideration.
  - The YAB will provide input and feedback to the YHSI Core Team (YHSI Core Team includes representatives from the YAB).
  - The YHSI Core Team will review applications and make the final selection of the consultant.
- Proposals will be reviewed for the following:
  - Applicant responsiveness to the questions.
  - Applicant prior experience with CES evaluation.
  - Applicant prior experience/ability to work with YYA and those with lived experience of homelessness and housing instability.
  - Applicant's approach and demonstrated ability/capacity to meet the project's deliverables.
  - Soundness of the applicant's proposed budget.

## STATEMENT OF QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

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### FORMAT

- Please limit your written proposal to no more than 10 single-spaced pages.
- Please use Times New Roman 12-point font. Please number all pages. Please use margins no smaller than 0.5 inches from the edge.
- The written proposal should be submitted in a single email as a single PDF document.
- Attachments are not counted toward the page limit but should be included as part of the single PDF document.

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### DEADLINE

- **RFP responses must be received by 4:00 P.M. on 09/09/26.** Late submissions will not be considered.

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#### SUBMISSION DETAILS

- Responses MUST be submitted by email to Brendan Auman at breauaman@pa.gov
- DO NOT submit RFP responses by mail, fax, or hand delivery.
- The email subject line should be: "YHSI CES Evaluation RFP Response: Organization Name".
- Incomplete submissions will not be considered.

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#### REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL COMPONENTS

The proposal submitted should include the following components:

**1. Organization Information.**

- A. Agency name.
- B. Agency's point of contact for this response, including name, title, email address, and phone number.
- C. Statement of Qualifications - briefly describe why your organization is interested in providing consulting services for this project.

**2. Organizational Experience.**

- A. Please summarize any similar/relevant projects on which the organization has worked.
- B. Describe the organization's experience with the following:
  - a. Conducting a Coordinated Entry System evaluation with the goal of making recommended changes to improve outcomes.
  - b. Developing processes/tools related to Coordinated Entry Systems
  - c. Using qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluation and analysis.
  - d. Working with Youth and Young Adults with lived experience of homelessness and housing instability, particularly in evaluation projects.

**3. Staff Qualifications and Experience.**

- A. Identify the staff who will work on this project. This includes indicating whether existing staff will be assigned to this project.
- B. Describe the youth-specific skills and experience of the staff who will work on this project.
  - a. If staff do not have youth-specific expertise, please describe what your organization will do to ensure that the consultant(s) are able to: 1) effectively collaborate with the YAB and YHSI Core Team in



the implementation of the evaluation, 2) effectively coordinate and supervise YYA engaged in the CES user testing activities, and 3) engage with YYA for the purpose of conducting the YYA focus groups.

- b. Please describe whether staff who will work on this project have ever been trained on the following topics/approaches: Positive Youth Development, Trauma-Informed/Healing-Centered Care, Equity and Power Sharing, and Racial and LGBTQIA+ Equity
- C. Describe how the skills and experience of staff who will work on this project will be employed to ensure success in the development and implementation of the CES evaluation. This should include staff skills and experience related to:
  - a. Coordinated Entry evaluation and/or design, including experience related to youth-specific CE evaluation and/or design.
  - b. Evaluation of projects or programs targeted to those experiencing homelessness or housing instability or similar populations.
  - c. Homeless Management Information System data and other similar data/data systems.
  - d. Supporting authentic youth engagement.
  - e. Engagement of people with lived experience.
- D. Provide a timeline for when staff will be available to implement project activities.

#### **4. References.**

- A. Include a minimum of three (3) professional references for whom a similar project has been completed within the last ten (10) years.

#### **5. Approach to Deliverables.**

- A. Please review the anticipated deliverables and provide the following:
  - a. A brief description (2-5 sentences) of the approach your organization would take for each deliverable given the anticipated budget.
  - b. An estimate of how many hours your organization anticipates spending on each deliverable, based on prior experience.
  - c. An estimated timeline for and description of how the organization will meet the deliverables for each CoC. Please clearly show the timeline for completing the deliverables for each CoC and explain whether some activities may be conducted jointly.

#### **6. Additional Information.**

- A. Please review the [YAB's Truth and Value Statements](#) and indicate your organization's willingness to abide by them for this project.

- B. Sign off on the agreement to abide by the Continuum of Care's Code of Conduct Policy

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#### QUESTIONS

- Questions should be submitted to Idelia Robinson-Confer at [idelia@framework-strategies.com](mailto:idelia@framework-strategies.com)

## APPENDIX A: RESOURCES

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHSI) information:  
<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/yhsi/>
- Advocates 4 Change (Eastern and Western PA CoC's Youth Action Board) Truth and Values Statement:  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Xklq83uocYnC7W1w4DSS-yXh04kYxG2-LbxktOsr0Y4/edit?usp=sharing>
- Resources Related to Collaborating/Engaging with People With Lived Experience:
  - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation - Engaging People with Lived Experience to Improve Federal Research, Policy, and Practice:  
<https://aspe.hhs.gov/lived-experience/#:~:text=In%20the%20context%20of%20ASPE's,policies%2C%20practices%2C%20and%20programs.>
  - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development - Youth Collaboration Roadmap:  
<https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/6269/youth-collaboration-102-and-201-roadmaps/>  
<https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-youth/resources-for-homeless-youth-service-providers/#youth-collaboration>
  - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development - Centering Lived Experience: <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/centering-lived-experience/#:~:text=Those%20with%20lived%20experiences%20of,are%20the%20most%20effective%20solutions>
  - True Colors United Youth Collaboration Toolkit:  
<https://truecolorsunited.org/portfolio/youth-collaboration-toolkit/>