YHDP Foundations & Beyond: Coordinated Community Plan
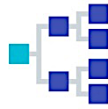
What Is It, What Are the Key Components, and How to Start Now

Statement of Need   **Community Partnerships**   **Governance Structure**   **Action Plan**

WHAT IS A COORDINATED COMMUNITY PLAN?

A Coordinated Community Plan (CCP) serves as a community's blueprint for preventing and ending youth homelessness. The CCP is the result of a comprehensive planning process that brings together diverse stakeholders to develop a coordinated community response to youth homelessness. The CCP lays the groundwork for implementation of a community's vision for preventing and ending youth homelessness, reflects authentic youth engagement and voice, establishes a community-wide commitment to equity, and provides a framework for investment in youth-driven projects to respond to locally-defined challenges and needs.

COORDINATED COMMUNITY PLAN THRESHOLDS & TAKING ACTION NOW

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has identified a number of key components and actions needed for the development of a strong youth homelessness response system – these are the basis for the following thresholds for the development of a CCP to prevent and end youth homelessness. Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) grantees across three rounds of funding have utilized these thresholds to develop ambitious and actionable plans for preventing and ending youth homelessness in their communities.

Whether or not you are a YHDP community, you can utilize the following thresholds to begin developing a plan for a coordinated community response to youth homelessness in your community. If you are interested in or have applied for YHDP funding, working on these thresholds <u>now</u> can provide you with a strong foundation for your ongoing youth homelessness efforts, including YHDP if awarded.

Key Component #1: STATEMENT OF NEED

Statement of Need	
Numeric Estimate of Need for the Following Groups:	**Needs of youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness regarding:**
- Unaccompanied youth at-risk of experiencing homelessness - Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness - Unaccompanied pregnant or parenting youth at-risk of experiencing homelessness - Pregnant or parenting youth experiencing homelessness	- Housing - Education - Employment - Social-emotional well-being

Why it's important: Communities must understand the scope, scale and intersectional characteristics and needs of youth and young adults (YYA) experiencing homelessness within their geographic area in order to effectively address youth homelessness. A statement of need clearly identifies the gaps, challenges, and barriers experienced by YYA at-risk of and experiencing homelessness, including risk factors for homelessness, disparate impact of experiences and interventions, and inequities and disparities experienced by populations of focus. These areas of need are topics for further action and discussion among key stakeholders, including youth with lived experience, during the coordinated community planning process. Numeric estimates of YYA at-risk of and experiencing homelessness within your geographic area are also crucial for developing the right interventions to the right scale with the right amount of assistance to effectively prevent and end youth homelessness.

How To Start Now:

☐ Begin collecting data from within the homeless response system on homelessness among unaccompanied youth under age 25, including pregnant and parenting youth. Potential sources include:
- Point-in-Time (PIT) Count data on unaccompanied youth and pregnant and parenting youth
- HMIS, Coordinated Entry, and/or project-level data on unaccompanied youth and pregnant and parenting youth served through CoC and ESG funded programs, including street outreach, shelter, transitional housing (TH), rapid re-housing (RRH), and permanent supportive housing (PSH) projects

- RHY-HMIS data for Basic Center Program (Emergency Shelter), Transitional Living Program, and Street Outreach Program on the number of unaccompanied youth served and pregnancy status of youth served with prevention services
- RHY-HMIS data for Maternal Group Homes on number of pregnant and parenting youth served

☐ Conduct outreach to organizations that may not be currently engaged in the youth homeless response system, such as those in the education, health, foster care and juvenile justice systems, to request any data on youth homelessness they may collect.

☐ Begin collecting data on youth and young adults at risk of experiencing homelessness, including pregnant and parenting youth, from sources including and beyond the homeless response system. Potential sources include:
- HMIS and/or Coordinated Entry data on youth accessing services through homelessness prevention, diversion, or drop-in center programs
- Census data on poverty levels
- Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY)-HMIS Data for Basic Center Program - Number of Unaccompanied Youth Served with Prevention Services
- Local and/or State education data (depending on your geographic area), including:
  - Students who were enrolled in school districts in your CoC geographical boundaries and identified as homeless according to the definition used by U.S. public schools under the following criteria:
    - *(i)   children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals**
  - Number of students experiencing homelessness under Department of Education definition of homelessness whose primary nighttime residence is "hotel/motel" or "doubled up"
- Local Child Welfare and Foster Care data on youth exiting the foster care system without stable housing or permanent connections, which may include youth in out-of-home care; youth who have run away from foster care placements; and youth aging out of the foster care system
- Local Juvenile Justice system data on systems-involved youth at risk of exiting to homelessness, including youth detentions; youth exited from the juvenile justice system; destination of youth exiting the juvenile justice system; and housing status of youth prior to juvenile justice involvement
- Youth Disconnection Data from Measure of America (available at the state, metropolitan area, congressional district, and county levels)

- Data on economic well-being, education, housing, health, juvenile justice involvement, and child welfare from the Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT Data Center

☐ Identify inequities and disparities experienced by youth experiencing homelessness, both in experiences of homelessness and access to housing and services. Make sure to examine the system for disparities across races, ethnicities, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

☐ Facilitate focus groups and listening sessions with youth with lived experience to identify inequities and disparities, resource needs, challenges and gaps they experienced within the local youth homelessness response system. Ensure diverse representation, voices, and intersectional experiences and identities.

Key Component #2: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Partner Agencies and Organizations	
Youth homelessness coordinated community planning efforts must include:	
- Continuum of Care (CoC) Board - Youth Action Board (YAB)	- Local and State Government - Public Child Welfare Agencies
Youth homelessness coordinated community planning efforts are also encouraged to include:	
- Affordable Housing Developers - Community Development Corporations - ESG Program Recipients - Health, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Agencies - Institutions of Higher Education - Juvenile and Adult Corrections and Probation - Landlords - Local Advocacy, Research, and Philanthropic Organizations	- Local and State Law Enforcement and Judges - Non-Profit Youth Organizations - Privately Funded Homeless Organizations - Public Housing Authorities - Racially and Culturally Responsive Organizations - Runaway and Homeless Youth Program Providers - School districts and McKinney-Vento liaisons - WIOA Boards and Employment Agencies

Why it's important: The homeless response system cannot prevent and end youth homelessness alone. Effectively addressing youth homelessness will require coordination, collaboration and innovation from a wide range of cross-system stakeholders, including youth with lived experience, state child welfare agencies, school districts, workforce development organizations, the juvenile justice system, and organizations that represent the cultural and racial diversity of youth in your community. Engaging partners in the community planning process early and often helps agencies and organizations see themselves in local efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness and become invested in the ongoing work.

Central to the success of a coordinated community planning process is the development of a strong Youth Action Board (YAB) comprised of youth that have current or past lived experience of homelessness. The YAB must be an authentic and equitable partner in every step of the community's youth homelessness response efforts, from planning to implementation of new projects to continuous quality improvement of the youth homeless response system.

How To Start Now:

☐ Support development of your local Youth Action Board (YAB), including:
- Recruit interested YYA with lived experience with a focus on youth with identities who experience disparities in the system (e.g. Black, Indigenous and other youth of color, LGBTQ youth)
- Build out key elements of YAB operations including compensation, transportation, and childcare needs;
- Identify and support meaningful opportunities for YAB members to develop leadership and advocacy skills; and
- Work with non-YYA CoC partners to ensure explain the role of the YAB as equal partners in decision-making processes and ensure they are prepared for authentic youth voice.

☐ Identify champions from the CoC Board, state and local government, and public child welfare agencies to support your youth homelessness efforts and provide early leadership for the group alongside the YAB.

☐ Engage your local school districts and McKinney-Vento liaisons early in the process. McKinney-Vento liaisons are crucial partners – they have a shared goal of preventing and ending homelessness for youth, are able to help identify students at-risk of or experiencing homelessness, and have access to dedicated resources to help meet the needs of unstably housed youth.

☐ Develop messaging for conducting outreach to potential partner agencies and organizations, including national and local data on YYA homelessness.

☐ Outreach to agencies and organizations in your community that interact with or may interact with YYA who are at-risk of or experiencing homelessness. Conduct intentional outreach to agencies that reflect the cultural and racial diversity of youth in your community.

☐ Work with the YAB and other YYA with lived experience to identify additional crucial partners for addressing youth homelessness.

Key Component #3: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Governance Structure
An organizational chart outlining a local governance structure for youth homelessness efforts, including: ● how decisions are made regarding funding and projects to address youth-homelessness; and, ● who is involved in the decision-making process.

Why it's important: A governance structure specific to youth homelessness efforts can help your community address the system level challenges that individual organizations, coalitions, and agencies are otherwise unequipped to address on their own. This decision-making structure and process should be respectful of the roles of different partners and the resources that they represent and transparent to both the partners and the public.

How To Start Now:

☐ Select a lead organization to coordinate planning and keep partners organized and focused on setting the vision and designing a cohesive system for youth.

☐ Begin developing a governance structure organizational chart, including defining clear roles and responsibilities with the CoC and YAB and how decisions will be made

☐ Design the local governance structure and decision-making process in partnership between YYA and older adult partners, with a focus on furthering equity and challenging norms of white dominant culture.

Key Component #4: ACTION PLAN FOR PREVENTING AND ENDING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Action Plan for Preventing and Ending Youth Homelessness	
1) Shared Vision Includes "end state" of youth homelessness (i.e. how will youth homelessness look after the coordinated community planning process is complete)	**2) Goals** Identifies at least one goal designed to achieve the shared vision
3) Objectives Identifies at least one objective of the goal(s) identified	**4) Action Steps** Identifies one action for each objective identified, including partner responsible and timeframe for action

Why it's important: The action plan is the community's commitment to responding to the needs of YYA experiencing homelessness through a coordinated, collaborative approach. The action plan should respond directly to the needs and gaps identified throughout the

coordinated community planning process and reflect authentic youth partnership and voice in all plan components. This plan provides a roadmap for the community's efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness and should be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the community's progress towards the shared vision, goals, and objectives, as well as new barriers or challenges that may arise.

How To Start Now:

☐ Identify any existing community plans that may support or inform the development of an action plan to prevent and end youth homelessness.

☐ Look at examples of coordinated community plans from YHDP communities for ideas of how to develop a shared vision, goals, objectives, and action steps.

Key Component #5: PRINCIPLES

The following key principles should be incorporated throughout the community's overall approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness, including all components of the coordinated community plan and interventions developed and implemented by the community. These key principles were identified by HUD and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) to reflect the distinct needs and experiences of YYA experiencing homelessness. This information can provide guidance and a framework for ensuring that your community's coordinated response to youth homelessness is equitable, outcomes-driven, and reflective of authentic youth voice, choice, and collaboration.

Key Principles To Incorporate Into Your Community Planning Process:

☐ **USICH Youth Framework and the Four Core Outcomes:**
  ● Stable housing, including a safe and reliable place to call home;
  ● Permanent connections, including ongoing attachments to families, communities, schools, and other positive social networks;
  ● Education/employment, including 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; and
  ● Social-emotional well-being, including 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.

☐ **Special Populations** of youth experiencing homelessness that are particularly vulnerable in how they experience homelessness, as well as their pathways in and out of homelessness, including:
  ● youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ);
  ● youth who are gender-non-conforming;
  ● minors (under the age of 18);
  ● youth involved with juvenile justice and child welfare systems; and

- victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation.

☐ Measuring and considering **racial inequities and other disparities** in the risks for, and experiences of homelessness in the community, consistent with fair housing and civil rights requirements.

☐ Incorporating **Positive Youth Development (PYD) and Trauma Informed Care (TIC)** into all aspects of the youth crisis response system, including at the system and project levels.

☐ Addressing **family engagement** strategies and services designed to strengthen, stabilize, and reunify families as part of the youth crisis response system.

☐ Strategies and approaches to ensure all youth will be offered **immediate access to safe, secure, and stable housing with no preconditions.**

☐ Integrating **youth choice** into all aspects of the youth crisis response system, including how youth will be provided choice on which providers and interventions to engage with.

☐ Developing a system that responds to the different needs for service type, intensity, and length of supports by providing **Individualized and client-driven support.**

☐ Providing meaningful opportunities for participation in community activities in support of **social and community integration** for YYA experiencing homelessness as they transition into adulthood.

☐ Ensuring that the **coordinated entry process** for the local CoC is youth-appropriate and its components are developed intentionally to incorporate youth.