**VT Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee**

September 25th, 2017: Meeting Notes

***Present:*** *Bethany Pombar (VCRHYP, Co-chair), George (OEO), Will Towne (SYFS), Ari Kisler (VCRHYP), Christina Farnham (WCYSB), Judy Rex (DCF, Co-chair), Kayla Miller (VCDP), Mike Nelson (NCSS), Christine Linn (YS), Anna Berg (YDP), Laurel Chen (VSHA), Sarah Grandchamp (HPC), Amos Meacham (Pathways VT)*

***Guests:*** *Shauna(VCDP)*

**Introduction: what do you hope to see happen as a result of this committee/plan?**

* Create a framework that addresses not just housing, but also prevention
* Chart a course for the future
* Gather ideas to bring back to my area
  + Chittenden County is often its own little world
* Increase statewide buy-in to prevention youth homelessness
* Increase awareness of youth homelessness
* Identify concrete things that DCF can do both in family services division and housing programs
* Learn more about services
* Make sure NCSS continues to be present
  + St. Albans is hoping to open a youth shelter; looking for contacts
* Highlighting where existing systems aren’t working
* Pooling resources and energy to increase efficiency
* Seeing what comes out of the focus groups with youth and figuring out how to incorporate meaningful youth engagement at local level
* Coordinating different silos to increase shared knowledge
* Making sure the housing assessment improves youth access to services
* Increase my own knowledge of the youth care world and work towards person-centered services

**Youth Engagement workgroup**

*Anna Berg provided an update on the work completed related to youth engagement.*

We’re getting ready to hold our focus groups. This has been a process we have been planning for a few months. Inviting youth to the Committee table doesn’t really fit their needs, so we decided that focus groups were a better way to get their input. The first group is being held next week. The group in Rutland doesn’t have a date yet, but we’re hoping it will be in late October/early November.

At our last meeting we went over the general plan for the focus groups and got a suggestion that youth peer facilitators host the groups. We’re excited to offer a $150 stipend to our peer facilitators. They will have training before the group and be debriefed with after. We’re still looking for youth to fill that role in some communities (Burlington and St. Johnsbury).

Bethany, Anna, and Christine will be co-facilitating with the youth. We’ll be able to offer dinner, childcare, and a small stipend for all youth who participate. Our host sites are all helping fill the need for childcare. We have received a few emails for people interested, but typically sign-up happens in the week before.

For those who can’t attend the focus group (timing, location, not comfortable), we’re developing an online survey. This is still in the works and we hope to send something out in the next couple of weeks for review. Survey will be short and intended to take only 5 minutes to complete. We’ve been discussing the possibility of a raffle as incentive for the survey and trying to sort out logistics.

*Discussion:*

* Can youth outside of a geographic area attend a focus group?
  + Absolutely, yes. We may be able to provide limited transportation, but are encouraging youth to access case managers or natural supports for help getting there.
* Is the group at Outright only for LGBTQ youth?
  + No, it is open to everyone!
* Will you be asking the youth if they want to serve on a youth advisory board?
  + Yes, we’ll be finding out if youth want to be further contacted and participate in other opportunities.
* Are there ways we can help advertise?
  + Yes! We’ll send an electronic version of the flier and everyone is welcome to disseminate.
* Reminder that we want to hear from a wide variety of youth who have engaged with services in Vermont; while the target audience is youth with housing instability, anyone is welcome!

**Key Stakeholder workgroup**

*Christina Farnham provided an update on the work completed related to key stakeholder feedback.*

The workgroup started by identifying the key stakeholders we want to interview or connect with in person, beyond just sending them a survey. For those we interview in person, we’re determining who we will meet with one-on-one and who we will meet with in a large group. The survey is in its beginning stages with draft questions targeted for a wide variety of stakeholders. We may draft more specific/personalized questions depending on who we are interviewing. Our timeline is November through December for interviews, but we plan to have the survey complete for dissemination by the end of October.

*Discussion: Are we missing anyone on our key stakeholder list?*

* Are Designated Agencies represented?
  + Yes, Bethany has a meeting planned with DA staff. It will be a combination of those providing mental health services and disability services.
* What about Adult Learning providers?
  + Tara is working on connecting with a statewide contact.
  + Suggestion that they be included in the list of stakeholders interviewed in person.
* Are the stakeholder interviews being used to gather information about the services they are providing or what to work into the plan?
  + Our main focus is what to work into the plan.
* Can we access another contact at AOE who is not just focused on McKinney-Vento?
  + Perhaps we could look at a special education coordinator who would have a broader understanding of AOE services.
* What about VocRehab?
  + Rose at WIOA is our contact through the Youth & Young Adult employment workgroup. VocRehab acts as the middle man between schools working with transition age youth and those providing employment support

*Review of the Survey Questions*

* Survey still needs an introduction
  + Suggestion: define “transition age” in introduction

Question One

* Is “Family Support provider” clear?
  + No, it could be misunderstood.
  + Suggestion: add (DCF) after “state or regional child welfare partner” and add “community based” after “family support provider”
* Suggestion: add examples after concerned citizen
* Do we want to ask about those with lived experience? If so, should it be a different question than #1?
* First two options can be easily misread
  + Suggestion: move ages to end of option

Question Two

* Suggestion: make answers multiple choice so that they can select multiply counties or choose statewide; if we’re surveying concerned citizens, we should ask what region they live in

Questions Three-Five

* Suggestion: move these questions to end; if someone doesn’t know what they’re being asked, they may not want to share this info yet

Question Six

* Suggestion: change “prevention” to “prevention resources and services” to capture knowledge about resources beyond prevention

Question Seven

* Survey Monkey recommends not having more than 6 things to rank in one question
  + Suggestion: change question from ranking to checking off 5 choices
* Family counseling/family support jumps out as something that is missing
* Youth mental health supports seems only focused on youth
* Suggestion: add misconceptions/community opinions/stereotypes about youth
* Suggestion: change “opiate epidemic” to a broader substance use option
* Can we combine youth employment opportunities, youth vocational supports, and high school completion?
  + It seems like opportunities and supports should be separate.
* Question feels difficult to complete; should we have a comment box?
* Youth substance abuse vs. family substance abuse?
* Suggestion: add broad family category related to dysfunction, conflict, etc.
* Suggestion: add something around life skills to help with a successful transition to independent living
* Suggestion: rework language to match phrasing to all positive or all negative
* Suggestion: Think about aligning survey with questions asked of youth
* Suggestion: rework question to include “what you think” to avoid making it sound like there is a correct answer

Question Eight

* Why does it say transition age youth as opposed to matching language elsewhere?
  + Suggestion: be consistent throughout with language.
* Suggestion: add affordable housing.
* Suggestion: add rapid re-housing in “short-term rental assistance with case management” etc.
* Discussion around how to make this approachable to everyone filling the survey out
  + How do we word things so they are understood?
  + We don’t have to fit this into the housing world; we can set our own categories
  + Suggest we align these categories with the CE assessment so that what we gather can be connected with concrete suggestions
    - Short term (less than 3 months), medium term (3-24 months), long-term (24 months or longer).
  + Definitions/clarity needed to make these options make sense to a broader audience

Question Nine

* Seems like a dense question
* Ask solely about barriers? Ask about what isn’t working with current system?

Question Ten

* Suggestion: change to checking off three choices
* Suggestion: change “local educational agencies” to “educational providers” to capture a broader definition
* Suggestion: remove “housing developers”
* Suggestion: make distinction of private landlords
* Suggestion: add religious affiliates

*Our timeline may be delayed due to feedback, but we’re still aiming to get it out in October or November!*

**Coordinated Entry**

*Will provided an update on coordinated entry in Chittenden County*

The Chittenden County Homeless Alliance had their coordinated entry retreat. A flowchart was created, but it still needs to be simplified. It shows all access points where people will complete the common screening form and then be referred to assessment partners (separated based on population type). They are planning on separate assessment tools for each population. This Committee made a recommendation to use the TAY-VISPDAT for youth. No other assessments were brought forward for other populations, so further discussion hasn’t happened. Plan is to have one list of people that is sortable. Goal is to have this in HMIS, but right now it is a spreadsheet. There is an effort to get 2-1-1 involved in this step.

*Ari reviewed the work done by the CE workgroup on VCEH’s assessment. The Committee made suggestions and provided feedback on specific questions, language choices, and formatting. Ari will make edits to the form and send it to Sarah Philips to bring to the VCEH CE Committee. Reminder: where we, as a committee, identify tension between the youth services world and the housing world can lead to recommendations we make in our final plan.*

**Next meeting:** *November 20th, 1-3pm, at Hartford Town Hall*