**VT Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee**

May 11th, 2017: Meeting Notes

***Present:*** *Ashley Greenfield (HPC), Rebeka Lawrence-Gomez (Pathways VT), Amanda Churchill (DCF), Will Towne (SYFS), Christine Linn (Youth Services), George Seiffert (OEO), Ari Kisler (VCRHYP), Christina Brown (WCYSB) Anna Berg (YDP), Bethany Pombar (VCRHYP, Co-Chair), Judy Rex (DCF, Co-Chair)*

**VT Council on Homelessness Presentation**

*Bethany shared about the presentation made at the April 25th VT Council on Homelessness meeting.*

Bethany, Judy, and Ari presented on the work this committee is doing, and shared our framework and charter. The council is a key stakeholder, especially as the authors of the plan to end family homelessness in Vermont. They are invested in supporting this committee and figuring out how our plan and their plan will complement each other. We offered to present again in six months and bring information about where in the process we are. We may have more regular meetings with Angus Chaney to continue the conversation and get additional feedback.

*Ari shared information about the discussion that took place after the presentation:*

* Suggestion to build in opportunities for introspection after the plan is implemented
* Questions about exploring the Housing First model for the youth population
* Suggestion to connect with the Veteran’s Committee and learn from their process

**TAC Inventory Presentation**

*Francine has worked on an inventory of housing and support services available to youth in Vermont. She took a system-by-system approach, looking at both those resources targeted for youth and those that transition-aged youth can access. The inventory ended up including state-funded resources in order to give a more complete picture. Where possible, she attempted to indicate when services are targeted at special needs populations. There are many options for how to organize this information. What will be most helpful may come to light as committee’s work progresses.*

*Homeless-Specific Resources*

These are resources specifically targeted at individuals who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This section covers state- and federal-funded agencies, as well as community providers. Some resources are available statewide while others, such as outreach resources, may be limited to only certain parts of the state. Youth-specific capacity is mostly through VCRHYP’s RHY providers. There are also HOP-funded beds specifically for youth. Additional resources are available through CoCs, where there is potential capacity for Rapid Re-Housing and Permanent Supportive Housing resources, but also some barriers to access. HUD is prioritizing those who are literally homeless or chronically homeless, which can be a barrier to youth.

*Affordable Housing System Resources*

This section focuses primarily on what is available through Vermont statewide housing agency (VSHA). Dependent on a youth’s situation, they may qualify for certain resources or preferences through this public housing authority (PHA). Homeless preferences for certain subpopulations exist with some other local PHAs as well. Francine suggested that the committee look at HOME and CDGB resources as possible bridges to stable housing.

*Housing Trust Fund*

Vermont has a promising plan in place with how to use their Housing Trust Fund. Potential opportunities exist here and should be further explored.

*Service System Resources*

This section looks at access points for youth, i.e. Parent Child Centers, 2-1-1, drop-in centers, etc.. Also included are prevention and transitional housing resources offered through DCF and DOC, as well as mental health providers, substance abuse providers, and employment training options. Additional providers include the VT Network, Community Action agencies, Reach Up, etc. Many of these are overlapping with other housing providers and appear elsewhere in the inventory (i.e. RHY providers).

*Group discussion:*

* Are there any insights on how Vermont compares to the national picture?
* Some states use a typology for triaging youth in need. VT is lagging in long-term supportive housing for youth. In terms of affordable housing options, matching a youth to a mainstream resource can work, but effort will likely be needed to get youth prioritized for these resources and options should be fully mined before connecting a youth.
* To determine what capacity VT needs to build, we should use our current data to isolate how many long-term permanent supportive housing resources we could use in the next year. Then we can compare how many are currently available to youth and use this to determine the gap.
* Discussion around under-utilization of the Family Unification Program, as well as our state’s trend toward serving youth with programs/services rather than with long-term supportive housing (i.e. not using housing first model).
* Continued attention should be paid to the Coordinated Entry process and how youth are prioritized. Discussion around how Chittenden County approaches youth in that process and how the Balance of State is considering to prioritize and view youth.

**TAC’s Overview of Plans from Other Areas**

*Naomi provided a presentation on plans that exist in other areas. Some of these plans will fit with VT’s process and some may just have pieces that we find helpful in our process. Her review covered one state plan, two city plans, and one from a non-US community (Calgary). Two of the included communities were selected for HUD’s Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project. All four communities were highlighted in HUD’s Guidebook Series. One-page summaries were provided to group. A PowerPoint presentation took a deeper look into each of the plans. With the exception of Wisconsin’s, all plans are available online.*

*Wisconsin*

They are at beginning of their work; they have a framework, but don’t yet have a full plan. Wisconsin has a coordinated collaborative system of their RHY programs, similar to VT. Their framework focuses on all youth and includes a strong focus on prevention. In 2013 they received funding to create a new bureau to push along this planning process. WI stands out as having really specific outcomes for youth. WI could be a potential peer-community for VT.

* Vision: all youth have the tools to thrive in adulthood
* Principles: right services at the right time
* Outcomes: education, employment, housing, well-being, and connections.

*Calgary*

Led by the Calgary Homeless Foundation, their plan was created in 2011. There is an emphasis on prevention, as well as coordinated entry and assessment. They also youth-centered service models and youth involvement in system planning. Aboriginal youth are a subpopulation identified within the plan. This could be used as an example for future federal funding applications by Vermont. Their plan is organized into milestones that are dated and range from specific to more broad. For each milestone, they identify strategies, set goals, and then highlight action items.

*Connecticut*

Plan development was led by multiple stakeholders and a statewide youth housing services coordinator was hired. There is an emphasis on youth involvement. They conducted interviews with youth to make recommendations about creating a more responsive system and implemented a statewide youth count. They produced an interactive online asset map of youth services.

* Vision: creating a future when all young people in Connecticut have safe, stable places to live and opportunities to reach their full potential

*King County, WA*

Plan development was led by a non-profit advocacy organization, All Home. As a Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project grant recipient, they are revisiting their plan and will need to have it approved by HUD. LGBTQ and youth of color are subpopulations and there is also a focus on youth under 18. There is a strong emphasis on data and evaluation elements. They created typology based on risk factors to best match youth with services. This plan has a heavier emphasis on housing than the others. Their framework is organized with recommendations, goals, what they have already done, what they have learned, what they’ll do next, and how they will know it has worked.

* Vision: every youth and young adult in King County has a safe place to live and thrive

*HUD’s Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project*

10 communities are actively working on plans. Once approved, they are eligible for demonstration project grants. These are communities to watch and then view their completed/approved plans. Some have a more rural footprint and may be most helpful for VT to review.

*How to Use this Information*

Consider common themes in other plans. Review plans and identify priorities we would like to include in our own plan. Reviewing a plan’s table of contents is a good way to start, allowing you to dive deeper into areas that sound most interesting to you.

**Youth Voice**

*Bethany led a discussion about meaningfully engaging youth voice in our planning process. The goal is to include youth in the process as early as possible.*

*Focus groups*

We’re considering 4-6 groups led by a regional co-facilitator from the committee, along with Anna and Bethany attending. Groups should be mix of youth with lived experience of homelessness, youth using other programs, and youth outside of services (i.e. only accessing drop-in services). We should collect basic demographic information. Pre-existing youth groups we should consider visiting include Youth Services, Spectrum, and NEKYS.

What do we need to know/ask?

* What services have been helpful?
* Where are the gaps?
* Why have certain services been helpful?
* What are the biggest barriers to accessing housing/services?
* Do you view VT systems as youth-friendly?
* What are your perceptions of why youth who disengaged are no longer here?
* Who used to be involved and why do you think they’re not involved anymore?
* Do you know other youth who are homeless right now?
* What do you think would help them in their situations?
* What do you wish existed that doesn’t already?
* What is your number one priority in each outcome area?
* What was your main priority before you engaged in services?
* What are your long-term priorities and goals? (2 year mark, 5 year mark)
* What have you learned from your experience?
* What is one thing you would pass on to someone else?
* Who do you go to for help and why?
* Where do you get information?
* What online platforms are tools you use?

*Additional Ideas*

* Written survey for youth outside of focus groups; passed out through case managers
* One-on-one interviews with youth
* Explore accessing youth in the corrections system (potential contacts = education provider in St. J correctional facility, Lindy)

*Youth engagement workgroup*: Bethany, Anna, Christine

**Available Data**

*Ari provided a chart that shows data currently available from a variety of resources. Committee members discussed additional data sources.*

**Next Steps**

*Data Analysis*

Committee members will bring back ideas about what data is missing and where to go for it. We’ll look at where each data element fits into the committee’s priority/outcome areas.

*Coordinated Entry process for youth*

Invite members from the Chittenden County CoC and the Balance of State CoC to discuss the CE process. (Chittenden County: Chris B. at CVOEO, Will Towne at Spectrum; Balance of State: Sarah Phillips at OEO, Sarah Grandchamp at HPC)

*State plan review*

Small groups will review and digest plans, pull out what peaks their interest, and bring back 3 priorities to the full group in July.

* Wisconsin: Bethany, Christina, Amanda
* Calgary: Rebeka, Will, Ari
* Connecticut: Judy, Sarah, Ashley, Anna
* King County, WA: Chrisinte, George, Ari

*Youth engagement*

Workgroup will report back

*Review key stakeholder list*

Make plan to interview them, create list of questions

*Timeline/benchmarks for committee*

*Review finalized TAC Inventory*