

Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee

Paddy Shea, CCHA Coordinator
Chittenden County Homeless Alliance
164 St. Paul Street B
Burlington, VT 05401

Dear Paddy,

The Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee is in the early stages of developing a statewide plan to end youth homelessness for Vermont. One of the committee's charges is to develop a shared understanding of evidence-informed practices to address youth homelessness. To that end, we have been looking at evidence-based best practices used by other states.

At our July meeting, Sarah Phillips gave us an overview and update on Vermont's Coordinated Entry process. Sarah encouraged the committee to review the two assessment tools being used by Chittenden and Balance of State and provide recommendations on how youth should be assessed.

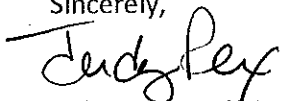
A workgroup was formed and reviewed the TAY VI-SPDAT (also known as the Next Step Tool for Homeless Youth) in comparison to the VI-SPADT and assessed its impact on youth. The TAY is a research-based tool and was developed to both predict which youth are most likely to experience long-term homelessness and determine who is most vulnerable and at risk. The workgroup's analysis found there are many advantages to using the TAY VI-SPADT with youth. It does a much better job addressing age and the specific life conditions unique to youth. It helps to level the playing field for youth who are often disadvantaged by assessment tools geared for adults.

We would like to recommend that the Chittenden CoC use the TAY VI-SPDAT assessment for youth and young adults under the age of 24. The Committee has some suggestions on language adjustments and/or the training of those who administer the assessment that we would be happy to share if the CoC chooses to accept our recommended adoption of this tool.

We also recommend that the CoC follow the TAY VI-SPDAT's recommendations on scores for youth at the same level they are committed to following the VI-SPDAT's recommendations on scores for adults. Because the TAY's recommendations align more closely with the youth housing models available in our state, we foresee greater buy-in to the Coordinated Entry process by youth-serving agencies if the TAY is adopted.

We would be happy to meet in person to discuss this tool in more detail, but wanted to get our recommendations to you for your August 8th meeting. We appreciate your consideration of our recommendation as we work towards addressing the unique developmental and social needs of homeless youth in Vermont.

Sincerely,



Judy Rex, Co-Chair
Director of Policy and Planning
VT Department for Children and Families