

## **APPENDIX 7:**

### ***Stakeholder Priorities for Addressing Youth Homelessness in Vermont***

A report for the Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee of the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness and Chittenden County Homeless Alliance

#### **Authors:**

Youth Homelessness Prevention Planning Committee, Stakeholder Subcommittee:

Tara Chase, Program Director, Windsor County Youth Services

Bethany Pombar, Director, Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs

Judith Rex, Director of Policy and Planning, Department for Children and Families

#### **INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT OVERVIEW:**

The Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee began meeting in 2017 to create a plan for reducing the occurrence of homelessness experienced by youth and young adults ages 16-24 in Vermont. As part of this work, the Committee began an assessment of the current landscape of supports and solicited input from stakeholders. The Stakeholder Subcommittee was formed to gather information from those working with youth and young adults experiencing housing crises.

The subcommittee developed two mechanisms for soliciting feedback from identified stakeholders: A series of interviews with key constituent groups and an online survey open to anyone self-identifying as a stakeholder. Participants in interviews and survey were asked about a variety of topics including what causes homelessness for youth and young adults aged 16-24, what could prevent it, and what do we need to do to respond to it. Subcommittee members collected and analyzed data from interview notes and survey results, categorized issues and identified reoccurring themes. The following report combines results from both assessment tools.

#### **KEY CONSTITUENT INTERVIEWS**

Five key stakeholder groups were prioritized for targeted interviews. In November 2017, three in-person interviews were conducted with representatives from the Community Action Agencies, The Youth Development Program, and DCF leaders. Members from the Juvenile Justice Workgroup and Balance and Restorative Justice provided written interview responses. A summary of themes from each separate constituent group is provided below.

### Community Action Agencies (CAA)

These agencies help lower-income Vermonters meet their basic needs and become self-sufficient. Services may include emergency food, fuel and utility assistance, Head Start, housing assistance, income tax assistance, information and referral and training.

*Summary of themes form interview:* The most common contributing factors to youth homelessness include family disruption (mental health, substance use, domestic and sexual violence, divorce, LGBTQ), system involvement (DOC, DCF, DMH) and poverty. CAA representatives want to see youth service providers and housing providers come together through cross-training and other opportunities to collaborate. They wanted to work with housing providers to link housing with vocational training/employment supports, stipends to youth as they are trained, and support with money management. There was strong support for a holistic approach to youth homelessness through increase mentoring for youth, support for teen centers, and services tailored to youth.

### Youth Development Program (YDP)

YDP is a voluntary, statewide program for youth who have spent time in the care of the VT Department for Children and Families, YDP works to ensure that former foster care youth enter adulthood with the necessary support to build productive and fulfilling lives.

*Summary of themes form interview:* Youth with a history of unsuccessful placements in both residential and foster care are high-risk for homelessness. There is a need to target this population with prevention efforts early on to mitigate risk. Serving youth that are already homeless is resource intensive and time consuming. YDP case workers reported barriers and limits their ability to serve couch surfing (precariously housed) youth. Housing was critical to their casework, youth need housing, preferably in a single-room occupancy model or a master-lease option that includes services, on-call caseworkers, and transportation. YDPs also felt strongly that Vermont needs more foster homes where youth can stay past age 18 to find jobs, deal with waiting lists for housing, and save the money needed for security deposits and rent. They also wanted to see YDP services extended to supporting young people age 24 – 26. YDPs also talked about the complications justice involved youth and young adults face. Criminal convictions are a significant barrier to obtaining employment, section 8 vouchers, apartments, access to some housing programs, and more.

### Juvenile Justice Workgroup (JJW)

This is a workgroup within the Department for Children and Families consisting of social workers, supervisors and central office staff from the Family Services Division, Vermont's Child Welfare Agency. The group focuses on policy development, practice discussions, and peer support as it relates to Vermont's Juvenile Justice System.

*Summary of themes form interview:* There is a strong desire for an array of housing supports to be available, including pregnant/ parenting placements, supportive adult living arrangements, housing with youth and young adults who need with mental health supports too, and drop-in centers that could double as emergency housing for youth. They thought housing services should include basic living skills education, information about the resources and services available locally, and support for building permeant connections and positive adult relationships.

Balanced and Restorative Justice Providers (BARJ)- BARJ serves youth who are on juvenile probation, at risk of becoming involved with the juvenile justice system or truant from school.

*Summary of themes form interview:* Many of the youth served by BARJ live in precarious housing situations such as couch-surfing with friends and families, living in cars, or finding an adult shelter that has open beds. BARJ youth workers felt that a major contributing factor for youth homelessness was a lack of family relationships and supports. They wanted to see more access to employment opportunities and increased financial support, and noticed the impact on a youth's ability to maintain their education. They talked about the tension between needing a home to find work and needing work to find a home. There were identified issues with the current housing system including Individuals without dependents experiencing longer periods of time being homeless because their needs aren't as great as families with children; long waitlists for shelters; and a need for more outreach to inform youth and young adults about available resources and services. This group felt that single room occupancy housing options would work best for their population.

#### VT Department for Children and Families (DCF)

As part of an integrated Agency of Human Services, DCF fosters the healthy development, safety, well-being, and self-sufficiency of Vermonters through reducing poverty and homelessness, improving the safety and well-being of children and families, creating permanent connection for children and youth, and providing timely and accurate financial supports for children, individuals, and families.

*Summary of themes form interview:* DCF leadership felt that housing is a keystone issue and an important social determinant of health and there isn't enough known about the long-term effectiveness or the cost-benefit of housing interventions. They identified key contributing factors to homelessness as high housing costs, low wages, generational poverty, mental health and substance use. Some of the strengths of Vermont's response include collaboration, Continuum of Care (CoC) system and creative funding strategies.

DCF has a robust response for youth through grant programs like Youth Development Program and support for the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs (VCRHYP). General Assistance and the Housing Opportunities Program create a safety net for young people over 18. They noted the challenge of serving young adults who are both parents and youth themselves and felt it was a critical issue to address.

DCF was interested in seeing an increase in the availability of an array of housing solutions specifically for youth and young adults, noting that there was no one-size-fits-all approach. They wondered what a good emergency shelter model might look like and there was support for using a host home model, which felt like a good fit for rural communities, and may link into their foster care system with partnered recruitment and retention support. DCF noted that data is currently a challenge for the system, and noted that “safe exits”, which is a tracked data measure, do not always equal permanent and stable housing, especially for youth. There was a sense that while AHS/DCF has put a lot of focus on homelessness, there was not enough data to show how the sub-population of youth fare within the mainstream housing response.

DCF Leadership would prioritize identifying the scope of the problem through improved data, identifying the choices of interventions available, rethinking host home and foster recruitment/retention strategies, addressing substance use disorders, and connecting workforce development to stable housing.

## **SURVEY**

A survey, designed to gather information from Vermont stakeholders about the causes for youth homelessness and what interventions would work best in our communities, was open from 10/6/17 through 12/11/17 and shared through email networks. A preview of survey can be found at this link: <https://goo.gl/zbbsQf>

One hundred and seventy-four (174) individuals representing all 14 Vermont counties responded to the survey. The majority of respondents were youth service providers (18%), other types of human service providers such as mental health, Reach Up or Head Start (17%), and Department for Children and Families (child welfare) social workers (16%). Other fields responding to survey included education, juvenile justice, housing and law enforcement. There were no responses from faith-based organizations and the medical community. Most respondents (73%) reported being familiar with youth homelessness services.

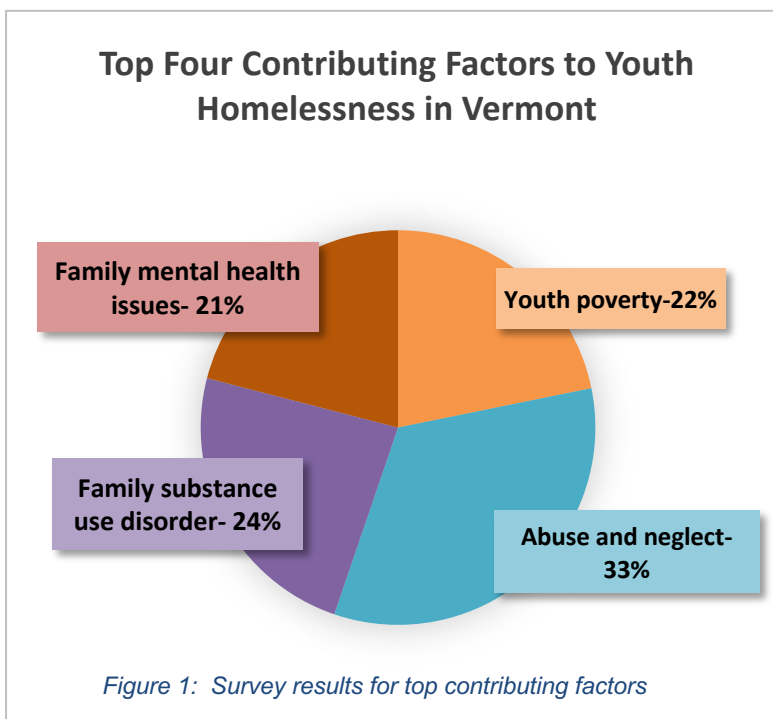
## INTERVIEW AND SURVEY FINDINGS:

The authors of this report analyzed survey responses and interview notes looking for reoccurring themes and ideas. Our findings are presented below. Where appropriate we have added some contextual data, but have not included an exhaustive review of data here. We would also like to note our own limitations and biases as stakeholders ourselves, working in child welfare fields.

Overall, stakeholders shared common thoughts about contributing factors and offered a variety of ideas for prevention and intervention supports. There was clear compassion for young people from all stakeholders, and a shared understanding that there may be inadvertent barriers or hurdles for youth accessing our programs. Stakeholders shared sentiments that while there are many supports that are working well in our communities, we need to create more access and increase the array of options available, while also streamlining the number of doors a youth needs to go to connect with different supports through increased partnership and program alignments.

### ***Contributing Factors to Youth Homelessness***

Survey respondents were given a list of experiences that may contribute to youth homelessness and asked to rank what they felt were the top three in order of impact. Childhood abuse and neglect, family substance use disorders, youth poverty and mental health issues were most identified contributing factors. The full list in order of impact is:



1. Childhood abuse and neglect
2. Family substance use disorders
3. Youth poverty
4. Family mental health
5. Youth mental health
6. Lack of basic life skills
7. Youth substance use disorders
8. Domestic violence
9. LGBTQ issues
10. Not completing High School
11. Youth pregnancy
12. Involvement with the justice system
13. Human trafficking and sexual exploitation

There were some differences in what was discussed and prioritized during interviews compared to the survey ranking results. The top themes from stakeholder interviews focused on both global and individual causes of family disruption:

- generational poverty;
- domestic and sexual violence;
- divorce; and
- lack of acceptance of youth with LGBTQ+ sexual orientation and gender identities.

High housing costs and low wages was another often identified contributing factors in interviews.

### ***Mental Health***

Youth living with mental health challenges were one of the unique populations repeatedly identified as needing additional supports for housing stability through survey and stakeholder interviews. A critical period for these youth is when they are transitioning from children services to adult services. This is a time when many young people are kicked out of their family's home with no place to go, though they are not yet able to be successful on their own. More supports need to be in place and more options that are ready to respond to these higher need youth and young adults. Many young people transition out of a residential placement when they are 18 back into either kinship care or independent living, but ongoing case supports are not in place and these transitions are not successfully sustained. Mental health workers in particular named these transitional times as needing intensive support. From existing runaway and homeless youth care workers, we hear that many people who are in transitional living programs need more specialized support than the program can offer, but that these youth have nowhere else to go and often stay past the initial program length of stay because there is no way to transition them out of housing without exiting them back into homelessness.

### ***System Involvement***

*“Youth who are close to aging out of DCF custody often fall through the cracks and not enough is being done to support 17-year-olds, specifically in regards to housing and permanency. Many of these youth go on to become homeless. When youth have an extensive trauma history,*

*they've spent so much time surviving and not thriving that they are well behind their peers in mastery of independent living skills."*

Youth with a history of unsuccessful placements in residential or foster care were identified as having a higher risk for homelessness. 82 young people served by the Youth Development Program, which supports youth aging out of the foster care system, were homeless in FY17 according to data collected through the Youth Homelessness Prevention Planning Committee. Stakeholders reported that young people with criminal convictions faced additional difficulties with employment and accessing housing supports due to their justice system involvement, which may make them ineligible for some services. It was noted that youth and young adults with prior sexual assault histories are especially difficult to place and need more wrap around supports as they transition to independence. There was an acknowledgement of compounding issues a young person might face when involved with the justice system.

Stakeholders wanted to see more focus on and support for extended care agreements and an increase in access to community-based case management, extending up to age 26, for youth who are involved with the Child Welfare system. They also felt that youth who are unified with family need more ongoing support from DCF after family reunification if issues arise.

### ***Community Stigma and Understanding Homelessness***

It was universally felt that youth experiencing housing instability faced community stigma that led to barriers to youth accessing services. Respondents said there was a need to do education and outreach to help communities understand the different factors contributing to youth homelessness.

Stakeholders were asked what myths and stereotypes needed to be addressed to enhance services for youth, and the same ones were repeated over and over. Youth are lazy, just want to party, use drugs, are bad, anti-establishment or delinquent. They lack motivation, are irresponsible, have done something wrong to cause their homelessness or difficult to work with. Clearly, there is a need to expose the facts behind youth homelessness and dispel the myths that blame or punish youth for being homeless or for acting in ways that may align with their developmental stage.

*"I think it's a massive myth to think that once a person turns 18 or 21 or some other arbitrary number, they're suddenly "adult" and should act like it without much help."*

### ***Specific Populations Ranked Low***

It is of note that domestic and sexual violence, and LGBTQ+ discrimination were ranked 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> respectively as causation for youth and young adult homelessness. Young people who accessed housing supports in Vermont reported these experiences more than the general population.

FY 2017, VT-HMIS data collected by the Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee showed that young people served by housing programs reported experiencing domestic violence at a rate higher than the general population and 22% of individuals who used Vermont's domestic and sexual violence shelters were young adults ages 18 through 24. 38% of youth under 18 supported by the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth programs identified as LGBTQ\* compared to 12% of the general youth population who identified as LGBTQ through the 2016 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Nationally, youth identifying as LGBTQ+ are at a much higher risk of experiencing homelessness.

*\*This only captures sexual orientation, not gender identity and does not include people who identify as trans, non-binary or other non-cisgendered identities.*

Reviewers were also surprised by how low youth pregnancy was ranked, 11<sup>th</sup> out of 13 contributing factors in the survey results. The Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs reported that in FY 2017, 15% of youth in their Transitional Living Programs (TLP) were pregnant and parenting youth and 26% of youth and young adults in mainstream housing programs are parenting according to FY17 VT-HMIS data.

This lower ranking sits in contrasts with information collected from stakeholder interviews where increased supports for parenting youth was frequently mentioned. It was felt that while these youth may have more access to existing economic and housing supports due to their parenting status, they also face a unique challenge in that they are placed into a response system that treats them like adults while still in the midst of their own late adolescent development. There was a desire for more developmentally appropriate options for this population that blended parenting support with holistic youth-centered supports too.



The lower causation rankings for these three specific populations paired with data that shows an overrepresentation of youth with these experiencing who are accessing housing supports may indicate the need for building increased awareness of the co-occurrence of these experiences and housing instability and how holistic, youth-centered services could address their unique challenges.

## **BUILDING SOLUTIONS**

Survey respondents were asked to rank, in order of importance, what services and supports are needed to end youth homelessness. The top three resources stakeholders prioritized were:

1. Affordable housing
2. Age-appropriate housing supports
3. Youth employment/vocational supports

Stakeholders naturally identified the need for supply, services and systems responses to work together to put coordinated programs in place that met youth needs.

## **SUPPLY**

### ***Access to affordable housing***

Affordable housing was ranked as the number one resource needed to prevent and end youth homelessness. It is widely acknowledged in Vermont that there is a lack of affordable housing. In 2015, there were only 57 affordable and available housing units for every 100 renting households with very low incomes.<sup>1</sup> In the first quarter of 2017, Vermont's rental vacancy rate was just 3.8%, compared to a 7% rate nationwide. This is clearly an area of need and housing developers should consider youth needs when developing affordable housing.

In addition to looking at the basic number of affordable units available, stakeholders noted the need to explore the role landlords play in youth's ability to access those units. Youth can be seen as high-risk renters, even in the best of circumstances they often lack a rental history, employment may not be secure, and they are still learning basic living skills. These barriers are compounded for youth who may lack familial support, have a trauma history, or have other challenges.

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<sup>1</sup> Talk Poverty, Vermont, 2016, <https://talkpoverty.org/state-year-report/vermont-2016-report/Stakeholder-Priorities-for-Addressing-Youth-Homelessness-in-Vermont-September-2018>  
Vermont Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program Coordinated Community Plan

Participants in almost every stakeholder group named landlords as having a primary role in supporting youth in housing. Many ideas came up during conversations about how to increase supports for landlords including:

- Creating an incentive for landlords renting to young people;
- Finding ways to reduce the financial risk landlords feel they face when renting to youth, like access to a risk pool; and
- Educating landlords around adolescent development, anti-discrimination practices, and working with assistance providers (like voucher programs, or local case managers) to reduce stigma and barriers youth encounter.

### ***Developmentally Appropriate Housing Supports***

Those who work with youth and young adult populations agreed that there was a need for developmentally appropriate housing supports designed specifically for the youth and young adult population. In Vermont, these have been limited to what is available through the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs and consist primarily of transitional living apartments, which are master-leased by agencies and sub-leased to youth. Young adults 18 and over can access other housing supports available through the Continuum of Care providers, but those services are designed for adult populations and may not always be appropriate for young people.

### ***Needed Housing Models***

Survey respondents and interviewees were asked to share their thoughts on what housing models worked best for young people. Responses ranged widely and participants agreed that there is no one solution that fits all youth. An array of options needs to be available to meet the diversity of youth needs; both short and long-term (up to two years) interventions. Options from emergency housing to developmentally appropriate single-room occupancy and transitional living program models, as well as access to independent living options with connections to support.

When survey respondents were asked what housing solutions worked best for young people, the top three selections were:

1. Permanent Supportive Housing programs with case management

2. 18-21-month Transitional Housing programs, and
3. Case management supports for youth to stay with family, friends or on their own.

There were a few models that sparked repeated interest in interview groups, including:

Home share or Host Home models: It was noted by some stakeholders that recruitment is difficult and needs to be resourced and hosts need to be well trained and trauma informed, as well as compensated enough to stay engaged.

Tiny house villages for youth: This option was mentioned multiple times from various constituent groups.

Studio or one-bedroom occupancies: Either as master-lease or voucher options, with co-located services or accompanied with either in-house case management, outreach case management, and/or on-call supports.

Kinship Care: For youth with increased mental or behavioral health challenges, expanding the support for kinship care was an essential resource, particularly for people 16-24 involved in the juvenile justice or mental health systems

Rental assistance: Some youth only need a helping hand for a short time to avoid eviction and homelessness; longer-term service users could be reduced by having flexible rental funds available.

Housing First approaches: Many respondents were interesting in a housing first approach for youth, a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and then providing additional supports and services as needed.

### ***Considerations for building youth-centered housing supports***

A number of themes came up as special considerations when developing housing solutions for youth and young adults:

- 1) Additional barriers 16 and 17-year olds face in accessing supports. They often cannot sign leases or access the adult supports that are available, and might not yet be suited for more independent housing options.
- 2) Need to create systems that provide intentional transitions out of supported housing options, like assuring youth who are leaving transitional living programs have vouchers they can use anywhere for up to a certain amount of time, or a savings account to ease the transition.
- 3) Privacy is important to youth. Youth want access to some privacy, youth don't want to be with older homeless adults and have some anxiety around being housed with others.
- 4) Having flexible, individualized pathways which blend housing interventions with case management and other supports are important to youth and will help them meet their needs.
- 5) All groups interviewed were concerned about the length of waitlists; some reporting they were years-long lists, and some programs have limitations that caused restrictions in access to case management while youth were in on the waitlist. Stakeholders wanted youth to be able to access more case management while on waitlists.
- 6) Additional outreach is needed to identify and engage homeless/ precariously housed youth.

*The general public would benefit from knowing more about the impacts of trauma on a human being and to understand that poverty is a systematic, generational issue and not solely the responsibility of those forced to endure it. If we focused more attention and resources on early interventions and supports, we could build fewer prison cells and stronger communities."*

## **SERVICES**

It was clear from responses that stakeholders wanted housing supports to be provided in conjunction with case management and other support services, which was seen a key to success. A number of specific areas of focus for services were identified.

### ***Employment Resources***

Interviewees identified employment as a vital part of long-term housing stability. To help support youth in obtaining and maintaining employment, they need access to case management, paid training opportunities, and increase employment options that paid more than minimum wage.

While there are employment supports for youth with higher needs, youth who may only be experiencing housing instability without a co-occurrence of other challenges have less access to employment supports. Youth employment resources, like the JOBS program or Vocational Rehabilitation, are limited to youth with existing mental or behavioral health or disability issues. The Workforce Investment Opportunities Act (WIOA) supports through the Department of Labor are limited to young people disconnected from schools. Many youth who are experiencing a housing crisis don't fall into any of these categories and don't have the same access to youth employment programs.

There was also an expressed sense that expanding and enhancing employment options for youth was a challenging part of case management and stakeholders thought that a youth employment specialist could help identify and coordinate resources statewide.

### ***Education***

Education plays a critical role in stabilizing young people and opening opportunities. There was a strong desire to increase access to supports from educational entities, both high school and post-secondary, to youth experiencing homelessness or precarious housing.

McKinney-Vento was seen as a critical support and stakeholders felt that there were opportunities to enhance coordination between educational entities and community partners to support youth. One specific area of potential collaboration was around increased data sharing to better understand the experiences of homeless students. It was also noted that there was not consistency across districts around referral protocols and work could be done to develop practice guidelines, including enhanced identification of red flags that appear when youth are experiencing precarious housing or homelessness, such as truancy.

Beyond identifying and connecting youth in need of supports to appropriate youth service provider, respondents saw schools playing a larger more preventative role in addressing youth homelessness as well, expressing a desire to see independent living skills built in as a part of the curriculum.

For college aged youth, the connection between dorms and housing availability was noted. Many homeless youth go to college and live in dorms, but during school breaks and summers are left without any place to go. Some stakeholders stated that they wished Community College of Vermont had some dorms to support low-income students who also need housing.

### ***Permanent Connections***

It was seen as essential across all stakeholder groups that youth have support in developing long-term connections with both peer and adult mentors for empowerment and bridging into adulthood. This was echoed when talking about youth with mental health or behavioral challenges, for youth involved with the child welfare system and juvenile justice, and any youth experiencing family disruption. Connecting young people with individual and family counseling, mentoring, and peer connections is a vital piece of holistic services that support long-term stability.

### ***Transportation***

Transportation can be a barrier to youth seeking housing stability and a lack of transportation options can prohibit employment or educational opportunities. . There was a desire from youth care workers to have more flexible funding options that could help pay for things like car maintenance, license fees or fines that are barriers to young people having their own transportation. Stakeholders also thought that youth services and housing should be located close to bus routes where available, but with the state's rural nature and limited public transportation options, providers should include alternative transportation supports as part of case management and housing services.

### ***Living Skills***

Life skills training is an essential part of youth support work and should include rental education and financial management. More life skills development should be specifically included in program planning.

*“ Some schools do okay with the independent living and life skills, but I feel that some don't have it on their radar at all... It would be great to see more students learn budgeting skills and also how to search for an apartment and understand what a good rental is.”*

## ***Youth/ Drop-in Centers***

When asked what resource, besides more housing options, was needed most to help prevent and end youth homelessness, youth/drop-in centers were mentioned across stakeholder groups. There was interest in seeing teen centers that also had emergency beds for teen at night, especially in the winter. People wanted drop-in centers to be the hub of access to services.

## **SYSTEM RESPONSE**

*“There would be a dedicated office who works with homeless youth and has partnership relationships with all types of services and all would be thinking, ‘How can we find a way to help this person?’”*

Stakeholders we talked to represented a number of different entities working to support youth who may also be experiencing homelessness or precarious housing. While some individual respondents reported that they felt systems were working well, all groups identified issues regarding the “system response” to youth homelessness. Overarching systems issues that were surfaced included:

- a. A lack of preventative supports. Many resources only became available after the crisis was already happening. Stakeholders wanted to see investments in upstream services and early identification of housing instability.
- b. Arbitrary age restrictions that limit access to supports. Reviewers heard frustration from responders that some supports, like transitional living program housing and the JOBS program, cut off to early and don’t extend to young adults up to age 25, while other housing or employment support aren’t available to youth who are under 18, like general assistance.
- c. Co-occurring issues need special attention, particularly for young people in need of mental health supports.

- d. A coordinated community response should break down silos and increased communication and collaboration between partners in youth services and housing agencies. Specific actions to assist this that were offered included:
  - i. Cross-training of partners to ensure a baseline knowledge about resources that are available.
  - ii. Cross-training youth and adult housing providers to ease the transition from youth services to adult services as youth age out.

### ***Building Connections and Collaborations***

Partnerships are a vital part of successful community responses to youth homelessness. Survey respondents were asked about what entities youth homelessness responders should prioritize connections and partnerships with. The top their responses were:

- Mental health and substance use providers (66% of respondents),
- Affordable housing providers (61%), and
- Educational systems including local McKinney-Vento liaisons (51%).

### ***Funding Issues***

Two primary funding issues arose:

1. Not enough funds for bricks and mortar housing interventions, including purchasing of buildings, solidifying blocks of master leased apartments, and some flexible funding for direct rental assistance.
2. Need for flexible funds to pay for things like car repair, enrichment activities, employment appropriate clothing.

### ***Data***

Stakeholders felt there was a lack of data available to understand youth experiences of homelessness, better data could help direct resources to the right option and evaluate what is working for interventions. Stakeholders wanted more information on youth with repeat



incidents of homelessness, youth who may access warming shelters and what their co-occurring issues might be, and youth to be better represented in the annual Point In Time count, expanding the definition for youth from literally homeless to those youth also precariously housed.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee (YHPPC) reviewed the draft stakeholder report at their September 2018 meeting and worked in small groups to identify common themes and priorities.

There is consensus among stakeholders and members of the YHPPC that Vermont needs to build a continuum of housing options for youth and young adults that is ***accessible, age/developmentally appropriate and includes case management, employment/vocational supports and transportation***. A “One Stop Shop” approach should be explored to meet the unique needs of youth and could help address some of the barriers that youth face in a rural state. Given the overall lack of affordable housing in Vermont, it is critical to educate landlords about the housing needs and challenges young people face and to simultaneously create incentives and reduce financial risks that landlords face when renting to young people.

This continuum of housing options should also include supportive adult living arrangements such as foster homes and host homes for young adults age 18 and older. Many stakeholders voiced the need for adult mentors, building permanent connections and positive adult relationships especially for youth and young adults with substance use and mental health issues.

The combination of high housing cost and low wages in Vermont was a frequent theme that highlights the need to expand financial supports for youth and young adults. Financial assistance with security deposits and rent and master-lease options were frequently cited. There is also a need for supports beyond housing such as stipends for youth engaging in education and vocational training programs.

There appears to be some discrepancy between the perceptions of stakeholders and the actual impact that domestic and sexual violence, pregnant and parenting youth and young people who identify as LGBTQ may have on homelessness. The needs of these sub-populations of youth and

young adults should be considered and more analysis of how these contributing factors can overlap and impact homelessness.

Finally, increased collaboration among youth and adult service and housing providers as well as cross trainings would help build capacity within the adult system to address the needs of young adults and foster a better coordinated system that would allow youth to smoothly transition from youth services and housing to adult services and housing.

## Ending Youth Homelessness Survey

**The Youth Homelessness Prevention Planning Committee, a joint work group of the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness and the Chittenden Housing Alliance, is soliciting feedback from stakeholders to inform our plan for ending youth homelessness by 2020. Our plan will be focused on youth and young adults ages 16-24 who lack a safe and stable place to sleep. This include youth who are literally homeless as well as those whose housing is precarious and insecure.**

**This survey is open to all participants, every voice matters. There are 12 questions and we anticipate the survey taking approximately 10 minutes to complete. If you have questions or want to offer more substantial input or stories, please contact Bethany Pombar at the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs at [bpombar@vcrhyp.org](mailto:bpombar@vcrhyp.org) or 802-229-9151.**

1. Please select the option that best describes your role as a community partner.

(select only one)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Homeless youth   | <input type="radio"/> Legal system representative         |
| <input type="radio"/> Housing provider for youth and young adults (under age 24) | <input type="radio"/> Educational provider Employment     |
| <input type="radio"/> House provider for adults (age 25+)                        | <input type="radio"/> program provider Juvenile Justice   |
| <input type="radio"/> Service provider for youth and young adults (under age 24) | <input type="radio"/> provider                            |
| <input type="radio"/> State child welfare professional (DCF)                     | <input type="radio"/> Law enforcement                     |
| <input type="radio"/> Community-based social worker                              | <input type="radio"/> Policy maker                        |
| <input type="radio"/> Mental health/substance abuse provider                     | <input type="radio"/> Concerned citizen, family or friend |
| <input type="radio"/> Medical provider   |   |
| <input type="radio"/>  |   |

Other (please specify)

2. What county in Vermont do you work or live in? (if you work in a region of VT, please check off the counties that make up the region)

- Addison county
- Bennington county
- Caledonia county
- Chittenden county
- Essex county Franklin
- county Grand Isle
- county Lamoille
- county Orange county
- Orleans county
- Rutland county
- Washington county
- Windham county
- Windsor county
- Statewide
- 

3. How do you feel about this statement: I am very familiar with youth and young adult homelessness services and prevention resources.

- Strongly Agree
- Disagree Strongly
- Agree
- Disagree
- Neutral (neither agree or disagree)

4. Please rank what you feel are the top 3 contributing factors to youth homelessness.

<input type="text"/>	Youth poverty
<input type="text"/>	Childhood abuse and neglect
<input type="text"/>	Youth/family substance use disorders
<input type="text"/>	High School completion
<input type="text"/>	Youth pregnancy
<input type="text"/>	LGBTQ issues
<input type="text"/>	Involvement with the justice system
<input type="text"/>	Human trafficking and sexual exploitation
<input type="text"/>	Domestic violence
<input type="text"/>	Youth myths and stereotypes

5. Please rank the top 3 services and supports that are needed to end youth homelessness. 1 being the most needed.

<input type="text"/>	Youth vocational supports
<input type="text"/>	Youth employment supports
<input type="text"/>	Affordable housing
<input type="text"/>	Age-appropriate housing supports
<input type="text"/>	Outreach about existing resources to the youth community
<input type="text"/>	Youth mental health supports
<input type="text"/>	Family mental health supports

6. Rank the housing solutions you think work best for youth and young adults (ages 16-24) that are homeless or at risk of homelessness, 1 being the best option.

<input type="text"/>	Emergency shelter (night by night availability)
<input type="text"/>	90 day Emergency shelter
<input type="text"/>	18-21 month Transitional housing
<input type="text"/>	Permanent Supportive Housing (permanent housing plus case management)
<input type="text"/>	Short-term (90 days) rental assistance/subsidies (w/case management)
<input type="text"/>	Medium-term (3-24 months) rental assistance/subsidies
<input type="text"/>	Long-term (2 years +) rental assistance/subsidies
<input type="text"/>	Case management support to stay with family, friends or on own
<input type="text"/>	Coordinated Entry Assessment

7. Where are the gaps and what is not working in the current system of care/housing solutions for youth and young adults (ages 16-24) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness? (please be as specific as possible)

8. What partners should youth homelessness prevention advocates prioritize connections with (check off your top 3)

- Educational Systems (local schools, GED, ABE, Higher Ed.)
- Child Welfare System
- Legal Services Providers
- Employment/Vocational Programs
- Economic Services/ Food Assistance Programs
- Hospitals and Health Clinics

- Mental Health/Substance Use Providers
- Early Childhood Programs/Childcare Providers
- Victim Service Providers including domestic and sexual violence responders
- Affordable Housing Providers, Housing Developers, Private Landlords
- Transportation Services
- Law Enforcement

9. What do you think is working best in your community to support youth and young adults who are precariously housed or homeless to help them avoid homelessness or end their homelessness?

10. If you had a magic wand to change one thing about how Vermont is responding to youth homelessness, what would it be?

11. Name (optional)

12. E-mail (optional)

13. Can we follow up with you?

Yes

No

Thank you for taking our survey!