



Vermont Coalition to
End Homelessness,
Balance of State
Continuum of Care

**YOUTH
HOMELESSNESS
DEMONSTRATION
PROGRAM**

**COORDINATED
COMMUNITY PLAN**

*DRAFT- February 2019
FOR REVIEW ONLY*

Image by Jakya Ellison, Youth Action Board member

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Acknowledgements

This plan reflects a statewide collaborative effort to examine and address the issue of youth and young adults facing housing instability and homelessness. The plan and subsequent system improvements would not have been possible without the commitment from many individuals and organizations. Among the list to thank include:

The many youth and young adults who participated in the focus groups held throughout the fall and winter of 2017/18. Your words and wisdom have been the base which we have built on and we hope you see your ideas reflected here.

The stakeholders who opened their meetings and minds to us as we assessed the landscape of services in Vermont and collected ideas for improvements; our work together has just begun.

The Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee, listed in Appendix 1, who have been working for almost two years to define the path forward and help open doors.

The Youth Action Board partners, also listed in Appendix 1, who have been teaching us and learning with us, asking critical questions, and sharing their truth.

The Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness, who has seen the challenge of homelessness and not backed down.

The Vermont Department for Children and Families, who have shown their commitment to ensuring safety of all young people and supported the Demonstration Program from the very beginning.

The Vermont State Housing Authority, who as the Collaborative Applicant for the Continuum of Care, has lent expertise and invaluable guidance as well as support accessing much needed resources.

The Vermont Coalition of Runway and Homeless Youth Programs, who have given time, space, vision and grueling commitment to the Demonstration Program.

The Technical Assistance Collaborative, the True Colors Fund, and the National Center For Homelessness Education who provided us with much needed guidance and support through the planning process.

And finally, to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for making this opportunity possible.

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INTRODUCTION:

In November 2016, a team from the Vermont Department for Children and Families, including Commissioner Ken Schatz, and the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs attended the New England Forum on Youth Homelessness, sponsored by the Region 1 Federal Interagency Council. Through the course of the day, the team heard voices of youth and young adults impacted by homelessness and inspiring stories from our neighbors on innovative programs. Towards the end of the day we were asked to develop some action steps to take home with us, and topping the list was our need to develop a plan for ending youth and young adult homelessness in Vermont.

“The harsh reality of this situation is that most youth are just trying to understand and accept what’s happening to them.”

- JR Burns, Youth Action Board member

By March of 2017, partners including the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs, the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness, the Chittenden County Homeless Alliance, and the Vermont Department for Children and Families established the Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee (YHPPC). For a year, the YHPPC worked to assess the current system of care including conducting regional focus groups with youth and interviewing key stakeholder cohorts.

In early 2018, the second round of funding for HUD’s Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program was released and in July Vermont was selected as one of 11 communities across the country, receiving an award of about \$2 million to develop and implement projects over two years with opportunities for sustained funding beyond that time. The first step in the Demonstration Program was to develop a plan. We had laid the groundwork. We were ready.

Over the course of our work together, we found that homelessness was being talked about a lot in Vermont, but the unique and complex factors faced by youth and young adults were not always being considered. Through our planning process, we have enhanced our ability to identify and address the unique needs of young people. We heard from youth how stigma impacts them and creates barriers, and how we might remove them; we learned how our coordinated entry system may be inadvertently disadvantaging young people and are ready to explore remedies; and we heard from community partners how much they care about this issue and want to find creative solutions forward.

Now, over two years since we laid the challenge out ahead of us, we are proud to present our plan. This document represents the culmination of hundreds of hours from agencies and individuals across the state, the majority of which were in-kind. This plan represents our first step in making youth and young adult homelessness rare, brief and one time. No young person in Vermont should go without a safe place to call home.

VISION:

The Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness: Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (VCEH: YHDP) will engage a coordinated community of stakeholders across a diverse geography working to make experiences of youth and young adult homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring. Taking into consideration both the opportunities and challenges presented to rural communities, Vermont acknowledges the need for a uniquely tailored approach to assisting youth and young adults in our state. We will lead first and foremost with youth voice, as the insight of those with lived experiences is invaluable. We believe collectively that just one youth or young adult at risk of becoming homeless is one too many.

Our shared vision is a system in which youth and young adults are empowered to thrive in their transition to adulthood, with equitable access to: safe and stable housing; educational and employment opportunities; supportive services which are sustainable, strengths-based and trauma informed; opportunities to build permanent connections; and any other resources necessary for achieving social-emotional wellbeing.

GOALS:

To achieve our vision and drive forward the plan to end youth homelessness in Vermont, we establish the following goals as guideposts for program implementation:

Continuum of Housing Supports: The community will offer youth and young adults a variety of housing options that meet individual needs and empower youth and young adults to reach their full potential in a safe, youth centered, and sustainable living situation.

Permanent Connections: The community will support youth and young adults in establishing lasting connections with families, friends, communities, and other natural supports of their choice, while cultivating opportunities and interests.

Social/Emotional Well-being: The community will embrace positive youth development, trauma-informed care, and resilience building; encouraging the ongoing development of skills, strengths, and hobbies among youth and young adults to ensure continued stability.

Education/Employment: The community will work to remove all barriers to success in education and employment for youth and young adults, and to support the pursuit of a variety of paths with an individualized approach.

Prevention/Diversion: The community will enhance the statewide system of identifying youth and young adults who are at-risk of homelessness by conducting annual assessments of needs, strengthening outreach, and increasing access points for assistance with housing and services so that youth and young adults who are experiencing housing instability are identified early and prevented from entering the homeless crisis response system.

STATEMENT OF NEED:

YHDP Target Population

The Vermont Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program aims to serve youth and young adults aged 12 through 24 residing, or with permanent connections, in the Balance of State Continuum of Care (BoS CoC) geographic area with housing and homelessness prevention services. Individuals served may fall into any of HUD's categories for defining homelessness:

- Category 1: Literally Homeless
- Category 2: Imminent Risk of Homelessness
- Category 3: Homeless under other Federal statutes

- Category 4: Fleeing/ Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence¹

General Demographic Information

Our geographic service area includes 13 counties in Vermont served by the Vermont Balance of State Continuum of Care, representing the entirety of the state minus Chittenden County. This represents almost half a million individuals and 74% of the state’s total population. Approximately 18% of Vermont’s total population is between the ages of 12 and 24; with 5% being 12 through 15 years old and 13% aged 16 to 24.² Table 1 shows population by age groups in BoS CoC counties.

Table 1: BoS Population by County and Age³

<i>County</i>	<i>Total population</i>	<i>Aged 10-17</i>	<i>Aged 18-24</i>
Addison	36,959	3,099	5,159
Bennington	36,191	3,338	3,479
Caledonia	30,333	2,906	2,912
Essex	6,176	531	375
Franklin	48,915	5,126	3,877
Grand Isle	6,919	627	465
Lamoille	25,333	2,426	2,391
Orange	28,919	2,587	2,423
Orleans	26,863	2,472	2,023
Rutland	59,310	5,139	5,540
Washington	58,504	5,330	5,536
Windham	43,145	3,776	3,580
Windsor	55,496	4,945	3,802
TOTAL	456,151	42,302	41,562

Poverty and Rurality in Vermont

Vermont is one of the nation’s most rural states with plaguing poverty issues.

According to the latest American Community Survey (ACS) estimates from the Census Bureau, 68,000 Vermonters live in poverty, or 11.3% of the state’s population; which looks like a family of 4 living on \$24,000 annually.

The state is home to approximately 625,000 people, 61% of which live in towns of less than 2,500 people.⁴ Vermont’s rurality, while part of the fabric of our identity, lends itself to issues that are unique to these small places. For example, Vermont has a lack of public infrastructure that impedes assets like easy transportation, cell-phone service, and internet connectivity, which has individual impacts to accessing supports and inhibits private sector growth, leading to a lack of economic opportunity.

In the 13 months leading up to September of 2018, the Vermont Department of Labor reports the statewide unemployment rate has rested steadily at 2.9%, compared to a national average of 3.6%. While that number may look good on the surface, from 2006 to 2016 the number of Vermonters employed dropped in every county except Chittenden and Franklin. Those two counties employed over 8,300 more people in 2016, while the rest of the state employed 18,000 fewer.⁵ Most communities are not seeing economic growth and it is getting harder to get by.

¹ Further information on HUD definitions of homelessness can be found in the appendices.

² 2016 Vermont Population Estimates By County, Town and Age, Vermont Department of Health, November 2017, http://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/STAT_2016_Population_Estimates_Bulletin.pdf

³ *ibid*

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, County Rurality Level, 2010

⁵ Public Assets Institute, State of Working Vermont, 2017

13.5% of Vermont’s children under 18 are growing up in poverty. Essex and Orleans Counties, which make up a large portion of what is known as the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont and are marked by extreme rurality, have an average of 15.6% of people living in poverty, with Essex County having 1 in 4 youth living in poverty.⁶ 32% of Vermont’s youth lived in families that were considered “low income”.⁷ Low income is an approximation of the income that is needed for most families to provide their children with basic necessities like adequate food, stable housing, and health care.⁸ During the 2017/18 school year, 41% of students were eligible for free and reduced price meals; and in fiscal year 2017, 1 in 8 Vermonters accessed SNAP benefits, 61% of those being families with children.^{9,10} It is fair to say that poverty in our rural communities is pervasive, leaving many youth and families at risk and living on the edge.

Homelessness and Risk in Vermont

Homelessness is a hardship too many Vermonters face. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness’ most recent *State of Homelessness in America* report, the rate of people experiencing homelessness in the United States was approximately 17 people per 10,000 on any given night, while the rate in Vermont’s BoS was significantly higher at 20.2. Nationally, while the overall number of people experiencing homelessness increased by less than 1%, from 2016 to 2017, the number of unaccompanied youth increased by 14.3%. In 2017, Vermont saw an increase of 32% of unaccompanied youth from our previous year’s count, double the average increase nationally.¹¹

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates, 2017
⁷ U.S. Census Bureau/ Annie E. Casey Foundation KidsCount, 2016
⁸ Gershoff, E. (2003) National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health, Living at the Edge Research Brief No. 3, Low Income and Hardship Among America’s Kindergartners
⁹ Vermont Agency of Education, Nutrition 2018, Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility Report
¹⁰ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, SNAP factsheet, Vermont, 2018
¹¹ National Alliance to End Homelessness, State of Homelessness in America, 2017, <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-report/>

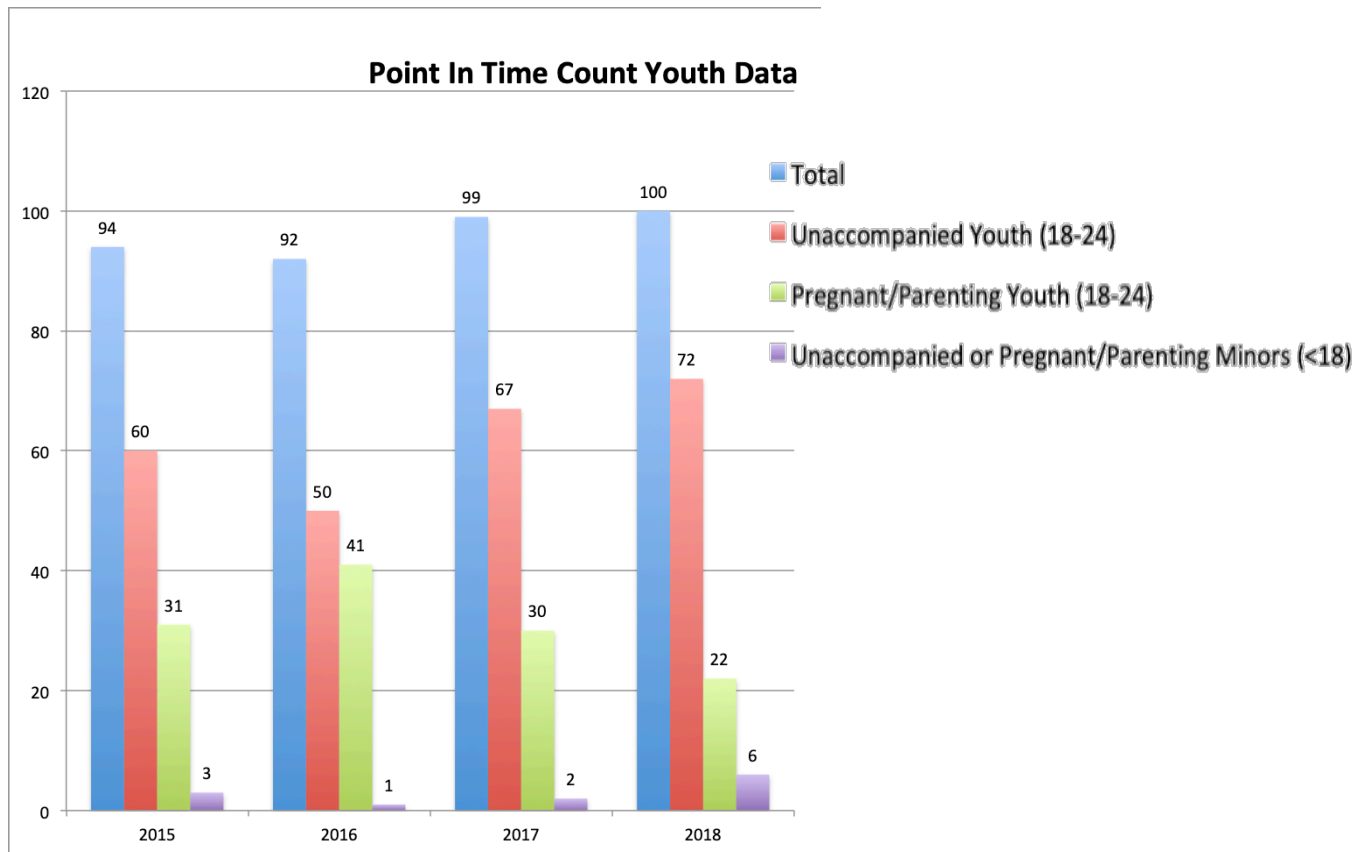


Figure 1: 2018 BoS Point in Time Count Youth Data

During the annual statewide Point-in-Time (PIT) Count conducted on January 31, 2018, 932 Vermonters in the BoS CoC experienced literal homelessness, a 5% increase from the previous year.¹² As shown in Figure 1, 100 people identified were youth and young adults between the ages of 12-24, representing 11% of the total homeless population on the night of the PIT Count: 6 were unaccompanied minors; 8 were chronically homeless YYA; 22 were parenting YYA, 2 of whom were also chronically homeless.¹³ Shown in Figure 2, of the 100 youth and young adults identified during the PIT count, 61% were in emergency shelter, 31% were in transitional housing, and 8% were unsheltered.

¹² Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness, 2018, <http://helpingtohousevt.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/2018-PIT-Report-FINAL-5-30-18.pdf>

¹³ Institute for Community Alliances, October, 2018

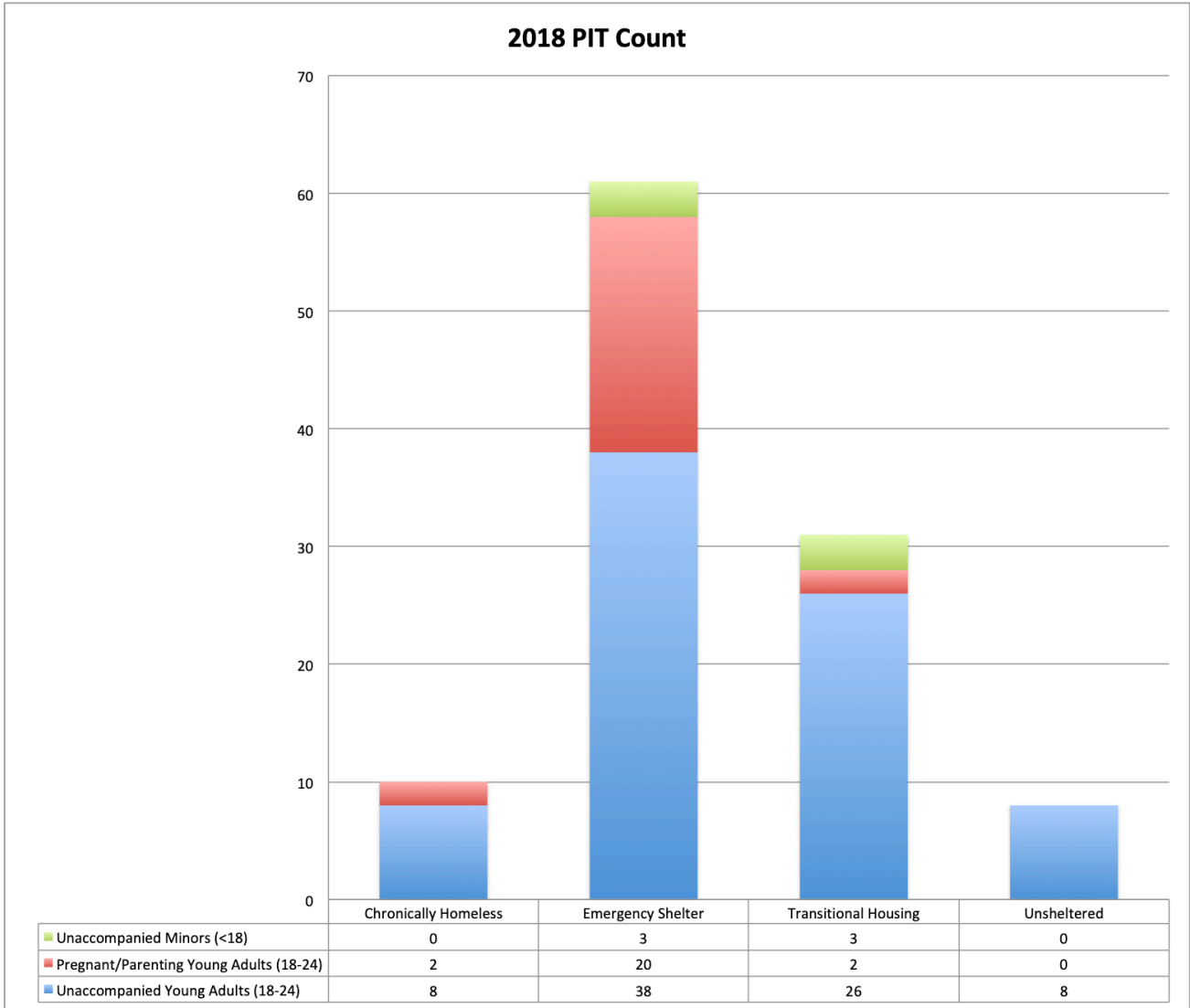


Figure 2: 2018 PIT Count location of youth (PLEASE ADD A TOTALS LINE: CH= 10, ES= 61, TH= 31, US=8)

According to the recently released study by Chapin Hall, *Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in Rural America*, youth experience homelessness in rural areas as commonly as they do in urban areas. Youth and young adults between the ages of 18-25 experienced rural homelessness at a rate of 9.2%, while 4.4% of adolescents ages 13-17 reported they had experienced homelessness at some point in the previous year (compared to 9.6% and 4.2% respectively of urban youth). Rural homelessness hides itself, “with greater reliance on couch surfing and sleeping in vehicles or outdoors.”¹⁴ The report also found that rural communities have less access to services specifically for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness and that YYA are more disconnected from education and employment and have less economic opportunities to pull themselves out of poverty and sustain suitable housing, evidenced by economic markers outlined above.

¹⁴ Morton, M. H., Dworsky, A., Samuels, G. M., & Patel, S. (2018). *Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in rural America*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago

To measure how many youth may be precariously housed in Vermont, in addition to the PIT Count, the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs (VCRHYP) conducted a precariously housed youth and young adult count on the same night and identified 124 YYA between 7th grade (approximately age 13) and age 23 who were doubled-up, couch-surfing, or otherwise unstably housed in the BoS CoC:

- 93 were in 7th-12th grade (approximately aged 13-17)
- 31 were aged 18-23
- 44 youth and young adults were unaccompanied by a parent or guardian (23 in grades 7-12 and presumably aged 18 or under; 21 aged 19-23)
- 65 were experiencing precarious housing with their families (all but one in grades 7-12)
- 14 were reported without information about whether they were accompanied or unaccompanied

It is important to note that VCRHYP only received information on precariously housed youth from 13 out of 52 total McKinney-Vento (M-V) liaisons in school districts/supervisory unions in the BoS CoC.¹⁵ With only 25% of school districts reporting, it is probable that a much higher number of YYA were precariously housed on the night of the count than reported here.

VCRHYP runaway and homeless youth (RHY) service providers served 425 youth and young adults aged 12-24 in the Balance of State CoC geographic service area with prevention, stabilization services, and independent living supports during FY18; of these, 16 youth under 18 were provided with emergency shelter and 51* youth were provided with transitional housing. (**Note, due to changes in how VCRHYP TLP providers were tracking utilization of shelter vs. support services, VCRHYP is missing the first quarter of data for FY18; the estimated total number of youth sheltered through TLP in FY18 is closer to 68.*) While these youth specific services are vital, they are working at capacity and not reaching or not the right option for all youth and young adults who need support, and currently, there are no other youth specific options.

Vermont BoS CoC is still working towards clarifying data measures in order to capture an accurate and un-duplicated count of all youth and young adults aged 16 through 24 experiencing HUD defined homelessness (which does not include precariously housed youth or youth in prevention services). Using what is available to us currently, in FY18, 399 YYA were served by Vermont housing programs:¹⁶

¹⁵ The Every Student Succeeds Act and McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act directs every school district to have a M-V liaison who serves as one of the primary contacts between homeless students and families, school staff, district personnel, shelter workers, and other service providers.

¹⁶ Youth served by RHY TLP providers are only included for a nine-month period (10/1/17-9/30/18) due to how TLP agencies were tracking youth in housing versus youth receiving only support services.

- 91 YYA were in domestic and sexual violence (D/SV) shelters (does not include youth under 18) and 13 were in D/SV transitional housing
- 276 YYA were in CoC, RHY BCP, RHY TLP and the state's Housing Opportunities Program (HOP) funded housing projects entering into HMIS
- 19 YYA were served in HOP-funded warming shelters that don't enter data into HMIS

Vermont youth are vulnerable to homelessness. Our rural culture breeds a mix of self-reliance and community-reliance which looks like young people who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk often leaning on extended family or neighbors and friends to help with a couch to sleep on for a while, or use of an old RV that's been parked in the corner of the field for a decade that is still mostly water tight. These solutions are often short-term, unsafe, and bring potential interpersonal conflicts into a youth's life; but unfortunately there are often not alternatives or services are not accessible due to a lack of capacity or availability, transportation barriers, or youth and young adults in need don't have information about what is available. As this project continues to examine and develop an enhanced response to youth and young adult homelessness, we will need to look at housing youth who are literally homeless, as well as preventing those who are at high-risk from falling into crisis.

CURRENT CAPACITY AND UTILIZATION

In May 2017, the Vermont State Housing Authority (the BoS CoC Collaborative Applicant) contracted with the Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc. to conduct an *Inventory of Housing and Services Programs to Assist Homeless and At-Risk Youth in Vermont*. In January 2019, the VCEH: YHDP Leadership Team updated the inventory to reflect capacity for FY19. The full report can be found in the appendices. Table 2 shows the youth specific bed capacity.

As of January 2019, there are a total of 64 youth-designated beds, plus 9 youth-specific vouchers in the BoS CoC. Of these:

- 21 are year-round emergency shelter beds for youth 12-17 years old operated by VCRHYP's Basic Center Program sites
- 38 are VCRHYP's Transitional Living Program beds for 18-22.5 year olds, with some exceptions for 16-17 and 22.5-24 year-old access
- 5 are transitional housing for pregnant and parenting youth
- 9 are Bos CoC funded youth-specific vouchers for 18-24 year olds available in six of the eleven BoS communities
 - In FY18, 9 RRH vouches went to two communities (Orleans and Washington); currently these are the only youth-specific beds accessed through coordinated entry

Vermont's current youth homelessness response system is almost entirely siloed in FYSB-funded programs, which limits both the amount and scope of services available. Building a more robust system with a wider variety of services dedicated for youth is vital as our state works toward ending youth homelessness.

Table 2: Homeless Youth-Specific Bed Capacity- January 2019

	Program/ Fund Source	Grantee/Provider	# Beds	Description
Emergency Shelter	HOP	Spectrum Youth & Family Services (Burlington) (OUTSIDE OF BoS CoC)	8	Year-round facility-based shelter <i>*also supported with RHY BCP funds</i>
	RHY BCP	Addison County Parent Child Center (Middlebury)	1	Site-based
		Lamoille Family Center (Morrisville)	2	Host homes
		Northeast Kingdom Community Action (Newport)	1	Host home
		Northeast Kingdom Youth Services (St. Johnsbury)	1	Host home
		Northwestern Counseling & Support Services (St. Albans)	3	Host homes
		United Counseling Services (Bennington)	1	Host home
		Washington County Youth Service Bureau (Montpelier)	8	Host homes
		Windsor County Youth Services (Ludlow)	2	Year-round facility-based shelter <i>*also supported with HOP funds</i>
		Youth Services, Inc. (Brattleboro)	2	Host homes
		Private	Spectrum Youth & Family Services (Burlington) (OUTSIDE OF BoS CoC)	10
		Statewide TOTAL	39	29 year-round (21 in BoS),10 seasonal
	Transitional Housing	HOP	Spectrum Youth & Family Services (Burlington) (OUTSIDE OF BoS CoC)	8
RHY TLP <i>*Indicates additional HOP funding supporting bed capacity</i>		Addison County Parent Child Center (Middlebury)	10	Site-based SROs
		Northeast Kingdom Community Action (Newport)	3	Scattered site units
		Northeast Kingdom Youth Services (St. Johnsbury)	9*	Scattered site units
		Northwestern Counseling & Support Services (St. Albans)	1	Scattered site unit
		United Counseling Service of Bennington County (Bennington)	1	Scattered site unit
		Windsor County Youth Services (Ludlow)	4*	Site-based units
		Washington County Youth Service Bureau (Montpelier)	3	Scattered site units
		Youth Services, Inc. (Brattleboro)	7*	Site-based
Other		Rutland County Parent Child Center (Rutland)	5	Site-based units for parenting youth & their children
	Statewide TOTAL	51	43 in BoS	
Rapid Re-housing	CoC (BoS)	VSHA administers in 6 counties through sponsor agencies	9+	9 is an estimate of the total dedicated to serve youth
TOTAL Statewide Youth Dedicated Beds			99+	
TOTAL BoS Youth Dedicated Beds			73+	

Where Youth and Young Adults Are Currently Being Served

As the VT YHDP stakeholders plan for system improvements, it is important to understand where youth are currently being served in the homelessness response system so that we may direct resources to areas of need, assess barriers YYA may face accessing underutilized existing resources, and create benchmarks to monitor the flow of YYA through the system.

In FY18, VCRHYP providers working in the BoS CoC sheltered 16 unaccompanied minors and provided 60 youth with transitional housing.¹⁷ An additional 6 youth were provided with transitional housing run by VCRHYP agencies but funded by HOP. 9 youth were connected with Rapid Re-housing vouchers dedicated for use by youth. Table 3 provides a county-by-county breakdown for where these youth were sheltered/housed. When compared with housing capacity, we can see some communities, particularly in the Northeast Kingdom, where TLP agencies are moving youth through quickly and able to serve more youth per beds than other communities. For example, Orleans county is served by NEKCA, who has 3 TLP beds and housed 13 youth, compared to Windsor where there are 4 TLP beds and 4 youth served. More examination of the outcomes for youth moved through TLP at different rates could help define best practices, as well as investigation into the differences of service vs. bed rates.

Table 3: FY18 Annual Youth-Specific Bed Utilization for BoS CoC**

County	Total Youth	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Rapid Re-housing
Addison	5	0	5	0
Bennington	0	0	0	0
Caledonia	16	0	16	0
Essex	0	0	0	0
Franklin	1	0	1	0
Grand Isle	0	0	0	0
Lamoille	2	2	0	0
Orange	0	0	0	0
Orleans	19	0	13	6
Rutland	12	0	12	0
Washington	18	8	7	3
Windham	8	0	8	0
Windsor	10	6	4	0
<i>BoS CoC Total</i>	<i>91</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>9</i>

¹⁷ NOTE: youth served in RHY TLP transitional housing are only included for a nine-month period (10/1/17-9/30/18) due to how TLP agencies were tracking youth in housing versus youth receiving only support services. We estimate that approximately 68 youth were provided with transitional housing in FY18.

Not all youth and young adults are going to, or want to go to, youth-specific housing supports. Combined with the RHY system’s limited capacity, other “mainstream”, or adult focused housing providers are vital resources that RHY are accessing.

In FY18, young adults aged 18-24 utilized BoS CoC mainstream housing at the following rates:

- 219 utilized mainstream year-round or seasonal warming emergency shelters (ES)
- 91 utilized domestic and sexual violence (D/SV) emergency shelters
- 223 were granted with General Assistance (GA) motel vouchers
- 15 were served by mainstream transitional housing (TH) programs
- 78 were provided with non-youth-dedicated Rapid Re-housing (RRH) vouchers
- 1 was served by a Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program

The above numbers are not de-duplicated, meaning a youth could be counted more than once, having used a warming shelter, then a GA motel voucher, then moving into transitional housing as an example.

Table 4 provides a county-by-county breakdown of where youth and young adults were served in mainstream emergency shelter; Table 5 provides a similar breakdown, but focuses on transitional and permanent housing programs. Note that numbers presented here are **not** unduplicated across bed type, county, or with the utilization rates of youth-specific beds in Table 3 above.

County	Total youth 18-24	GA Motel Voucher		ES	D/SV Shelter
		Youth 18-24	Households with children		
Addison	30	5	0	25	0
Bennington	85	52	7	32	1
Caledonia	24	14	2	8	2*
Essex	1	1	0	0	*
Franklin	50	26	3	14	10*
Grand Isle	0	0	0	0	*
Lamoille	8	5	0	0	3
Orange	4	4	1	0	0
Orleans	10	9	0	1	*
Rutland	82	35	5	2	45
Washington	97	31	3	51	15
Windham	68	25	0	28	15
Windsor	74	16	2	58	0
BoS CoC Total	546	223	23	219	91*

**Notes regarding D/SV shelter bed utilization:*

- I. *Caledonia, Essex, and Orleans counties are all served by one organization, which sheltered a total of 2 youth across all three counties.*
- II. *Franklin and Grand Isle counties are both served by one organization, which sheltered a total of 10 youth across both counties.*
- III. *BoS CoC Total (104) includes 13 youth sheltered through the Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence that can't be associated with a particular county.*

County	Total youth 18-24	TH	RRH	PSH	D/SV TH
Addison	20	0	20	0	
Bennington	16	2	14	0	
Caledonia	5	0	5	0	
Essex	0	0	0	0	
Franklin	3	0	3	0	
Grand Isle	0	0	0	0	
Lamoille	4	0	4	0	
Orange	0	0	0	0	
Orleans	3	0	3	0	
Rutland	3	0	3	0	
Washington	5	0	4	1	
Windham	8	0	8	0	
Windsor	12	0	12	0	
<i>BoS CoC Total</i>	<i>94</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>78*</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>13**</i>

**BoS CoC total for RRH (78) includes 2 YYA served by UVM's statewide RRH project for veterans, which can't be associated with a particular county.*

***Note: A total of 13 YYA, ages 18-24, were served in D/SV transitional housing programs, but we don't have this broken down by county. Additionally, the 13 may include those served in Chittenden County. Due to increased privacy for domestic and sexual violence victims, data is not entered into HMIS.*

Where Youth Are Entering the Homelessness Response System

Housing is a struggle for youth and young adults in Vermont and residents are not always aware of where to go for help. According to Vermont 2-1-1, who provides information and referrals to those in need, 1,947 calls were received from people aged 18-24 over a one-year period from December 1, 2017 through November 30, 2018. Of these calls, 46% (901) were seeking housing or shelter supports, making it the number one issue callers needed help with. The vast majority of other calls were for issues that indicate increased risk for housing crises such as mental health supports, access to public assistance programs, and temporary financial assistance. 141 calls were received from youth 12-17 years old; 9% were for housing or shelter programs. Mental health supports topped the list for minors calling for resources, and housing/ shelter issues were third.

Housing and shelter support is the top issue people ages 18-24 call VT 2-1-1 for, with over 900 calls in in the past year.

Vermont's homelessness response system consists of both crisis beds and permanent housing projects. YYA often utilize crisis services first, such as emergency shelter or transitional housing, and then transition into longer-term housing, such as Rapid Re-housing or Permanent Supportive Housing.

FY18 HMIS data for the Balance of State shows us that the majority of youth and young adults entering crisis beds throughout Vermont are not literally homeless, as defined by HUD, at the time of their entry. This aligns with the findings of Chapin Hall's study discussed earlier, highlighting the plight of precariously housed youth in rural communities. In Vermont, youth and young adults accessing homelessness crisis services are frequently coming from a family or friend's place where instability has caused them to seek out alternative housing. We need accessible housing programs and services without eligibility limited to literal homelessness.

As shown in Figure 3, YYA specific locations night before entry into crisis beds, just over half of all youth and young adult entering into crisis beds were precariously housed prior to entering the homelessness response system:

- 23% were staying with family
- 19% were staying with friends
- 5% were staying in a hotel or motel they were paying for out of pocket
- 3% were renting a place of their own without any subsidy
- 1% were renting a place of their own with an ongoing subsidy

Nearly a quarter of youth and young adults were already in some form of crisis housing:

- 21% were in emergency shelter or a hotel/motel paid for with a General Assistance voucher

- 3% were in transitional housing
- 0.37% were in a Safe Haven project

6% entered the homelessness response system from another system of care:

- 2% came from a psychiatric facility
- 1% came from foster care
- 1% came from a substance abuse treatment facility
- 1% came from a residential project or halfway house
- 0.37% came from jail/prison/juvenile detention
- 0.37% came from a hospital

18% of youth were unsheltered, meaning they were staying in a place not meant for habitation, such as on the streets, in a car, or in an abandoned building.

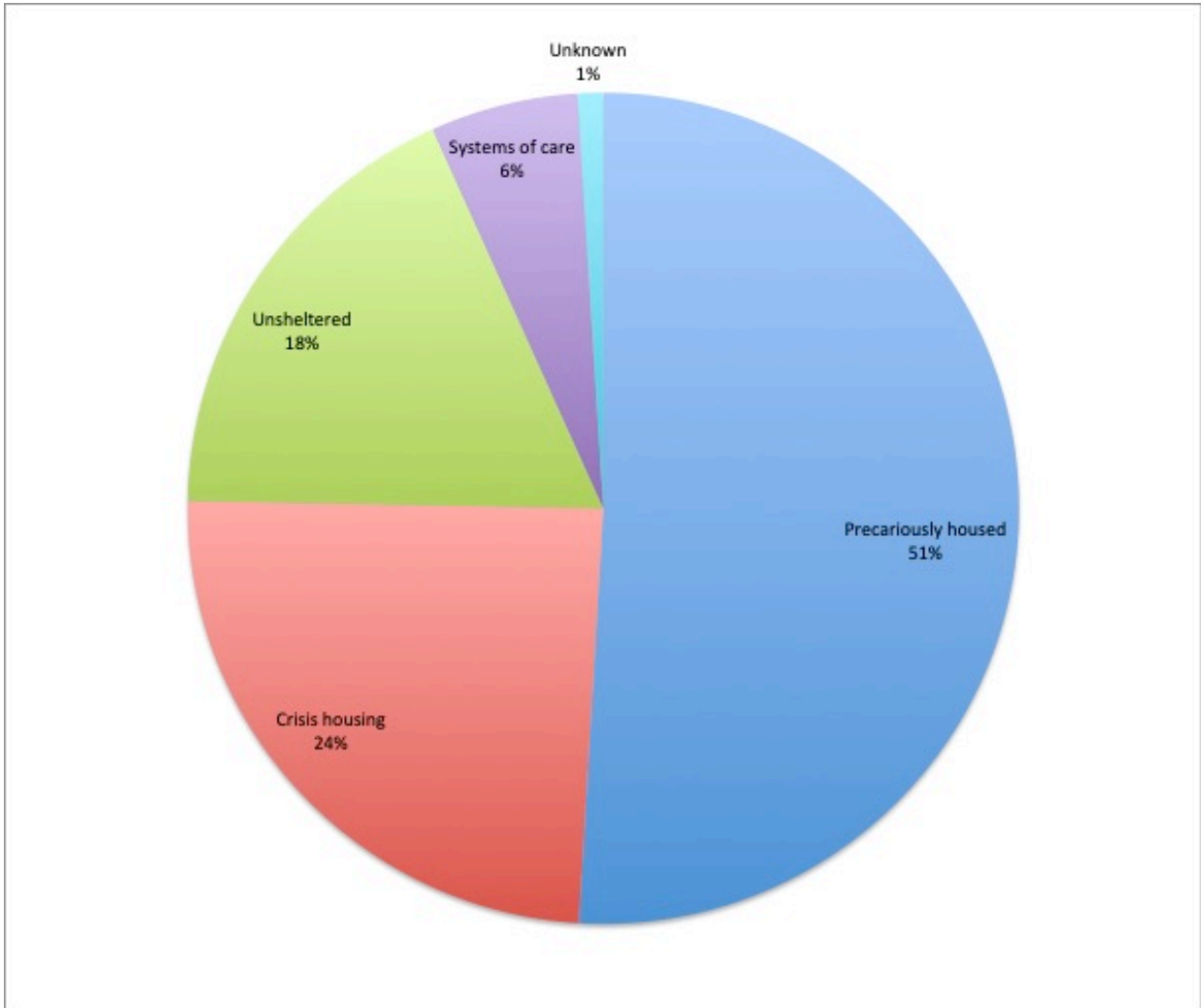


Figure 3: HMIS categorized location night before entry into crisis beds

As YYA move through Vermont’s homelessness response system, they often transition from a crisis bed to a permanent housing program. FY18 HMIS data shows that the majority of YYA (53%) served in permanent housing beds (such as Rapid Re-housing or Permanent Supportive Housing) were staying in a crisis bed the night before entry: 41% came from emergency shelter, while 12% entered from a transitional housing project. Nearly a quarter (23%) were experiencing unsheltered homelessness prior to entry and the remaining 24% were precariously housed. Figure 4 shows a detailed breakdown of YYA’s location prior to entry into permanent housing beds.

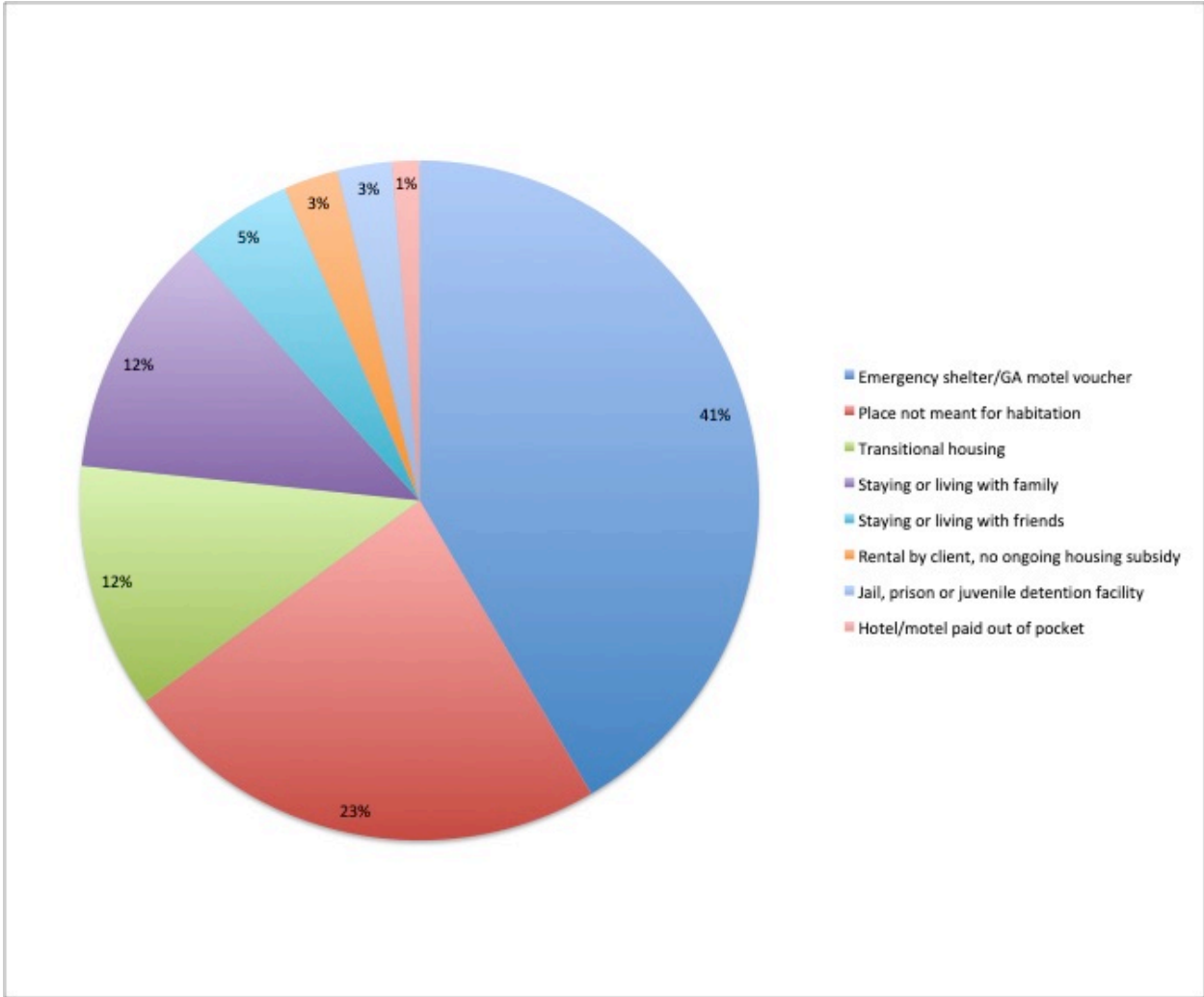
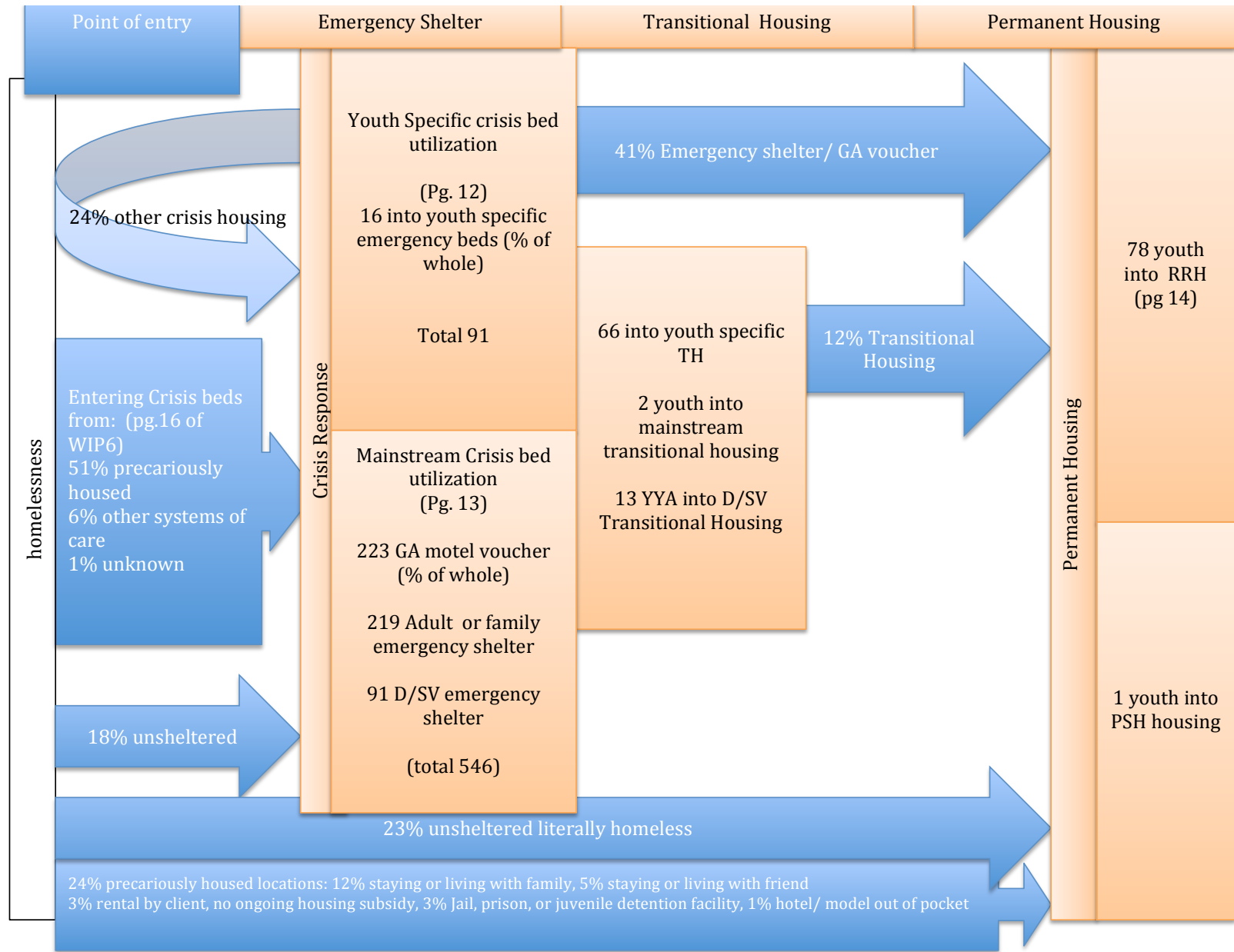


Figure 4: HMIS categorized location night before entry into permanent housing programs

The following flow chart in Figure 5 shows where youth who are precariously housed or literally homeless are entering the current system of care from, and what housing interventions they are being connected to. Continued assessment and analysis of the flow through the system of care will help determine if new YHDP projects are successful in reducing new entries into the

system and quickly moving youth and young adults into permanent housing instead of emergency shelter beds.

Figure 5: Youth Entry Flow Chart- where YYA enter the system from and what resources they are connected with



Length of Time In Emergency Shelter and Housing Projects

FY18 HMIS data also shows that certain youth and young adult subpopulations remain in shelter longer than their peers. The median length of time a parenting YYA stayed in emergency shelter in FY18 was 79 days, while the median for non-parenting YYA was just 25 days. Similarly, the median length of time Black YYAs stayed in emergency shelter in FY18 was 74 days, while the median for White YYAs was only 36 days.

Without access to additional client and community data, we are unable to draw conclusions around causation for Black and/ or pregnant and parenting YYA are having longer shelter stays. Speculatively, Black youth and young adults may be facing more barriers to stabilizing their living situations and leaving shelter than their White peers. This could include a lack of employment opportunities due to racism or bias, service systems and providers that are not adequately addressing the needs of young people of color, or disconnectedness of Black YYA to natural support networks and a lack of opportunity for them to build those connections. Pregnant and parenting youth may not be able to find affordable two-bedroom options where they can use rental assistance vouchers, or they may not have transportation that would allow them to get from a potential home to a daycare or work. It is also possible that White and/ or non-parenting YYA are leaving crisis beds sooner than their Black or pregnant and parenting peers even though they do not have stable housing yet.

Further examination of shelter exits and conversations with YYA crisis bed users are needed to understand this issue better and determine causation of inequitable lengths of stay. More information about the unique needs of each of these sub-populations can be found further in the report.

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS AND COORDINATED ENTRY

Integration of Youth and Young Adults into the CoC's Coordinated Entry System

The Balance of State's Coordinated Entry (CE) Committee, which is made up of a variety of stakeholders, was established to plan and evaluate implementation of a Coordinated Entry System for the CoC and has completed the following tasks to date:

- Developing the Coordinated Entry Partnership Model
- Establishing Coordinated Entry Policies & Procedures
- Creating universally used Coordinated Entry-related forms (e.g. Release of Information, Housing Crisis Referral Form, Housing Assessment, Participant Information and Complaint Process handout)
- Providing training and resources to Coordinated Entry partners who include:
 - community action agencies, RHY providers, emergency shelters, community meal providers, food shelves, HOP grantees, drop-in centers, etc.
- Creating outreach material templates to support local community implementing CE.

The Committee is currently focused on developing a process for evaluating local implementation of Coordinated Entry and expanding Master List prioritization to be used for housing resources beyond Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and Rapid Re-Housing (RRH).

Through the YHDP's Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee (YHPPC), a youth-specific Coordinated Entry (CE) workgroup was also created. This workgroup, which includes representatives from RHY providers, mainstream housing providers, and Vermont's HMIS lead agency, has worked to identify ways to strengthen the Balance of State's Coordinated Entry system for YYA and worked closely with the CoC's CE leadership to make the Housing Assessment, which prioritizes people placed on the Master List for available housing, accessible to youth and young adults. The workgroup is currently in the process of reviewing recent data on youth and young adults within the CE system and forming feedback for the CoC on how YYA are faring within the CE process. The workgroup has also compared the Balance of State's Housing Assessment to the TAY-VI-SPDAT and indicated ways in which the current assessment fails to equitably prioritize youth and young adults on the Master List. Recommendations on how to address this lack of equity will be formalized by the workgroup and submitted to the Balance of State Coordinated Entry Committee for consideration.

The Vermont Balance of State has integrated RHY providers into the Coordinated Entry System in a variety of ways. All RHY providers within the Balance of State are one of the following:

- A *Referral Partner*, which screens clients into Coordinated Entry and refers them to another partner for assessment
- An *Assessment Partner*, which completes the Housing Assessment with clients and adds them to the Master List
- A *Lead Agency*, which completes Housing Assessments and adds clients to the Master List, while also managing/overseeing the Coordinated Entry process for their local CoC¹⁸

Youth and young adults within the Balance of State CoC have the option to access Coordinated Entry through a RHY provider or through any mainstream provider who is a CE partner, operationalizing the "no wrong door" philosophy inherent to Coordinated Entry. McKinney-Vento liaisons are still being integrated into Coordinated Entry, primarily as referral partners, and work should be done to assure they are trained in appropriate referral protocols for unaccompanied youth as well as families they may be working with.

Data on Youth Accessing Coordinated Entry

Vermont's Coordinated Entry system is currently designed to prioritize clients only for Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and Rapid Re-housing (RRH). Some local communities use the Master List to prioritize access to additional housing resources, but a statewide order of

¹⁸ For more information on Coordinated Entry Roles, please see VCEH Local CE Partnership document appendix

priority for any additional type of housing has not yet been established. Considering that a large portion of Vermont youth and young adults do not meet the HUD definition of literally homeless or the eligibility for PSH or RRH programs, there are a limited number of youth and young adults within the Coordinated Entry system at this point.

A review of the Balance of State's Coordinated Entry data from September 2018 through November 2018 shows an average of 114 young adults, ages 18-24, on the Master List each month. This comprised about 10% of all people on the Master List, which averaged 1,137 per month for that time period.

Just under half (49%) of young adults on the list were literally homeless when they were assessed for Coordinated Entry (in emergency shelter, place not meant for human habitation, or transitional housing); the remaining 51% were experiencing precarious housing. This indicates Vermont's need to establish housing resources for youth and young adults who will not be eligible for existing CoC-funded PSH and RRH programs and emphasizes why YHDP-funding is vital for our community. Additionally, it highlights the importance of setting an order of priority for FYSB-funded Transitional Living Programs as soon as possible so that youth and young adults can be connected with this valuable resource even if they enter the homelessness response system through a mainstream housing provider.¹⁹ Additionally, it is federally mandated that FYSB TLPs are integrated into CE.

The Balance of State has chosen to use its own assessment for Coordinated Entry, rather than utilizing a preexisting tool, such as the VI-SPDAT. All people/households accessing Coordinated Entry are assessed using the same tool, meaning that there is no difference in how the vulnerability of single adults, families, youth, or other populations are determined. The assessment first matches a person with a level of assistance (short, medium, or long-term) and then assigns them a complex service needs score with 12 indicating the highest level of need. The assessment questions asked are included in the appendices. The Master List is then sorted using the following order of priority:

1. Chronic homelessness + complex service needs score
2. Non-chronic homelessness + disability, then
 - a. Unsheltered or living in an emergency shelter/safe haven
 - i. Then, homeless at least 12 months + complex service needs score
 - ii. Then, homeless for less than 12 months + complex services needs score
 - b. Living in transitional housing (meeting homeless definition prior to entry) + complex service needs score
3. Non-chronic homelessness without disability + complex service needs score

¹⁹ FYSB funded Transitional Living Programs are specifically for RHY populations through the U.S. Department for Health and Human Services, Family & Youth Services Bureau instead of through HUD.

All Balance of State Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and Medium-term Rapid Re-housing (RRH) projects (4-24 months) must use the order of priority (along with specific program-eligibility factors) to determine who will receive the next available bed/subsidy. According to the order of priority:

- PSH is reserved for those people on the Master List that have been matched with long-term assistance;
- Medium-term Rapid Re-housing is available to those matched with medium assistance, with an exception made for people matched with long-term assistance who have a housing stability plan showing they could be successful with a lower level of support;
- Short-term Rapid Re-housing, which provides rental assistance for up to 3 months to people who only need a small amount of financial support to stabilize, is prioritized based on a first-come, first-serve basis to all households that are matched with short-term assistance.

7% of youth and young adults, on average, received a complex service needs score of 8-12, which would allow them to be prioritized towards the top of the Master List. 5% of people of all ages scored between 8-12. Young adults who were added to the Master List during the time period reviewed are scoring slightly higher than all people for needing PSH.

On average, 43% of youth and young adults assessed were matched with medium-term assistance and 45% were matched with long-term assistance. Compared to 26% of all people matched with medium-term and 63% with long-term; more young people are in need of medium-term support than the average for all people. However, 48% only received a complex service needs score of 0-3 and 46% received a complex service needs score of 4-7. When combined with the fact that the length of time a person has been homeless plays a significant role in the order of priority, which inherently disadvantages youth and young adults, YYA in the Coordinated Entry system are facing challenges access existing Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Re-housing interventions and exiting the Master List into permanent housing.

A review of three months of data (September 2018- November 2018) shows that, of the average of 114 YYA on the Master List every month, only about 11 exit the CE system (see Figure 6 for an overview of exit destinations based on a three-month average); no YYA exited to Permanent Supportive Housing and only 4% exited to Rapid Re-housing projects.

During that same three-month period, an average of 45% of youth and young adults remained on the Master List for more than 90 days. There were:

- 42 (37%) YYA who had been on the Master List for 90-180 days
- 18 (16%) who had been on for 181-270 days
- 10 (9%) who had been on for 271 days or longer

Of those 10 YYA had been on the longest, 6 had been matched with long-term assistance, indicating they were in need of a significant housing intervention. However, all but one of them

had a complex service needs score of 6 or less, making it unlikely they will ever rise to the top of the Master List and be offered PSH.

Comparatively, during the same time period, of people of all ages on the list:

- 348 (30%) had been on for 90-180 days
- 149 (12%) for 181-270 days
- 91 (8%) were on the Master List for 271 days or longer

At the time of this report, we did not have exit data analytics for all people to determine how many exited to PSH or RRH, but it appears that young adults aged 18-24 are remaining on the Master List about the same amount of time as all adults. While glad that youth are not experiencing apparent barriers significantly more than their older adult counterparts, Vermont housing partners should reflect on overall solutions to long lengths of time between assessments and being connected to housing interventions, including the creation of more PSH and RRH for everybody.

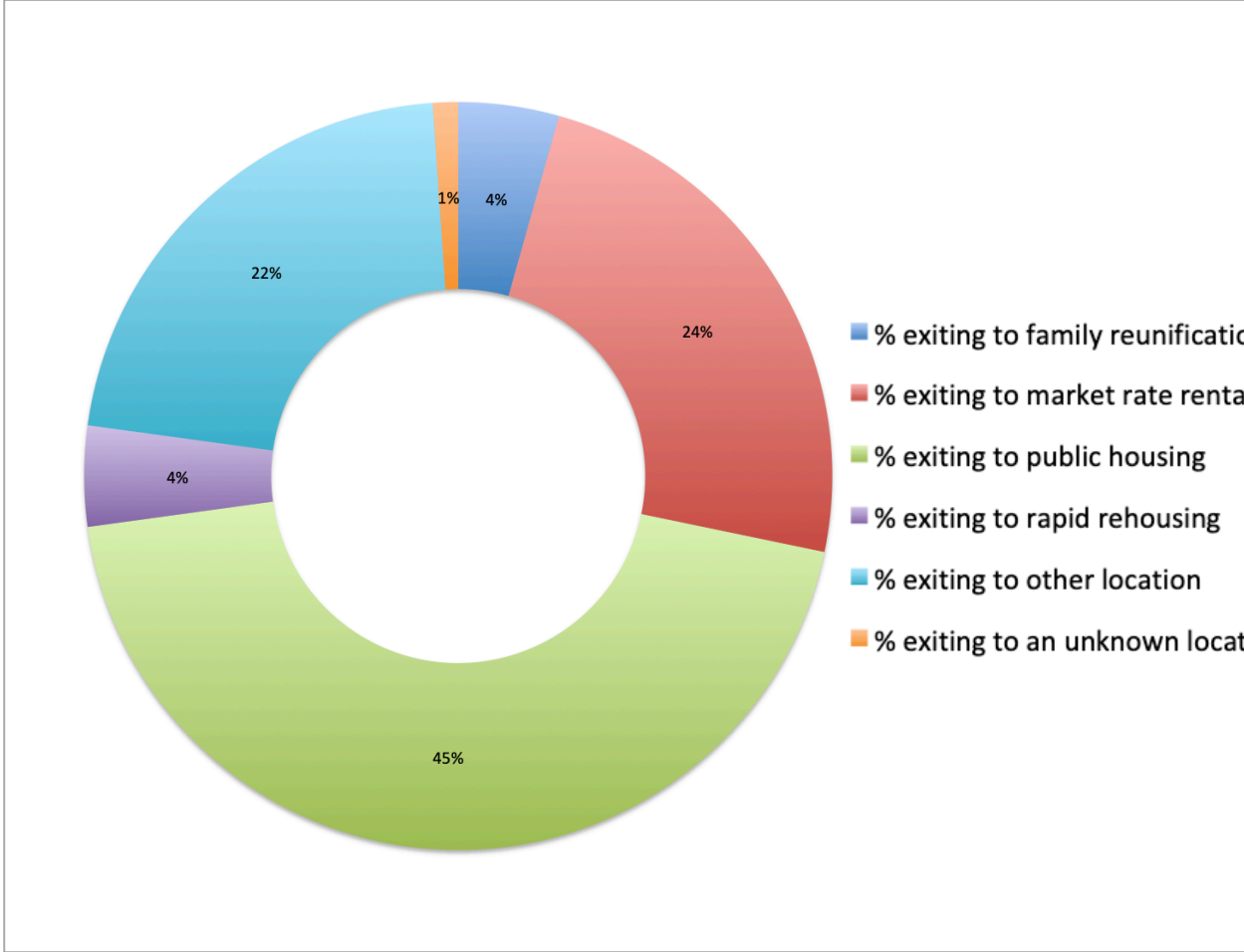


Figure 6: YYA CE Exit Destinations Over 3-months

Housing Assessment and Youth Needs

While the data shows that youth are not currently more or less disadvantaged in comparison with all people through the coordinated entry assessment, ongoing conversations about the effectiveness of the housing assessment tool for young people are warranted. One focus of the YHPPC’s Coordinated Entry workgroup has been to compare the Balance of State’s Housing Assessment with the TAY-VI-SPDAT to determine how they measure the vulnerability of YYA. This comparison showed that there are a wide variety of risk factors which the TAY-VI-SPDAT considers when calculating a youth’s vulnerability score that the Balance of State’s Housing Assessment does not include: risk of harm, legal issues, risk of exploitation, meaningful daily activity, self care, social relationships, tri-morbidity, and medications. Even those risk factors that the Balance of State’s Housing Assessment does consider are applied in a much more restrictive way than the TAY-VI-SDPAT.

Some examples are below:

Risk Factor	TAY-VI-SPDAT’s Response	BoS’s Assessment Response
Location	Youth staying anywhere other than ES/TH/SH = 1 point	Youth is unsheltered = 1 point
Money management	Youth owes anyone money or currently has no income = 1 point	Youth has been without cash income for entire past year = 1 point
Abuse/trauma	Youth’s current lack of stable housing is due to violence at home between family members OR unhealthy/abusive relationship at home or elsewhere = 1 point	Youth is a survivor of domestic/sexual violence = 1 point

The YHPPC’s CE workgroup comparison reflects that the Balance of State’s Housing Assessment is not measuring the unique vulnerabilities of youth. The Balance of State may want to examine the current tool and create a different, but compatible assessment for YYA populations with special focus paid to the complex service needs score section, or to amend the current housing assessment tool to measure these vulnerabilities for all people. USICH’s Federal Youth Framework or intervention suggests incorporating a risk and protective factors perspective into understanding the diverse needs of homeless youth to better identify which interventions will serve them best.²⁰

More needs to be done so that the Coordinated Entry system is connecting youth and young adults to the services they need, including:

- Creating more housing resources and enhanced family reunification services for YYA who are not eligible for PSH or RRH
- Creating more PSH and RRH for those youth who do qualify
- Setting order of priority for FYSB funded TLPs so youth can access them through any door

²⁰ U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, Framework to End Youth Homelessness: A Resource Text for Dialogue and Action, 2013

- Creating a compatible housing assessment for YYA, or revising the existing resource so that additional risk factors are used to determine complex service needs scores and reduces barriers to prioritization.

SERVING THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF SPECIFIC SUB-POPULATIONS AND INTERSECTIONAL ISSUES

“Youth” are often lumped into one group when talking about housing supports, and while airtime is given to thinking about trauma-informed care and adolescent development for youth and young adult populations, more awareness of intersectional issues and opportunities is needed. In the sections below, we outline some of the specific data points highlighting unique information about sub-sections of youth and young adults in Vermont for consideration when planning appropriate housing interventions. Most youth will fall into multiple sub-sections, such as a Black trans unaccompanied minor, or a parenting 20-year-old with a disability who is also trying to go to college. To prevent re-occurrence of crisis, ensure incidents are brief, and reduce long-term impacts of housing instability, services for youth need to address all aspects of their well-being, not just housing.

Sub-Populations: Unaccompanied Minors

Unaccompanied minors are youth ages 12-17 who are not residing with their family or legal guardians. They represent a unique population with additional barriers to housing stability. The absence of a connected guardian can lead to complications accessing emergency resources; existing emergency shelter options for minors in Vermont require parental permission with few exceptions. Youth may also run into barriers because they may not have a parent or guardian available to assist with practical things like signing school paperwork or permission forms (i.e. enrollment forms).

In the state, a majority of youth under 18 accessing services are “precariously housed”, i.e. youth who are doubled up with friends or relatives or living day-to-day in motels, with money and options running out. According to the 2018 PIT Count, there were only 6 unaccompanied minors who met HUD’s definition of literally homeless: 3 in emergency shelter, and 3 in transitional housing, all sheltered by RHY funded sites. However, the VCRHYP precariously housed count identified 93 precariously housed youth in grades 7-12 on the same night as the PIT Count. As referenced above, the Chapin Hall *Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America* report has found that rural youth and young adults experience homelessness at a similar rate to urban youth and young adults, 4.4% of rural minors vs. 4.2% of their urban counterparts, but are more frequently couch-surfing or doubled up.

Vermont can strengthen practices for identification of unaccompanied minors, including connecting system of care partners to increase awareness of red flags and warning signs that may indicate a youth is homeless or on the edge of homelessness, and improve referral protocols. For example, there were 141 calls to VT 2-1-1 from youth ages 12-17 from December 1, 2017 through November 30, 2018 for support accessing resources. 9% of those were for

housing/ shelter programs, mental health supports topped the list for minors calling for resources, and housing/ shelter issues were third. Working with mental health providers to increase awareness of the service array available to at-risk youth and where resources can be accessed will help prevent or divert youth from homelessness.

In addition to earlier identification and services specifically for precariously housed minors, we need to explore and address the barriers unaccompanied youth are facing when accessing shelters. There are 21 emergency beds for unaccompanied youth in the Bos CoC, all operated by the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs network of agencies.

VCRHYP providers housed a total of 16 unaccompanied youth in FY18 for a total of 20 separate shelter stays (3 youth accessed more than one stay). The median length of time minor youth remained in shelter in FY18 was 19 days, compared to 36 days for all youth 12-24 and 54 days for persons of all ages. This short length of shelter stay is partially due to Vermont state law, which restricts the number of days a youth under 18 may be sheltered outside of the foster care system to 21 nights. 6 shelter stays were for the full 21 days, 5 stays were between 18-20 days, and the remaining 9 stays were for 9 days or less.

More than half of all emergency shelter stays run into the total number of days a minor can be sheltered. 6 shelter stays were for the full 21 days, 5 stays were between 18-20 days.

Emergency shelter stays for unaccompanied minors are lower than we may expect given the number of precariously housed youth. Feedback from VCRHYP providers is that most minors are opting to work with RHY agencies to identify other places they can stay rather than enter a shelter bed. Sometimes this is because of the 21-day limit, and the youth are concerned that they won't have enough time in those 21 days to address the underlying issues that caused their homelessness and don't want to be bounced around. Sometimes they are not using the emergency beds because there is only one available in the county and it is 40 miles from their school. Often youth opt for other placements because it is more comfortable for them to stay with someone they know than in a host home. RHY providers support the youth in building these natural supports and stabilizing the housing situation while working on family reunification. However, evidence points to a reasonable assumption that more youth are facing homelessness than are accessing RHY shelter resources.

Unique needs and recommendations for serving unaccompanied minors include:

- BoS CoC partners should increase low-barrier services available to minors to increase program engagement, this could include:
 - provision of gateway services like youth groups or counselor hours offered in local schools; teen centers or special drop-in nights with youth activities in local community spaces; access to showers, hygiene products, and clothing including socks and coats; or free meals.
 - peer-led engagement opportunities and outreach efforts.

- Increased program connections with community partners such as McKinney-Vento liaisons, school guidance counselors, and law enforcement to increase early identification and appropriate referrals.
- Youth under 18 are precariously housed more often than their older counterparts and need increased access to prevention and diversion supports.
- Minors seeking housing supports should have immediate and ongoing access to case management that includes family reunification, family engagement, and/ or building permanent connections within a youth’s self-defined support network.
- More options for housing 16 and 17 year olds should be explored as this population most often cannot access housing supports beyond Transitional Living Programs, which are limited and often have waitlists.
- The crisis shelter system consists only of a limited number of Basic Center Program host homes across the state and is limited to 21-day stays, this option is not always attractive or available; more options for sheltering minors safely should be explored through partnership with RHY providers and the state’s child welfare agency.
- Minors receiving housing supports or identified as precariously housed should be connected to more educational support to reduce dropout and maintain a passing GPA.
- It should be a priority to connect minors who are precariously housed or otherwise at-risk of running away or becoming homeless, or who are experiencing homelessness to mental health supports.

Sub-Populations: Pregnant and Parenting Youth

Table 6: YYA Birth Rates in BoS CoC Counties

<i>County</i>	<i>Ages 12-18</i>	<i>Ages 19-24</i>	
Addison	0.7	27.1	Vermont has a relatively low teen and young adult birth rate. In 2016, the teen birth rate was 4.0 births per 1,000 women, while the birth rate for youth ages 19-24 was significantly higher at 40.0. YYA births vary significantly among communities, as shown in Table 6. Some communities have significantly higher teen and young adult birth rates, such as Franklin and Orleans counties. More housing resources for parenting YYA populations could be used in communities with high birth rates.
Bennington	4.7	55.4	
Caledonia	3.8	70.5	
Essex	0.0	111.1	
Franklin	8.3	81.2	
Grand Isle	0.0	76.1	
Lamoille	2.9	53.0	
Orange	4.4	58.4	
Orleans	8.4	93.2	
Rutland	4.8	48.2	
Washington	3.4	47.0	
Windham	5.4	53.6	
Windsor	3.7	67.5	
Vermont	4.0	40.0	Pregnant and parenting YYA are at high risk of homelessness. With compounding factors of generational poverty, lack of a high school

diploma or GED, high childcare costs, and limited employment opportunities, many young parents face homelessness. According to 2015 Vermont Department of Health data, young women under 20 have the highest rate of unintended pregnancy (72%), followed by women ages 20-24 (70%). Under the best of circumstances, supporting a young family is difficult;

unintended pregnancies can lead to family conflict that further destabilizes YYA and puts them at a higher risk of homelessness.

According to HMIS FY18 data, 22% (57) of YYA receiving all housing supports were parenting. 19% of youth and young adults (80) served by VCRHYP's Balance of State RHY specific providers were pregnant or parenting, and 80% of those had custody of their children at project entry.

Pregnant and parenting youth are overlapping with many existing state systems already, which provides points of contact and screening for earlier identification of housing instability. There may be opportunities to explore increased partnership to ensure youth are connected to housing supports:

- Statewide, 15.2% of all children 0-4 are living in poverty. In November of 2018, there were a total of 729 young adult parents aged 18-24, representing 629 households on Reach Up (Vermont's TANF program).
- In 2018, Vermont's Head Start, a federal program that promotes the school readiness of children from birth to age five from low-income families, served 58 pregnant women and 201 children who were homeless. These numbers represent a 25% increase from 2017 service numbers.
- 23 parenting youth ages 18-24 were granted general assistance (GA) hotel vouchers to avoid unsheltered homelessness during FY18, representing 16% of all young adult head of household's accessing GA emergency support. FY18 HMIS data shows that parenting youth, on average, spend more nights in emergency shelter than non-parenting youth at an average of 93 days in emergency shelter versus 50 days for non-parenting youth.

Unique needs and recommendations for serving pregnant and parenting YYA include:

- Longer lengths of time in emergency shelters indicate a need to reduce barriers to housing stabilization and increase a variety of housing options to meet their needs.
- YYA parenting households may need more housing search support to find larger units near work, school, childcare, and other supports.
- As a highly vulnerable population, more specific housing supports are needed to divert from homelessness.
- Pregnant and parenting YYA need additional service linkages, system navigation and care coordination to manage both parent and child needs.
- Parenting YYA need access to flexible funding to pay for care expenses including child care, diapers and formula.
- Pregnant and parenting youth may need support for relationship management with co-parent, access to counseling can strengthen success in housing projects.
- Young parents need peer connections, housing providers should create opportunities for parenting youth households to connect with one another.

Sub-Populations: LGBTQ

Nationally, 40% of homeless youth and young adults identify as LGBTQ, 68% of those are homeless due to family rejection and 54% have experienced family abuse. Startlingly, nearly 1 and 3 transgender people have been turned away from shelters across the United States, meaning already scarce resources are inaccessible for trans people and the results are stark.²¹ Chapin Hall’s recently released brief, *Missed Opportunities: LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in America*, states that LGBTQ YYA had over twice the rate of early death among youth and young adults experiencing homelessness, and LGBTQ youth with intersectional racial oppression had some of the highest rates of homelessness, 16% of all Black and LGBTQ youth and young adults compared to 4% of white, cis-gender, heterosexual youth and young adults.

According to a 2016 Gallup poll, 5.3% of all Vermont residents identify as LGBTQ.²² The Vermont Youth Risk Behavior High School Report for 2017 shows that 11% of high school youth identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender, signifying a growing population of young people with unique needs related to sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression.

In the 2017 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 12% of LGBT youth and young adults skipped school because they felt unsafe compared to 4% of their heterosexual counterparts; 11% misused prescription drugs compared to 5% of their counterparts, and 33% of LGBT youth and young adults made a suicide plan in the last 12 months compared to 8% of their hetero counterparts.

18% of YYA (71) served by VCRHYP’s Balance of State RHY providers in FY18 identified as LGBQ; 4% (15) identified as gender non-conforming or transgender. LGBTQ youth are overrepresented in homeless and precariously housed youth and young adult populations compared to the general population and are at higher risk for homelessness.

LGBTQ youth are at higher risk of homelessness, making up about 20% of all youth served by Vermont’s RHY providers.

Unique needs and recommendations for serving LGBTQ YYA include:

- Housing providers, particularly crisis bed providers, should ensure there are gender affirming (match their identity instead of sex assigned at birth, including considerations for YYA who do not identify as either M or F) or gender free (no gendered considerations at all) beds that youth and young adults can access that do not separate or stigmatize YYA.
- All housing program staff should be fully trained in LGBTQ competency and be prepared to support:

²¹ Trans Student Educational Resources, <http://www.transstudent.org/homelessness/>

²² Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/203513/vermont-leads-states-lgbt-identification.aspx>

- ID recovery and changes --birth certificate, passport, driver's license
- Job placement programs that address and support youth and young adults who may need to navigate workplace harassment and discrimination
- Substance abuse programming that addresses LGBTQ youth's unique experiences including minority stress
- Case management meeting locations should have access to gender-neutral bathrooms.
- LGBTQ YYA need access to health and sexual education that includes and affirms a wide variety of sexual orientations and gender expressions and housing providers should make connections to youth service providers who can offer this.
- LGBTQ YYA have increased risk of not completing high school. Additional educational supports should be wrapped around them youth to reduce drop-out and maintain passing GPAs.

Sub-Populations: Child Welfare and Justice Involvement

Many youth who have been in state custody or involved with the child welfare system at any point in their history have a heightened risk of housing instability and face additional barriers to successful and independent transition into adulthood.²³ A recent study of youth who had been in foster care in Washington state found that more than one in four had been homeless at least one night within the first year after they aged out of the foster care system.²⁴ Where youth were placed and how much they moved while in custody impacted their risk for homelessness. Those youth who had two or more placements, or had changed schools frequently, were at a higher risk of experiencing homelessness than peers who only had one placement. And youth who had, at any time during their child welfare involvement, been placed with a relative had a decreased risk of homelessness.²⁵ Additional risk factors that stood out as significantly predictive of homelessness were youth who have been involved with both child welfare and juvenile justice systems through multiple convictions or adjudications and youth who had parented a child, regardless of whether the child was living with them.²⁶ An overview of risk and protective factors identified through the study is presented in Figure 7.²⁷

²³ Toro, Dworsky, & Fowler, 2007; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2008)

²⁴ David Mancuso et al, Youth at Risk of Homelessness: Identifying key Predictive Factors among Youth Aging Out of Foster Care in Washington State, RDA report 7.106 (2015)

²⁵ ibid

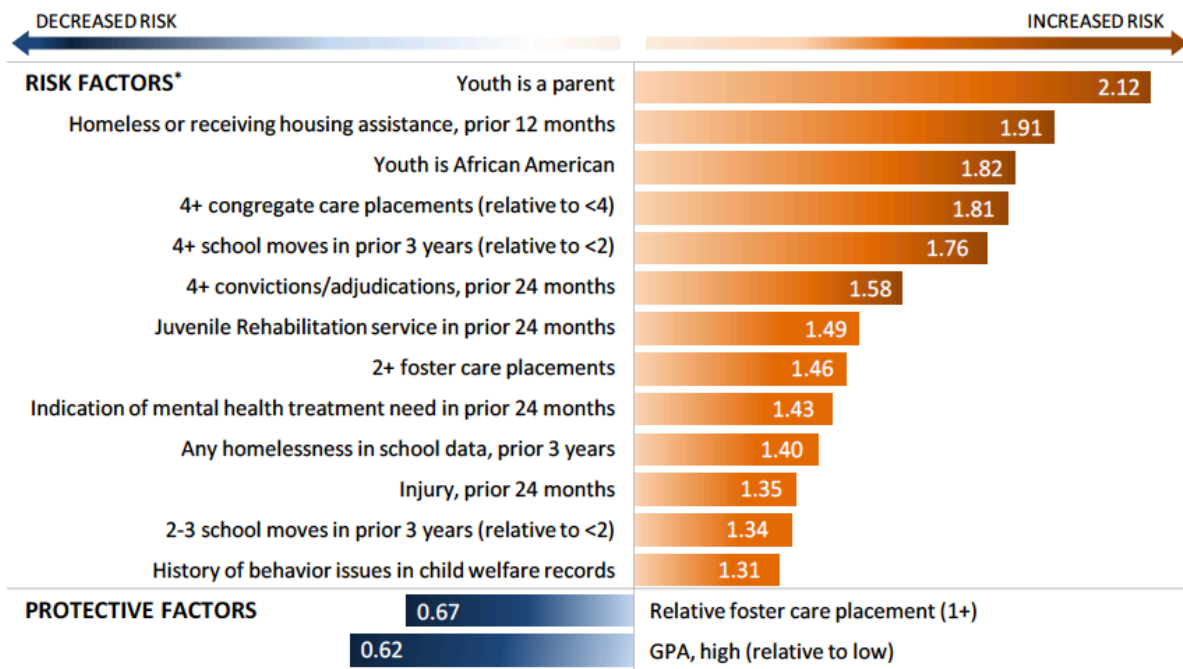
²⁶ ibid

²⁷ ibid

12-17 year olds in DCF custody represent the second largest cohort in the last three years

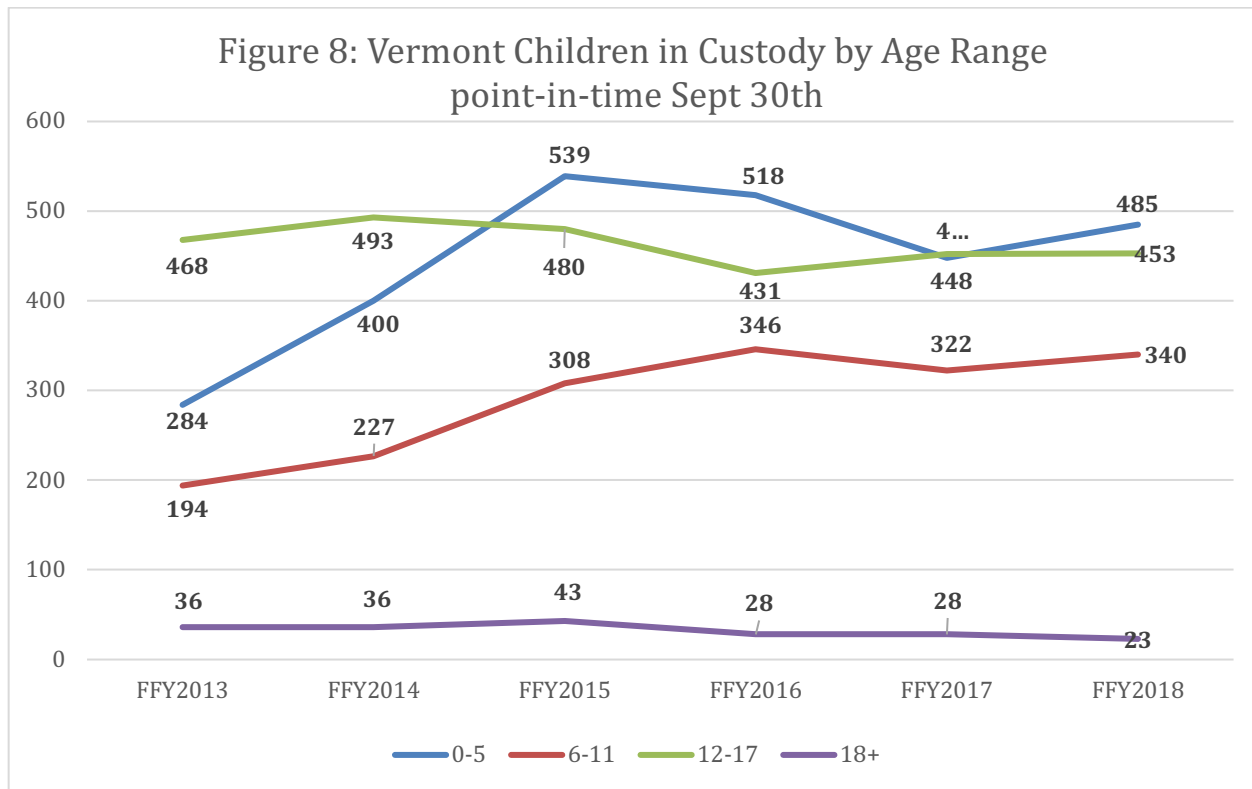
In Vermont, the Department for Children and Families (DCF) had an average of 1,293 children 0-17 in DCF custody at any point in FY18, and a slightly higher number of 1,357 in FY17. Child Abuse and Neglect intakes have increased by 28% over the past five years, and the number of children and youth in custody by 27%. According to a VT point-in-time review done annually on September 30 each year, reflected in Figure 8, we can see that 12-17 year olds in custody represent the second largest cohort in the last three years, just behind children under 5, and prior to 2015 it was the largest cohort in care. Over the last 5 years, youth 12-17 have represented an average of 36.5% of youth in DCF custody. 55 youth aged out of care in FFY18, and 47 in FFY17.

ODDS RATIOS | Odds of Experiencing Homelessness after Aging Out of Foster Care



*NOTE: 1) Disrupted adoptions are highly predictive of homelessness (Odds Ratio = 3.39), but the prevalence is extremely low (2 percent) and therefore not included in the above chart, 2) prior homelessness or housing assistance was based on data from ACES and HMIS and included permanent and permanent supportive housing, and 3) all factors are statistically significant at $p < .05$ except history of behavior issues in child welfare records ($p = .22$).

Figure 7: Washington State RDA report, Risk and protective factors



The Family Services caseload data in Table 7 provides a point-in-time snapshot for the three type of open cases a youth and family could have with DCF, with an additional breakdown of the custody cases.

Table 7: Total Children in VT Custody as of September 30th of each year, by case type

	FFY2013	FFY2014	FFY2015	FFY2016	FFY2017	FFY2018
Custody Cases <i>(see below for a breakout)</i>	982	1156	1370	1319	1250	1301
Family Support Cases*	417	405	426	502	580	512
Conditional Custody	573	573	553	596	575	815
Total Number	1972	2134	2349	2417	2405	2628

**This is a FAMILY count. Each family could represent more than one child.*

Types of Custody Cases:

	FFY2013	FFY2014	FFY2015	FFY2016	FFY2017	FFY2018
Abuse & Neglect	702	897	1133	1128	1052	1111
Delinquency	156	143	128	101	100	85
Beyond Parental Control	123	114	106	88	98	103
Voluntary	1	2	3	2	0	2

Most of the children are coming into custody as a result of abuse and neglect. Since 2013, the number of delinquent youth coming into custody has decreased by 45% and the number of youth beyond parental control has decreased by 16%. While decreasing, this still represents a significant number of cases where the youth is in custody because they are “beyond parental control,” indicating a high risk for family disconnection and runaway.

In FY18 there were a total of 512 open “Family Support” cases. Family Support cases are open cases for families at high risk. DCF does not take custody of children but provides supervision and services to help stabilize the family. “Conditional Custody” orders are cases where a judge places a child in the conditional custody of a parent, relative or other significant person, while also ordering DCF to supervise the case, assess the risks, provide services and ensure the youth’s safety. Since 2013, there has been a significant increase (42%) in Conditional Custody cases. This sharp rise in Conditional Custody orders indicates more youth are at risk of housing instability due to family conflict.

The increases across all types of DCF involvement show a growing burden on the child welfare system and indicate the need for partnership with local service providers to provide both wrap-around services and extended connections to ensure successful transitions and long-term stabilization. In response to this demand, Vermont’s child welfare system continues to support system-engagement prevention efforts through their Prevention and Stabilization Services for Youth and Families (PSSYF) program.

Juvenile Justice and Court Involvement:

Vermont is in the process of implementing a number of reforms to its Juvenile Justice System in an effort to align the system with brain development research and best practices for serving youth and young adults. Vermont was one of the few states where 16 and 17 year olds were charged in criminal court as adults for any offense, including misdemeanors. The collateral consequences for youth charged in adult court includes a criminal record which can impact their ability to find a job or secure housing, exclusion from the military, and ineligibility for college loans.

Reforms include:

- Changing jurisdiction from adult criminal court to family court. Family court proceedings are confidential and don’t result in a public record for the youth.
- Expanding its Youthful Offender status from 17 to 21 years old. Youth with this status who successfully complete their probation requirements can have their criminal record expunged and their family court is sealed.
- Filing misdemeanor motor vehicle offenses in family court.

Vermont has also created an option for State’s Attorneys to refer youth to a DCF approved community-based restorative justice program in lieu of filing charges in family court, thus

avoiding the justice system all together. Other reforms being studied in Vermont include adjudicating in family court all offenders who are 18-20 years old, expanding Youthful Offender status to age 24 and expanding juvenile jurisdiction to 21-years old and allowing DCF to provide supervision instead of the Department of Corrections.

Based on a two-year average for FY17 and FY18, there were about 212 youth ages 10-17 and 1545 young adults ages 18-24 charged with offenses annually. Most of the youth under 18 (203) were adjudicated in family court as delinquent or a youthful offender. For young adults ages 18-24, the majority (1,104) were charged with misdemeanor crimes that went through Criminal Court without youthful offender status.

In FY18, there were 662 cases involving youth between the ages of 10-17 disposed by the courts; 203 were adjudicated delinquent in Family Court and connected to case management supports, but 440 cases were dismissed all together. This indicates an opportunity to work with local law enforcement agencies to reduce the number of arrests and increase referrals to community prevention and diversion partners, which could help with earlier identification of youth and young adults (YYA) who are unstably housed or otherwise in crisis and divert YYA from system involvement. Of note, 76% of all YYA dispositions are male offenders.

Top offenses committed by youth and young adults ages 10-24 years old include:

Motor Vehicle Violations:	38%
Violation of Public Ordinance:	18%
Assault:	11%
Theft:	10%
Domestic Violence:	9%
Drug Offense:	6%

Youth who are designated truant, unmanageable or delinquent are often referred post-disposition to VT’s Balance and Restorative Justice (BARJ) programs, which provide additional case management supports. In FY18, 576 youth were served by BARJ programs statewide. BARJ providers could be critical partners in long-term stability for youth and diversion from housing crisis for high-risk youth populations.

Child Welfare Involved Youth in Community-based Services:

Youth and young adults who have been involved with child welfare and juvenile justice system often show up in community-based programs with housing needs, sometimes very shortly after or while still involved with those systems. 32% of youth (136) served in FY18 by Balance of State VCRHYP providers were currently involved with the State’s Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice system in some way (this includes open investigation, custody, conditional custody order, open family case, juvenile probation, youthful offender status); 48% (204) reported some form of past involvement. That is an increase from FY17 data that showed 19% currently involved and

28% involved in the past, which may be the result of statutory, policy, and practice changes and/or the result of increased need.

Vermont's Youth Development Program (YDP), which supports youth and young adults transitioning out of foster care/ state custody, served a total of 524 youth and young adults statewide in FY18. There were 24 youth and young adults within their Balance of State locations that reported experiencing homelessness at some point during the year; 2 youth served by YDP and reporting homelessness during the year were under 18.

Unique needs and recommendations for serving YYA who intersect with the Child Welfare and Juvenile justice system include:

- Expanding the Youth Development Program (YDP) to serve more youth and young adults as they transition to independent living including providing additional housing supports such as the expansion of the availability of extended care funding.
- Increase permanency planning for young adults age 18-24 who are not ready to live independently.
- Explore Home Share programs tailored to this population that match youth and young adults with appropriate homes and provides training, mediation, stipends and other supports to ensure successful and sustained placement.
- Increase partnerships between DCF, BARJ, schools and youth housing providers to support youth participating in juvenile justice supports who may be precariously housed or homeless.
- Develop peer support opportunities for youth and young adults exiting custody, such as youth-to-youth mentoring with young adults who have successfully transitioned being paired with youth about to exit.
- DCF and agencies serving DCF involved youth should expand opportunities for and connections to mentoring programs to support adult connections.
- Explore increasing post-care contacts for DCF and YDP closed cases for at least 12 months to monitor ongoing housing stability and safety and re-engage youth, young adults, and families where housing is not secure.

Sub-Populations: Youth Connections to Secondary and Post-Secondary Education

Ensuring YYA are connected with and succeeding in secondary and post-secondary education is vital to their long-term success. According to Chapin Hall's recent report, students with less than a HS diploma or GED have a 346% higher risk for homelessness.²⁸ Georgetown University reports that by 2020, two-thirds of jobs will require some form of post-secondary education.²⁹

²⁸ Chapin Hall, Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America, 2018

²⁹ Georgetown University, Center n Education and the Workforce, 2018

School attendance remains a priority for most Vermont youth experiencing precarious housing or homelessness. 77% of youth and young adults served by Balance of State VCRHYP RHY programs in FY18 were attending school regularly, had graduated, or had obtained their GED. However, 26% report attending school irregularly, being suspended, expelled or dropped out.

While YYA seem to want to stay connected to and finish school, as it is often a safe place where they can see peers, stay warm, and eat, there is evidence that they face institutional hurdles. Economically disadvantaged Vermont students are dropping out of high school or struggling to graduate on time. At a rate of 8.6%, Vermont has the second highest high school dropout rate in New England; that rate nearly doubles to 15.5% when students are from low-income families.³⁰ For those low-income students who remain in school, graduating on time is a struggle; over 1 in 5 do not complete high school on time, compared to 1 in 25 middle or higher-income students.³¹ From these numbers we can speculate that Vermont’s educational system is struggling to adequately support the success of low-income students and address significant risk of homelessness.

More resources may be needed to support McKinney-Vento Liaisons. In FY17, The Vermont Agency of Education reported 340 students across the BoS CoC in grades 6-12 who were connected to McKinney-Vento Homelessness services; this represents 39% of all students receiving McKinney-Vento supports, and 1.2% of all students enrolled in grades 6-12. Of all students, grades pre-k-12, participating in homelessness services:

- 14.2% were residing in shelters
- 56% were identified as doubled up
- 8.5% were unsheltered
- 1.4% were migrant youth
- 6.2% were identified as unaccompanied

Of the 6.2% (54) reported unaccompanied, we may assume that the majority of those were in grades 6-12, indicating that 16% of middle and high school students experiencing homelessness were disconnected from their families. 31.4% of all youth receiving homeless services also had an Individual Education Plan (IEP), signifying they were in need of extra educational support.

Youth who are in school have a variety of unique needs. Care coordination with community partners is vital to connect youth to all the available resources. Some special considerations may include providing access to counseling within school to address stressors on housing instability; providing financial supports for school supplies, appropriate clothing, and school fees that may arise like field trips or graduation robes; ensuring youth have quiet places to study if they are staying in shelters; and flexibility in absentee policies which may impose punitive measures on youth who lack the resources for daily attendance.

³⁰ Voices for Vermont’s Children, Seeing the Whole Child, 2017

³¹ *ibid*

For those that do graduate high school, post-secondary education can feel out of reach. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, only 36% of Vermonters 25 years or older have at least a Bachelor's degree. While almost 75% of high school seniors plan on enrolling in a 2 or 4-year school, only 60% actually do enroll in college immediately after graduating.³² A key-contributing factor is the cost of college, which is extremely prohibitive for lower-income families.

In addition to tuition and boarding costs students face, which can often be covered through financial aid, loans and scholarships; there are costs of living that still occur such as meal plans, books, clothing, and other necessities. Food insecurity is a rising concern for economically disadvantaged young people in college settings. Department of Education data shows that almost 2 million at-risk college students who were potentially eligible for SNAP did not report receiving benefits in 2016.³³ As a homeless YYA thinks about their future opportunities, the barriers may seem insurmountable. In addition to financial burdens, youth who are or want to attend college also face challenges around being displaced from dorms during school breaks and summer vacation, and in Vermont, where many of our colleges are situated in rural settings, transportation back and forth to campus can be difficult.

With such a low percentage of all Vermont students matriculating to college or university, and identified disadvantages of low-income students, we have heard from young people that they do not see post-secondary education as part of their future. This indicates that we need to create lower-barrier access points for YYA to see that they can be successful in college, and put resources in place to offer a menu of supports, from tutoring to financial support, additional counseling services, and innovative and progressing engagement techniques.

Unique needs and recommendations for serving YYA engaged in secondary and post-secondary education include:

- Ensure youth and young adults have access to necessary documents required by schools, such as birth certificates, school records, and immunization documents.
 - Note that McKinney-Vento allows for immediate enrollment of homeless students regardless of completion or availability of necessary of paperwork and documentation.
- Youth and families experiencing precarious housing may be eligible to McKinney-Vento and Title 1 supports even though they might not be eligible for some HUD homeless services. Support workers should be trained in different eligibility requirements to refer and connect youth to appropriate resources. These funds can help provide supplies needed to complete assignments or participate in school activities.
- McKinney- Vento liaisons should develop family engagement strategies, ensure supports are youth-centric, and have plans for coordination with other community partners who can help provide youth and families wrap-around care.
- Students experiencing homelessness may be more tired and/or stressed, they may be hungry, have a hard time getting to or staying in school all day, and they may be

³² Vermont Student Assistance Corporation, Vermont Senior Survey: Class of 2016

³³ United States Government Accountability Office, 2018, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/696253.pdf>

experiencing behavior management challenges. School and support workers should ensure trauma-informed approaches and reduce consequences of misbehavior or truancy if possible.

- Students who have been verified homeless by RHY, M-V or HUD service providers can apply for the FAFSA as independent students, without including their guardians' income information. This can help leverage additional financial aid supports to make post-secondary options more attainable. School and community support workers should stay connected with youth who may be interested in college to ensure they have the verification needed to access this benefit.
- Homeless youth and young adults in college may not have places to go during holidays and school breaks. Schools should retain some open housing all-year.
- College students who were homeless or precariously housed may be able to leverage food assistance programs to reduce food insecurity while attending school. More education should be done to ensure caseworkers, colleges, and students know of these supports.

Sub-Populations: Youth Connections to Employment Supports

Employment supports for YYA are an essential component of building long-term stability. There are many barriers youth face to employment, including some factors that will always be outside of our direct control, such as a lack of suitable employment opportunities for YYA. However, there are many opportunities for bolstering services for YYA including flexible funding to support transportation related expenses like fine remediation, car repair, or bus passes; increased partnership with existing supports; an examination of where employment support gaps are and how we can fill them; and increased partnership with existing employment supports.

In Vermont, much of what is available specifically for youth populations is through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program, run through the VT Department of Labor. WIOA strives to offer a comprehensive array of high quality services, including career exploration and guidance, continued support of educational attainment, and training for in-demand industries and occupations. The program provides services to youth with barrier to employment, with special focus on supporting the education and career pathway of out of school youth. The program currently has 8 case managers located across the state. According to the Vermont Department of Labor, there were 35 homeless youth supported in Project Year (PY) 17, 19 youth who were in Foster care, and 84 youth who were ex-offenders.

This program is valuable and it is critical for us to look at connections to WIOA programs for the 26% of YYA being served by Vermont's RHY providers who are not attending school regularly or who have dropped out/been suspended. However, with only 8 case managers across the state, there may not be enough capacity to serve the breadth of unstably housed YYA eligible for the program. It is important to note that the majority of YYA served by existing RHY programs would not be eligible for WIOA supports because they are not disconnected from their schools.

Through the demonstration program, more opportunities for connecting homeless YYA to employment programs should be explored and expanded.

Another resource, supported in part by WIOA is the VT Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, which offers the JOBS program for eligible youth with disabilities. This program offers both Linking Learning to Careers and Pre-Employment Transition Services for youth transitioning from high school, as well as progressive and supported employment for older youth who have already left high school. While available in every county and a valuable resource, many youth who are experiencing homelessness do not have a co-occurring disability and are not eligible. However, increased cross-training and care coordination can increase referrals and wrap around supports for those youth who are.

VCRHYP's FYSB funded housing providers are also key helpers in connecting youth with employment supports. Whether through job coaching during regular case management meetings or connecting with community partners, these RHY providers are supporting employment achievements for youth. Still, more needs to be done. For YYA facing homelessness who are served by VCRHYP's statewide network of Transitional Living Program providers, only 45% were employed at exit. While this is a 12% increase in employment at exit vs. entry, a majority of young people were struggling to find or keep employment.

Unique needs and recommendations for serving YYA with employment supports:

- Housing providers and employment support agencies should cross-train on service availability and eligibility requirements to support referrals and case coordination.
- More resources need to be developed for youth who do not meet the eligibility requirements for WIOA and Vocational Rehabilitation supports.
- Service providers supporting employment should establish strong connections to local employers and find ways to strengthen their relationships with YYA including providing education on TIC and PYD, and challenges precarious housed and homeless youth might face that impact how they participate in the employment environment.
- All housing providers and case managers serving YYA should work with youth to develop career pathway goals.
- Providers should consider co-location of care provision or care consolidation so youth do not need to attend multiple meetings.

Sub-Populations: Youth With Mental Health, Physical, Developmental or Substance Use Disabilities

49% of youth and young adults in HMIS during FY18 reported having a disabling condition, which HUD defines as a diagnosable substance abuse disorder, a serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions. This is an increase from 38% in FY17. Over a one-year period from December 1, 2017 to November 30, 2018, VT 2-1-1 received 34 calls for mental health

assessment, treatment and support services for youth 12-18 and 94 calls from young adults 18-24 years old, and another 14 calls from YA 18-24 for substance use disorder services.

With this rise in YYA with disabling conditions that are seeking services, we could expect to see more youth moving into medium- or long-term housing interventions. However, the current Coordinated Entry system prioritizes youth based on complex service needs scores and an order of priority that is heavily informed by length of time a person is homeless. People who are chronically homeless are more often prioritized for RRH and PSH interventions. YYA are at a disadvantage for accessing RRH and PSH and are staying on the Master List for longer periods of time since YYA often haven't been over 18 long enough to meet the markers for chronic homelessness. This is discussed further in the Coordinated Entry section of this report.

We can see the impact of youth not meeting being prioritized for RRH or PSH through an examination of residential status at intake from Vermont's district mental health agencies (DAs). In Figure 9 below, we can see how many 18-24 year olds were either on the street or in a shelter when their mental health case was opened by one of VT's DA's over the last 5 years. In general, numbers have been fairly consistent. The Howard Center (HC) is located in Burlington, outside of the BoS CoC, and unsurprisingly has some of the highest numbers served due to Chittenden County's higher population.

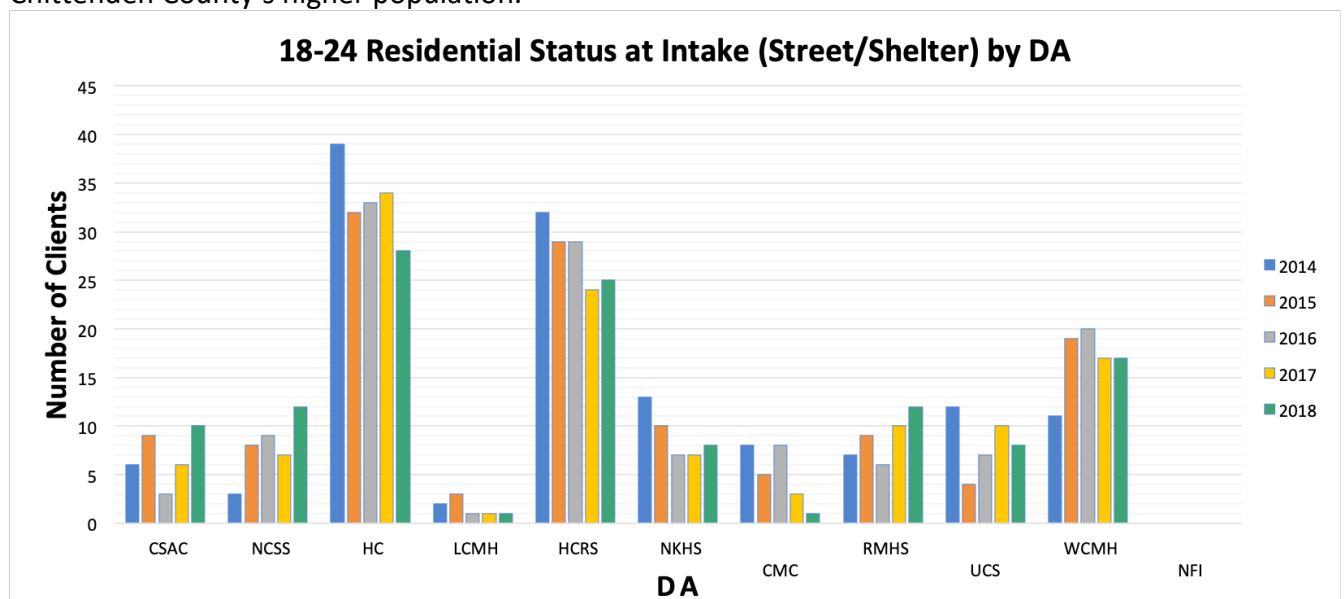


Figure 9 - Residential status at intake

Young Adults with developmental, behavioral, or substance related mental health disabilities qualify for a “disabling condition” in Vermont’s Coordinated Entry Housing Assessment and that should increase their access to Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH). However, Figure 10 shows us that in most communities, more youth who are currently being served by DAs are literally homeless in a shelter or on the street than at they were intake. Not only are YYA with disabilities not being connected to housing supports, they are losing the housing they have.

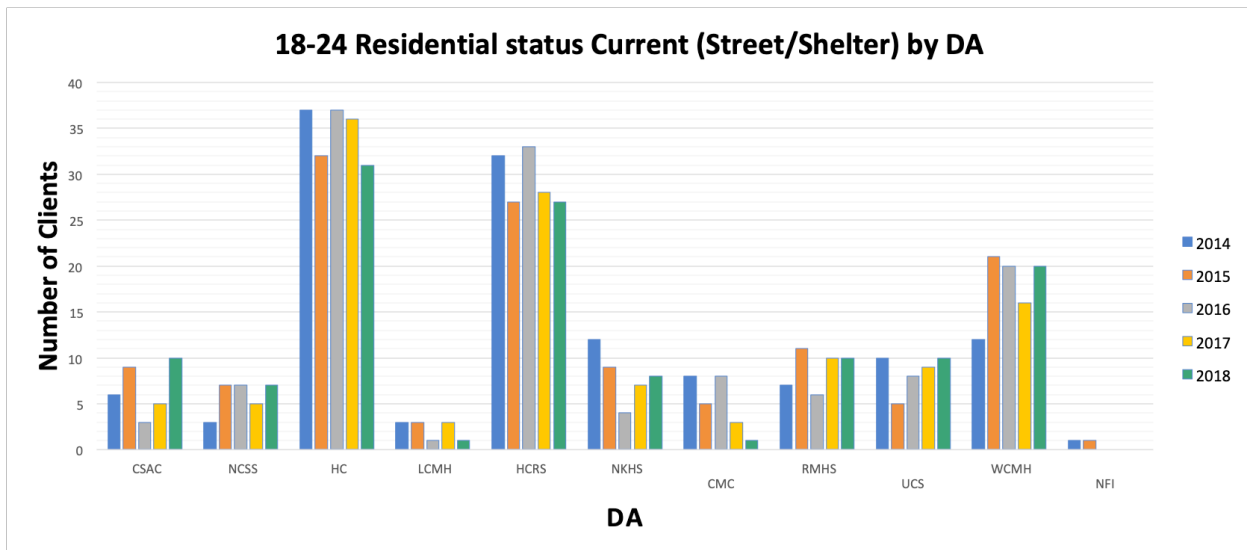


Figure 10: Current location

The VT YHDP should encourage projects in areas of high need to specifically target young adults with intersectional mental health issues. It is important that there is close collaboration between mental health providers, housing providers, and youth serving agencies. The current response system often connects youth to TLPs but those supports may not be the best fit for youth with higher mental health needs. The consequence is that TLPs, the only low-barrier housing option for YYA, have waitlists and often have youth in housing without the unique supports that they need. Youth who stay for the maximum length of stay allowable end up being pushed out into homelessness or unstable living situations because there are no other resources for them. Further complicating this is that a youth in TLP housing is not eligible for any of the current BoS CoC-funded RRH projects and that the time they spend in TLP housing does not count towards their time “chronically homeless” per HUD’s definition, which creates a barrier to accessing PSH. YYA with mental health disabilities need housing specifically for them, and barriers to moving these YYA into permanent housing need to be addressed.

In addition to the co-occurrence of housing insecurity and mental health disabilities, we also need to be looking at substance use in YYA populations; referrals to substance abuse treatment providers and coordination of care is important to youth’s success in housing interventions. Housing partners should also assess their policies and protocols to explore if there are barriers to accessing services that could be eliminated, such as zero-tolerance policies or one-strike rules. YYA are already in the midst of adolescent brain development and are often just learning how to connect actions to consequences. Restrictive and punitive rules that push them out of housing lead to youth residing in unsafe or risky places. Harm reduction and adolescent brain development science should be integrated principles and part of the training offered to housing providers serving YYA.

Another challenge faced by youth with physical disabilities in Vermont is housing and program accessibility. Agencies should ensure they have housing that is ADA compliant and that case meetings happen in locations that have accessible meeting spaces and restrooms.

Unique needs and recommendations for serving YYA with disabilities:

- YYA with disability status need more access to PSH and RRH projects. The Coordinated Entry system should explore how to mitigate the low placement rate of youth with disabilities.
- YYA with disabilities need peer support and opportunities to share personal experience in a non-judgmental environment, human connection that reduces isolation, and stigma reduction.
- Housing providers should have harm-reduction oriented policies in place for serving YYA with disabilities that includes screening for suicidal ideation, substance use and referral to treatment providers.
- Youth housing should be ADA compliant.

Sub-Populations: Race and Ethnicity

The 2017 U.S. Census Population Estimates indicates that 5.5% of the Vermonters identify as Black, Asian, American Indian or Alaska Native, or two or more races; and 1.9% identify as Hispanic or Latinx.³⁴ According to the 2017 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey reports, 16% of high school students identified as a racial and/ or ethnic minority, which is almost double the general population. This speaks to the changing demographics in Vermont, with youth and young adult communities having increased diversity.

During the 2018 VT BoS PIT count, 11% of youth and young adults between the ages of 12-24 identified as black, multi-racial, or Asian; 8% identified as Hispanic or Latinx. 7.5% of youth served in FY18 by BoS CoC VCRHYP providers identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, or Black; 4% identified as Hispanic or Latinx. These numbers are on par with the Youth Risk Behavior Survey racial diversity data and do not indicate an overrepresentation of youth of color or ethnic backgrounds seeking housing supports.

However, FY18 HMIS data shows that Black youth and young adults spend, on average, more nights in emergency shelter than White youth and young adults. In FY18, Black youth and young adults' median length of time in emergency shelter was 74 days, while the median for White YYAs was only 36 days. This indicates the need for agencies serving youth and young adult populations to be culturally sensitive, aware of implicit bias and consider the intersection of race/ethnicity and risk in the state.

As discussed in the “length of time in shelter” section above, youth and young adults of color face additional barriers due to racial discrimination that may be prohibiting them from exiting emergency shelters into permanent housing quickly, those barriers need to be examined and addressed to reduce this racial disparity.

³⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/vt-viewtop>

Unique needs and recommendations for serving racial and ethnic minority YYA include:

- Longer lengths of time in emergency shelters indicate a need to reduce barriers to housing stabilization for Black youth.
- Housing staff should be fully trained in implicit bias, cultural competence, diversity and inclusion and provide trauma-informed services that address cultural trauma as well as personal experiences.
- Cultural education should be available to others residing in housing also. Cultural sensitivity should be taught in a way that allows for people to respectfully ask questions, learn, and understand the needs of their peers to address the issues that often arise.
- Increase hiring rates for people with diverse racial and ethnic identities in housing programs.
- Housing providers should allow space for and support diverse cultural expressions and traditions, including providing cultural foods and ethnic products such as hair-care.
- Support services that affirm racial and ethnically diverse youth and young adults including job placement and housing programs that also help youth navigate harassment and discrimination.
- Family reunification should be prioritized, including looking for family outside of the service area and state.

Sub-Populations: Domestic and Sexual Violence

Experiencing or witnessing domestic or sexual violence puts youth and young adults at heightened risk of housing instability. From youth and young adults fleeing homes where there is intimate partner violence against a parent or guardian, being pushed out by an abuser as part of their abuse towards a parent, or fleeing for their own safety; housing is a critical issue for many victims and survivors of abuse. Additionally, many youth and young adults who are direct victims of violence from a parent or partner leave the household to find that their identity was stolen and credit ruined, or they can't get good landlord references because the person who abused them ruined the home or stole rent checks. The economic abuse that a perpetrator of domestic violence commits often leaves those fleeing violence at higher risk for homelessness.

Young adults aged 18-24 represented nearly 19% of all persons sheltered in Balance of State domestic and sexual violence shelters in FY18. 104 young adult head of households aged 18 through 24 were sheltered by Vermont's BoS CoC domestic and sexual violence agencies in FY18, compared to 555 total adults in D/SV shelters across the BoS service area. D/SV agencies that offer Transitional Housing (TH) served 13 young adult head of households aged 18-24 in their TH programs. An additional 29 youth aged 13-17 were in D/SV shelters with their mothers. It is important to note that the number of YYA head of households is representative of youth that were homeless due to directly experiencing intimate partner violence or sexual assault. This does not include youth that fled their homes alone when there

Young adults aged 18-24 represented nearly 20% of all persons sheltered in Balance of State domestic and sexual violence shelters in FY18.

was violence being experienced by their parent or other household member. With the expanded HUD Category 4 homeless definition of “Fleeing violence” more youth would have access to shelter than current D/SV shelter regulations allow.

18% of youth and young adults 12-24 served by VCRHYP Balance of State RHY-specific agencies in FY18 identified as a domestic or sexual violence survivor; this was a 10% increase compared to FY17. In FY18, 27% of all youth and young adults in HMIS reported being a domestic violence survivor; 8.5% reported fleeing domestic violence at the time of accessing services.

Incidents of domestic and sexual violence are widespread. Overall, the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence member programs across the state served 579 youth aged 13-17 and 935 young adults aged 18-24 in FY18. According to the 2017 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 10% of high school students who dated reported experiencing sexual violence in the past 12 months and 7% of youth who dated reported experiencing physical violence within their relationships. Female students, students of color, and LGBT students are all significantly more likely than others to experience both physical and sexual dating violence.³⁵ Domestic and sexual violence is an unfortunate reality in for the lives of youth and young adults and can lead to homelessness. Housing and youth service providers need to be considering the unique needs of these YYA and increasing appropriate resources.

Unique needs and recommendations for serving YYA who have lived in households with domestic and/or sexual violence and/or who are direct victims of dating, domestic or sexual violence:

- Expanding definitions of HUD’s homeless categories mean more YYA qualify for support under Category 4, outreach and education to enhance screening in to housing supports are needed for assessment partners.
- YYA fleeing violence have safety planning considerations and may need more choices available to them to meet those needs, including support to relocate to another area and increased privacy considerations.
- Legal advocacy, representation, and resources (court advocacy, financial, relief from abuse orders, emancipation, etc.) may be needed.
- Credit and financial resources may have been harmed by abuser, specific support to rebuild or reduce ongoing impact should be provided.
- Housing providers should enhance partnership and service connections to trauma/healing-centered mental health supports and agencies who support domestic and sexual violence victims and survivors.
- YYA fleeing D/SV often have increased need for medical care and access to sexual and reproductive healthcare, support to access these services should be prioritized.

³⁵ 2017 VT YRBS data

Sub-Populations: Exploitation and Trafficking

In 2018, the VT Department for Children and Families accepted 23 reports for suspected child/youth sex trafficking statewide for youth ages 8-17. 91% (21) were female and 9% (2) were male. An additional 8 reports were made in 2018, but were not accepted by DCF. Between the years of 2014-2018 Vermont DCF has seen 107 accepted reports on child/youth sex trafficking. Most of the victims (70) have been between the ages of 14-17 and more than half of the victims are in DCF custody. Common themes include exchanging sexual acts for drugs, cigarettes, alcohol, phone cards, electronics, other gifts, or promises of becoming famous.

Nearly 4% of youth and young adults seeking services through VCRHYP RHY service providers in FY18 self-reported experiencing sexual exploitation and nearly 4% reported workplace exploitation. Nationally, research finds that less than 4% of all adolescents exchange sex for money³⁶ but youth experiencing homelessness are more likely to fall victim to sexual exploitation and 28% of unsheltered youth living on the street, and 10% of YYA in shelters have engaged in “survival sex”, trading sex for basic needs such as food, shelter or phones.³⁷ If a YYA has already been a victim of abuse, it increases the odds that they will exchange survival sex.³⁸

The low number of youth and young adults identified through VCRHYP RHY programs in comparison with national statistics demonstrating the connection between youth and young adult homelessness and trafficking may indicate that Vermont’s RHY providers are not doing enough to identify or address trafficking within their population of YYA served. Enhanced screening and increased training could support more identification.

Unique needs and recommendations for serving YYA who have exposure to sexual or workplace exploitation and trafficking include:

- Increased training for support workers on screening and early identification of the warning signs of exploitation, including ensuring that screening is ongoing throughout case management and not just at entry/ exit.
- Non-stigmatizing, trauma-informed case management that includes safety-planning, harm-reduction, and addresses YYA’s sexual health is essential.
- Safe housing is key for victims and should be offered without preconditions for engaging in other services or reporting their abuse to authorities.
- YYA who want to make a report to law enforcement should be connected with appropriate legal representation so they know their rights and what to expect prior to reporting.
- YYA should be given opportunities to make informed decisions about what services and supports they want in order to regain power, choice and control in their lives.

³⁶ J.M. Edwards, B.J. Iritani, & D.D. Hallfors, Prevalence and Correlates of Exchanging Sex for Drugs and Money Among Adolescents in the United States, 82 Sexual Transmitted Infections 354, 355 (2006)

³⁷ Jody M. Greene, Susan T. Ennett, & Christopher L. Ringwalt, Prevalence and Correlates of Survival Sex Among Runaway and Homeless Youth, 89 Am. J. Pub. Health 1406, 1408, 1999

³⁸ Kristen Finklea, Adrienne L. Fernandes-Alcantara, & Alison Siskin, Congressional Research Serv., R41878, Sex Trafficking of Children in the United States 6, 2014

- YYA with exploitation or trafficking histories should be connected to services that can offer non-stigmatizing sexual education.

Sub-Populations: “Urban Travelers”

In some Vermont locations, there is an annual influx of homeless YYA in warmer months. These youth often travel from state to state and rarely stay for the long-term. Sometimes these youth choose to leave safe and stable housing situations behind for the “lure of the open road” and bucking mainstream lifestyles, but many traveling youth have traumatic histories, substance use disorders, are in need of mental health supports, or come from generational poverty and lack of opportunity. For most, long-term homelessness was probably not a foreseen consequence. These youth often lack faith in systems and aren’t accessing supports that could help them.

While sometimes seen as a nuisance, it is important that we see them as the homeless youth they are and work to understand the needs of this population, providing them with relevant resources that may help them leave the streets for safer and more sustainable options.

Unique needs and recommendations for serving YYA “urban travelers”:

- The impact these youth have on systems is unknown; BoS CoC should conduct a youth count in warmer months and conduct street outreach to connect with the population, concurrently conducting a brief survey with these YYA could help grow understanding of their needs.
- Youth serving agencies could make hygiene necessities, showers, snacks and water available for travelers to help build trust and connections.
- Peer outreach workers may be seen as more relevant or friendly to these populations, helping them know about local resources and building relationships.

BLUEPRINT FOR YHDP FUNDED PROJECTS

During the planning phase, there were a number of innovative project ideas collected from stakeholders. The Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee reviewed what was learned about community need, additional resources, and gaps in the service array and prioritized the following six project types for VT YHDP funding (presented in order of priority).

- Rapid Rehousing: Tenant or Site-Based Vouchers with Master-lease Waiver
- Support Services: Youth Housing Navigators and Landlord Liaisons
- Support Services/Coordinated Entry: Landlord Liaisons
- Transitional Housing/ Rapid Rehousing Joint Component
- Rapid Rehousing: Short-term Diversion Support
- HMIS Data Quality and Analysis

These projects will rely on a housing first model, with immediate access to housing with no preconditions; incorporate the USICH Framework/core outcomes (stable housing, permanent connections, education/employment, and social-emotional wellbeing) and address:

- Special populations (LGBTQ, minors under 18, pregnant and parenting youth, youth involved in JJ and foster care systems, victims of trafficking and exploitation, youth of color)
- Positive Youth Development and Trauma Informed Care
- Immediate access to housing with no preconditions
- Youth choice
- Individualized and client-driven supports
- Social and community integration
- Coordinated entry

More details about each of these projects is presented below.

In addition to the following prioritized housing projects, to successfully end youth and young adult homelessness a whole system's approach is needed to divert youth from entering the system and ensure positive outcomes for those youth who do need support. To that end, we have included a list of **non-YHDP funded projects** at the end of this section, as well as a list of **objectives and action steps** to address each goal area in this plan in the appendices. The VT YHDP team will support ongoing capacity building, planning, and evaluation of the whole system to move these non-funded projects forward and achieve identified objectives and action steps for this Demonstration Project.

1) Rapid Rehousing (RRH): Tenant or Site-Based Vouchers

Program Description	Timeframe for Participants	Population Served	Type of Organization	Desired Outcomes
<p>RRH low barrier housing that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports YYA in their own apartments through rental vouchers, apartments could be scattered across a community or located within a single building • Provides a case manager who connects participants to other community services that they need, including connections to employment or educational supports to further a career pathway; enhances life skill development; and builds permanent connections and natural supports with the participant • RRH uses a housing first approach and will vary from high-level of services to low-level of services depending on the needs of the participant • Service providers will be trained in cultural competence to serve LGBTQ, racial and ethnic minorities, and how to address mental health needs and adolescent development • Provides opportunities for participants to connect with other participants through community activities, support groups, or other formal or informal spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Between 3 and 36 months with waiver approval • Site-based with waiver for Master-leasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unaccompanied young adults and minors ages 16-24 experiencing literal or imminent homelessness, fleeing violence, pregnant or parenting or who are precariously housed <i>(HUD Categories 1, 2, 4)</i> • Preference for pregnant and parenting youth and youth fleeing violence <i>(including domestic, sexual, human trafficking or sexual exploitation)</i> 	<p>To be determined through the RFP process, eligible entities will be agencies with demonstrated capacity including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing and shelter providers • Parent child centers • Youth serving organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of participants remain stably housed during the program • 75% of participants are employed at least part-time at exit • 85% of program participants exit to a permanent housing destination

2) Support Services Only (SSO): Youth Housing Navigators

Program Description	Timeframe for Participants	Population Served	Type of Organization	Desired Outcomes
<p>Youth Housing Navigators SSO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of case management support to help connect YYA in crisis response settings to permanent housing more quickly or self-resolve existing barriers to stable housing so YYA reduce the length of time they need shelter or transitional housing supports • Assist youth with following through on service linkages to other community resources, including connections to employment or educational supports to further a career pathway; enhances life skill development; and builds permanent connections and natural supports with the participant • Agencies seeking funding are encouraged to consider Peer Navigators, employing YYA who have been through the housing response system process • Funding may also cover outreach to increase earlier identification of youth in need and reduce barriers to connecting youth to service supports • Service providers will be trained in cultural competence to serve LGBTQ, racial and ethnic minorities, and how to address mental health needs and adolescent development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 12 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unaccompanied young adults and minors experiencing literal or imminent homelessness, fleeing violence, pregnant or parenting <i>(HUD Categories 1, 2, 4)</i> 	<p>To be determined through the RFP process, eligible entities will be agencies with demonstrated capacity including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing and shelter providers • Youth serving organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% of YYA have shorter lengths of stay in shelter or transitional housing compared with median length of stay of YYA in similar cohorts • 75% of participants would have a minimum of 5 service connections tracked through HMIS • 85% of participants exits emergency shelter and transitional housing to a permanent housing location

3) Support Services Only (SSO)-Coordinated Entry: Landlord Liaisons

Program Description	Timeframe for Participants	Population Served	Type of Organization	Desired Outcomes
<p>Landlord Engagement/ Landlord Liaison (SSO/ CE):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landlord liaisons or engagement specialists would be either situated in local communities, regionally, or within statewide organizations who can provide support to partners who are working with landlords to increase access for YYA populations, and/or work with landlords directly to reduce barriers, stigma and concern they may have so that YYA can access their housing, either with or without vouchers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlimited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project will not work directly with youth but will cover BoS CoC communities 	<p>To be determined through the RFP process, eligible entities will be agencies with demonstrated capacity including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing and shelter providers Youth serving organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number of YYA using RRH vouchers in community-based housing by 25% Reduce the average length of time between YYA being approved for RRH voucher use and securing housing

4) Transitional Housing-Rapid Rehousing Joint Component (TH-RRH)

Program Description	Timeframe for Participants	Population Served	Type of Organization	Desired Outcomes
<p>TH-RRH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combines Transitional Housing, a service-intensive, frequently congregate-care component, with a pathway to RRH, a scattered site independent living component YYA can either start in TH and work towards RRH as soon as possible, skip into RRH but move into TH if unsuccessful in an independent setting, returning back and forth to either component for the duration of the 36-months <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a case manager who connects participants to other community services that they need, including connections to employment or educational supports to further a career pathway; enhances life skill development; and builds permanent connections and natural supports with the participant Service providers will be trained in cultural competence to serve LGBTQ, racial and ethnic minorities, and how to address mental health needs and adolescent development Provides opportunities for participants to connect with other participants through community activities, support groups, or other formal or informal spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24 to 36-months with waiver approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unaccompanied young adults and minors ages 16-24 experiencing literal or imminent homelessness, fleeing violence, pregnant or parenting, or precariously housed <i>(HUD Categories 1, 2, 3, 4)</i> <i>(note, cap of 10% for category 3 youth)</i> 	<p>To be determined through the RFP process, eligible entities will be agencies with demonstrated capacity including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing and shelter providers Youth serving organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% of participants are given life skills training 90% of participants are provided with either employment or educational services 75% of participants are employed at least part-time at exit 85% of program participants exit to an independent living situation

5) Rapid Rehousing (RRH): Short-term Diversion Support

Program Description	Timeframe for Participants	Population Served	Type of Organization	Desired Outcomes
<p>RRH/ Diversion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connects with YYA prior to entry into crisis response or housing system Provides YYA with flexible funds for maintaining housing or short-term housing support, can include move-in/ out funds, moving costs, utility deposits, short-term rental assistance, and legal services Funding may also be used flexibly to cover costs associated with transportation, car repairs, public transportation passes, or other reasonable costs related to transportation Participants will be connected with a case manager who will: help navigate housing options; access funding; connect participant to other community services that they need, including connections to employment or educational supports to further a career pathway; enhance life skill development; build permanent connections and natural supports with the participant; and assist with family engagement through access to counseling and mediation supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unaccompanied young adults and minors ages 16-24 experiencing literal or imminent homelessness, fleeing violence, pregnant or parenting, or precariously housed <i>(HUD Categories 1, 2, 3, 4)</i> <p>(note, cap of 10% for category 3 youth)</p>	<p>To be determined through the RFP process, eligible entities will be agencies with demonstrated capacity including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing and shelter providers Youth serving organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75% of participants are independently housed at exit < 25% of participants enter the housing response system during the 3-months they receive diversion support

6) Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

Program Description	Timeframe for Participants	Population Served	Type of Organization	Desired Outcomes
<p>HMIS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State HMIS System Administrator, the Institute for Community Alliances, can cover operating and personnel costs associated with ensuring data collection and reporting are robust for YHDP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlimited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project will not work directly with youth but will cover entire BoS CoC community 	<p>To be determined through the RFP process, eligible entities will be agencies with demonstrated capacity including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HMIS Lead Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICA will participate in 75% of YHDP local and national meetings related to data ICA will create and pull reports for A Way Home America Dashboard at least annually ICA will create separate YHDP projects and reports, pull data for YHDP evaluation and monitor data quality and completeness ICA will assist in trend and data analysis with YHDP leadership at least two times a year ICA will train HMIS users on YHDP project workflows

Non-YHDP Funded Projects

Program Description	Timeframe for Participants	Population Served	Type of Organization	Desired Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of a BoS CoC-wide learning community where members can access ongoing training, technical assistance, and peer support for best practice service delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlimited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth service and housing providers with a focus on YHDP and RHY funded projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead by statewide or regional partner with capacity for training and understanding of both youth services and housing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased knowledge and skills for housing providers serving YYA populations to increase positive outcomes for YYA Increase awareness of local and statewide resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drop-in centers for teens and young adults where they can access low-barrier services such as hygiene supports including showers and laundry, food and warm meals, access to computers for housing and job searches, connections with peers, recreational activities, and access to case managers who can connect them with other resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlimited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All YYA ages 12-24 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth serving organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YYA at risk of homelessness are identified earlier and diverted from crisis responses YYA have access to well-being supports YYA have opportunities to build permanent connections and natural supports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landlord mitigation fund 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landlords of unaccompanied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase number of landlords renting

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-time access per youth/landlord 	<p>young adults and minors ages 16-24 being served by YHDP or RHY project sites</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth serving organizations 	<p>directly to YYA with RRH vouchers or agencies master-leasing apartments to YYA</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent Supported Housing (PSH) that is a non-time-limited housing subsidy combined with a high level of supportive services. It is a model that is most effective when combined with a housing first approach and is typically designed for folks with the highest needs, including long experiences with homelessness and a household member with a disability. • YHDP PSH would not require YYA to have a chronically homeless status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permeant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing providers • Youth serving organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High needs youth with complex risk factors, including disability, are being connected to long-term housing and service supports
<p>Host Homes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment, training, rent, food stipends, and transportation support for host homes that can serve transition aged youth ages 18-24 for 1 to 24 months. • Recruitment, training, food stipends, and transportation support for host homes that can serve minor youth ages 12-17 for up to 21 days • Host homes would support youth learning independent living skills and building permanent connections • YYA in host homes would be connected to intensive case management services that will: connect participant to other community services that they 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 days for minors • 1 to 24 months for 18-24-year olds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unaccompanied young adults and minors ages 16-24 experiencing literal or imminent homelessness, fleeing violence, pregnant or parenting, or precariously housed (HUD Categories 1, 2, 3, 4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth serving organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the statewide safety net of emergency shelter options for minors • Reduce the number of unsheltered YYA during the annual PIT count • Reduce the number of unaccompanied young adults using mainstream crisis responses

<p>need, including connections to employment or educational supports to further a career pathway; enhance life skill development; and build permanent connections and natural supports with the participant; mediate host home and youth relationships</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Action Board coordination and support funding including: personnel and operational funds for a part-time coordinator position, youth stipends for transportation and consultation time, funding for YAB participation in national YHDP training opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlimited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unaccompanied young adults and minors ages 16-24 experiencing literal or imminent homelessness, fleeing violence, pregnant or parenting, or precariously housed <i>(HUD Categories 1, 2, 3, 4)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure youth voice is included in statewide planning and evaluation of YHDP and other housing partnerships Provide statewide and local leadership opportunities for youth with lived experiences

RFP SELECTION PROCESS OVERVIEW

Any eligible agency in the VT-500 Balance of State CoC may apply for YHDP funds, including:

- State government
- County governments
- City or township governments
- Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Others qualifying entity

YHDP leadership will work with the YHPPC and VCEH to develop an RFP and an unbiased selection process that includes VCEH, Youth Action Board members, and other stakeholders, built on the existing VCEH model for CoC Project selection.

An anticipated timeline is:

March 25	Webinar on YHDP project implementation and HUD CoC Program Grants Administration
April 1-12	Regional In-Person Trainings (White River Junction, Rutland, Waterbury)
April 15	YHDP RFP released
April 22	Bidders Call #1 and written questions due
April 24	Bidders Call #2
April 28	Written responses to questions provided
May 6	Project applications due to VCEH
May 31	YHDP selection initial notification
June 1-28	Selected project application technical assistance
July 1	Submission of selected projects to HUD (final deadline July 15)
August – September 1	Development of grant agreements

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

As the Vermont Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program moves from planning into project selection and implementation, an ongoing evaluation process will be developed to ensure projects and the program are meeting defined goals and outcomes and the program is moving prioritized objectives forward. Through a continuous quality improvement plan, we are committed to learning from doing, sharing information with state and national partners, and holding youth experiences paramount.

A few key components of our continuous quality improvement plan will be:

- **Ongoing analysis of system flow** to determine what gaps and barriers exist, where resources should be targeted, and which processes could be made more efficient.
- **Data drive** through ongoing analysis of systems data, individual project data, and youth outcome data.
- **Enhanced integration with BoS CoC annual evaluation efforts**, including bi-annual reports to the Bos CoC on YHDP outcome areas and activities.
- **Youth evaluation** from YHDP housed youth as well as other YYA accessing system of care.
- **Stakeholder feedback** from community and state partners.
- **Transparency** through creation of data dashboards to easily share snapshots of critical indicators and regular reports to partners.
- **Flexibility** to adapt and respond to evaluative findings within the parameters of the funding.

The governance structure will support progress and accountability through:

- Continued regular meetings of the Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee.
- Regular reports from YHPPC sub-committees during YHPCC meetings and the creation of a new sub-committee focused on CQI development and implementation.
- Ongoing information sharing with the Youth Action Board.
- Consistent representation of the YHPPC and YAB during the BoS CoC Board meetings and biannual sharing of evaluation data.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Vermont-500 Balance Of State CoC
- Formation of The Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee
- Decision Making
- Youth Action Board (YAB)
- Youth Homelessness Prevention Planning Committee (YHPPC)
- YHDP Leadership Team
- YHDP Coordinated Community Plan Partner list

Appendix 2: SYSTEM ENHANCEMENT OBJECTIVES AND ACTION STEPS

Appendix 3: SERVICE PHILOSOPHY AND KEY PRINCIPLES FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

- Housing-First Approach
- Positive youth development and Youth Thrive
- Trauma-informed Care
- Harm-reduction
- Family Engagement
- Social and Community Integration

Appendix 4: YOUTH HOUSING & SERVICES INVENTORY

Appendix 5: YOUTH HOUSING HEAT MAPS

Appendix 6: YHPPC STAKEHOLDER WORKGROUP FINAL REPORT

Appendix 7: YHPPC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT WORKGROUP FINAL REPORT

Appendix 8: YOUTH THRIVE PROTECTIVE AND PROMOTIVE FACTORS

Appendix 9: HUD DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS

Appendix 10: DEFINITION OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

Appendix 11: SIGNATURES FROM OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES

APPENDIX 1: **GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

VERMONT-500 BALANCE OF STATE COC

The VT Coalition to End Homelessness (VCEH) is the decision-making body for the Vermont-500 Balance of State CoC whose mission is to:

The Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness supports the work of local CoCs; connects them to a broader network of stakeholders; administers federal funds; and advocates for funding and policy changes so that people living in Vermont have a safe, stable, affordable home and if homelessness occurs it is a brief and rare occurrence during which everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

VCEH is an entirely volunteer-operated partnership of community stakeholders; the VCEH Board operates as a collective within an informal organizational structure. VCEH does not maintain any organizational staff, but is supported with substantial in-kind support by many community members and stakeholders. The VCEH Board conducts open meetings, with the entire CoC membership and public, on a monthly basis and follows a CoC Governance Charter, which is reviewed and revised annually by the entire CoC.

The VCEH Board is led by a CoC Executive Team that establishes monthly agendas, facilitates meetings, and oversees general CoC operations, and includes:

- **Co-Chair:** GroundWorks Collaborative (Josh Davis)
- **Co-Chair:** Pathways Vermont (Rebeka Lawrence-Gomez)
- **Treasurer:** Capstone Community Action (dawn butterfield)
- **Secretary:** Homeless Prevention Center (Heather Hinckley)

The VCEH Board is comprised of an additional 25 members, including:

- **Two current/formerly homeless representatives** (Whitney Nichols/Shawn Kelley)
- **One rep from each of the twelve (12) local/regional CoCs**
- **One rep for youth:** at least one member of the Youth Action Board (youth), or if unavailable – VT Coalition of Runaway & Homeless Youth Programs (Bethany Pombar)
- **One rep for victims of domestic/sexual violence:** VT Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence (Kara Casey)
- **One rep for veterans:** U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs Medical Center-White River Junction (Jason Brill)
- **Two reps from the VT Agency of Human Services:** Office of Economic Opportunity (Emily Higgins) and Dept. of Mental Health (Brian Smith)
- **One voting rep for Housing Partners:** VT Housing Finance Agency (Andrea Tieso), VT Housing & Conservation Board (Jen Hollar), VT Dept. of Housing & Community Development (Shaun Gilpin)

- **One rep for the Vermont State Housing Authority** (Daniel Blankenship)
- **One rep for CoC HMIS Lead Agency:** Institute for Community Alliances (Meghan Morrow Raftery)
- **Up to three reps-at-large:** VT Agency of Education (Deborah Ormsbee), United Ways of Vermont/VT 211 (MaryEllen Mendl), VT Affordable Housing Coalition (Erhard Mahnke)

The VCEH/VT BoS CoC receives administrative and leadership support from:

- **Collaborative Applicant:** VT State Housing Authority (Daniel Blankenship)
- **CoC Support Specialist:** VT State Housing Authority (Andrea Hurley)
- **HMIS Lead Agency:** Institute for Community Alliances (Meghan Morrow Raftery)
- **Coordinated Entry Lead Agency:** VT Agency of Human Services (Sarah Phillips)
- **HUD ESG Grantee:** VT Agency of Human Services (Emily Higgins)

The VCEH Board approves and oversees a variety of committees and workgroups to ensure the implementation of specific CoC operations, including a Coordinated Entry, HMIS, and ending Veterans' Homelessness.

FORMATION OF THE YOUTH HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PLAN COMMITTEE

As the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness (VCEH), Vermont's Balance of State Continuum of Care, worked to advance local and national goals of ending youth homelessness by 2020, we recognized that unaccompanied youth and young adults under 25 represent a unique population impacted by experiences of homelessness and developing responses would require a range of interventions that meet their unique developmental and social needs. The Youth Homelessness Prevention Planning Committee (YHPPC) was formed in March of 2017 to:

- Increase data collection and analysis to gain better understanding of youth and young adult homelessness in Vermont.
- Develop a shared understanding of evidence-informed practices to address youth and young adult homelessness, current Vermont and national resources, and what interventions increase positive outcomes.
- Create a statewide plan to end youth and young adult homelessness through increasing capacity for interventions that reduce risk factors, build protective factors and mitigate long-term impacts of experiences of homelessness. Interventions should address four primary outcomes as outlined in the USICH framework¹:
 - Stable Housing
 - Permanent Connections

¹ United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, Framework for ending youth homelessness, February, 2013, <https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/framework-for-ending-youth-homelessness>

- Education/ Employment
 - Social/ Emotional Well-being
- Ensure that every community has the capacity to identify and engage youth and young adults at risk of experiencing homelessness and intervene to prevent loss, reduce barriers to emergency crisis services, and increase short and long term housing supports appropriate for the unique populations needs.

During the early work of YHPPC, four primary workgroups were formed: Stakeholder Engagement, Youth Engagement, Data Collection, and Coordinated Entry. These groups worked to assess the current landscape of youth and young adult homelessness in Vermont. Through their efforts:

- A stakeholder survey asking about perception of causational factors for youth and young adult homelessness, strengths and gaps in the current response system, and ideas for enhanced prevention and diversion was released which collected responses from 174 self-identified stakeholders.
- Five key informational interviews were held with partner groups including Department for Children and Families representatives, Children’s Mental Health Providers, Juvenile Justice Representatives, Vermont’s Youth Development Program providers, and Community Action Agencies.
- Four focus groups for youth ages 16-24 were held in Brattleboro, White River Junction, St. Johnsbury and Burlington. Focus groups were co-facilitated with a youth engagement committee member and a youth from the community.
- A youth survey was released to solicit feedback from young people aged 14-25 with lived experiences of homelessness or precarious housing, 38 eligible respondents completed the survey.
- An initial data compilation was conducted and gaps and duplications were identified. A plan was developed to address issues with HMIS and other data providers.
- The implementation of coordinated entry is being examined through a youth-focused lens and the Chittenden County CoC (the other HUD recognized CoC in Vermont) was supported in their early adoption of a common youth assessment tool and by-name list.

Final reports from both the stakeholder workgroup and youth engagement workgroup can be found in the appendix.

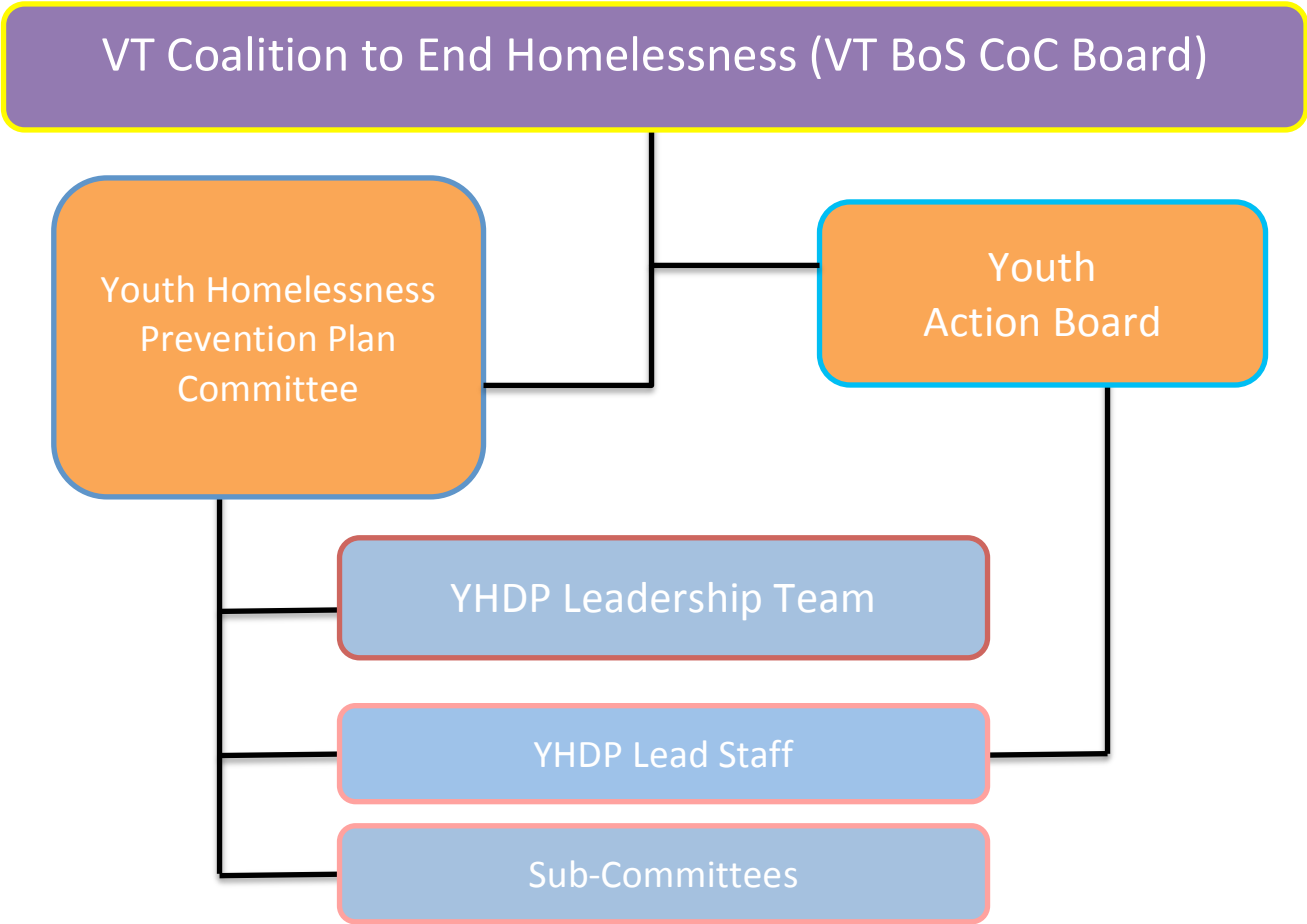
When the opportunity for the second round of funding for HUD’s Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project opened in January of 2018, the VCEH and YHPPC were eager applicants

as we continued to move our planning process forward and build engagement from community partners. Once awarded as the Vermont Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program, we strengthened and clarified our governance and decision-making structures to facilitate the development of a Coordinated Community plan.

Decision Making:

The Vermont Youth Homeless Demonstration Program - Coordinated Community Plan (VT YHDP-CCP) is a collaborative and inclusive process with direction provided by the Youth Action Board (YAB) and support provided by the YHDP Leadership Team, Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee, YHPPC subcommittees and YHDP Lead Staff. Planning decisions are passed through the YHPPC to YAB for approval before being presented to the VCEH for final approval. The YHPPC follows a simple majority vote rule for members present. There is no quorum that needs to be achieved, and each member gets one vote, except RHY program representatives whose vote counts as two, please see the below list of voting members.

Decision Making Flow-Chart:



A separate committee will be established which has voting member seats from YHPCC and YAB members, as well as other identified CoC stakeholders, to review and rank Vermont’s YHDP project applications going forward.

YOUTH ACTION BOARD (YAB)

YAB membership currently consists of six youth from five different communities who range in age from 17-25. Representatives include one youth of color, two LGBTQ identified youth, two male-identified youth and four female-identified youth, all with lived experiences of homelessness. YAB is supported directly by the YHDP coordinator, meets at least monthly, attends YHPPC meetings, and members are compensated for their time. At least 2/3 of YAB members must be currently or formerly homeless. Co-chairs are voted on by YAB board and serve two-year terms. The YAB uses consensus-based decision making unless an urgent timeline must be met in which case a major majority of 75% of YAB members are needed to pass decisions. The YAB met at least monthly through the planning phase and will continue to meet at least quarterly through program implementation. Meetings happen both in person and through virtual phone and computer-based forums to support statewide participation. YAB members are invited to and participate in all YHPPC meetings in addition to their separate YAB member only meetings. YAB members are paid consultants for the VT YHDP.

Current membership includes:

- Ron Burns (co-chair)
- Jakya Ellison (co-chair)
- Keegan Jones
- Devon Rinaldi
- Lacey Beetham
- Genesis Van Dyke

YAB support team:

- VT YHDP Coordinator: VT Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs (Bethany Pombar)
- YAB YHDP Technical Assistant providers: True Colors Fund (Kahlib Barton and Ziggy Keyes)

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PLAN COMMITTEE (YHPPC)

The YHPPC Stakeholders meet monthly to review and provide feedback on plan development and project implementation. All members are volunteers through their organizations. Since

March 2017, when planning for the YHDP application began, the YHPPC has met for a total of 37 hours. A full member list can be found on the following page.

The committee currently includes several subcommittees, which have membership that may extend beyond YHPPC voting members:

- Coordinated Entry-
 - Ari Kisler, VCRHYP
 - Christine Linn, Youth Services, Inc. of Windham County
 - Wendi Byther, Youth Services, Inc. of Windham County
 - Will Towne, Spectrum Youth & Family Services
 - Meghan Morrow Raftery, Institute for Community Alliances

- Data Coordination –
 - George Seiffert, DCF Office of Economic Opportunity
 - Ari Kisler, VCRHYP
 - Meghan Morrow Raftery, Institute for Community Alliances

- Youth Engagement-
 - Bethany Pombar, VCRHYP
 - Christine Linn, Youth Services, Inc. of Windham County
 - Anna Berg, Youth Development Program

- Stakeholder Input-
 - Bethany Pombar, VCRHYP
 - Judy Rex, DCF Commissioner’s Office
 - Tara Chase, Windsor County Youth Services

VT YHPPC support-

- **VT YHDP Coordinator-** VT Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs (Bethany Pombar)
- **CoC Support Specialist-** VT State Housing Authority (Andrea Hurley)

YHPPC Voting Membership			
Group	Weight	Organization	Representative(s)
Post-Secondary Ed.	1	Community Colleges of Vermont	Kate Hughes
Elementary/Secondary Ed.	1	Agency of Education	Jesse Roy
Mental Health Housing Provider	1	Pathways Vermont	Amos Meacham, Rebeka Lawrence-Gomez
District Mental Health Service Provider	1	Northwestern Counseling & Support Services	Nic Kosac
Foster Involved Youth Services	1	Youth Development Program	Jennifer Boardman
Adult Housing Services	2	Homeless Prevention Center	Sara Schoenwetter
		Upper Valley Haven	Ellen Reader
Housing Authority	1	Vermont State Housing Authority	Daniel Blankenship
Domestic/Sexual Violence	1	Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence	Kara Casey, Amy Torchia
Runaway and Youth Service Providers	2	Windsor County Youth Services	Tara Chase
		Youth Services, Inc.	Christine Linn, Wendi Byther
Statewide Youth Coalition	1	Vermont Coalition of Runaway & Homeless Youth Programs	Bethany Pombar, Ari Kisler
Pregnant and Parenting Youth Service Provider	1	Family Center of Washington County	Janine Gallagher
Child Welfare System/ State Government	1	DCF Commissioner's Office	Judy Rex`
State Housing Licensing	1	DCF Family Services Division	Lauren Higbee
State Housing/ ESG Entity	1	DCF Office of Economic Opportunity	George Seiffert
Youth Employment	1	Department of Labor	Rose Lucenti, Tracy Verge
Juvenile justice	1	Valley Court Diversion Programs	Vacant
Youth/Teen Center	1	LISTEN Community Services	Katie O'Day
HMIS	1	Institute for Community Alliances	Meghan Morrow Raftery
Chittenden County Homeless Alliance	1	Spectrum Youth & Family Services	Will Towne
LGBTQ+ Services	1	Outright Vermont	Amanda Rohdenburg (consultation)

VT YHDP LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Leadership Team coordinates the YHPPC through agenda planning, draft development support, guidance for the YHDP coordinator, technical assistance organization and project management oversight. The team includes Demo Project applicant partners and runaway and homeless youth service providers.

- **YHDP Lead Agencies-** VT state Housing Authority (Daniel Blankenship) and VT Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs (Bethany Pombar, Ari Kisler)
- **Public Child Welfare Agency-**VT Agency of Human Services (Judy Rex)
- **CoC Collaborative Applicant-**VT State Housing Authority (Daniel Blankenship)
- **CoC Support Specialist-** VT State Housing Authority (Andrea Hurley)
- **State Education Agency-**VT Agency of Education (Deb Ormsbee, Jesse Roy)
- **RHY Direct Services Provider-**Windsor County Youth Services (Tara Chase)
- **YHDP Technical Assistance Providers-** -Technical Assistance Collaborative (Lauren Knott, Ellen Fitzpatrick)

YHDP COORDINATED COMMUNITY PLAN PARTNER LIST

Partners	Partner's name	Involvement
○ CoC Program Recipients/ Providers	Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA); Pathways Vermont; Homeless Prevention Center; Upper Valley Haven; Institute for Community Alliances; Agency of Human Services (AHS); Northwest Counseling and Support Services (NCSS)	VSHA is the YHDP Lead Agency and on the YHDP Leadership Team. All are YHPPC voting members.
○ Youth Advisory Boards	Coordinated by the VT Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs	At least monthly meetings through planning phase and quarterly meetings required ongoing (see decision making matrix for more information)
○ Local and State Government	VT Department for Children and Families – Commissioner's Office	YHDP Leadership Team, Co-Chair of the YHPPC, and supporting YHDP planning and implementation through direct funding of \$87,500 over two years
○ Public Child Welfare Agencies	VT Department for Children and Families	See row C
○ ESG Program Recipients	VT Department for Children and Families - Office of Economic Opportunity	YHPPC voting member and on YHPPC Data Subcommittee
○ Local and State Law Enforcement and Judges	N/A	N/A
○ Early Childhood Development and Child Care providers	Family Center of Washington County	YHPPC voting member
○ Local and State Educational Agencies	VT Agency of Education	On YHDP Leadership Team and a YHPPC voting member
○ Runaway and Homeless Youth Program Providers	VT Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs (VCRHYP), Windsor County Youth Services (WCYS), Youth Services Inc.,	VCRHYP & WCYS are on the YHDP Leadership Team; All are YHPPC voting members and/or hosted a youth focus

Partners	Partner's name	Involvement
	Spectrum Youth and Family Services, Northwestern Counseling & Support Services	group for the YHPPC Youth Engagement Subcommittee; Some are involved in various YHPPC subcommittees
○ Non-Profit Youth Organizations	LISTEN Community Services - Junction Teen Center; Outright Vermont; VT Youth Development Program (YDP)	All are YHPPC voting members; YDP is a member of the YHPPC Youth Engagement Subcommittee and participated in a YHPPC Stakeholder Subcommittee interview
○ Juvenile and Adult Corrections and Probation	VT's Department for Children and Families – Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ); Valley Court Diversion Programs (VCDP)	VT's juvenile justice system is integrated with DCF (see row C for DCF involvement); BARJ participated in a YHPPC Stakeholder Subcommittee interview; VCDP is a YHPPC voting member
○ Health, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Agencies	Pathways Vermont; Northwestern Counseling & Support Services	YHPPC voting members
○ WIOA Boards and Employment Agencies	VT Department of Labor	YHPPC voting member
○ Landlords	N/A	N/A
○ Public Housing Authorities	Vermont State Housing Authority	See row A
○ Institutions of Higher Education	Community Colleges of Vermont	YHPPC voting member
○ Community Development Corporations	N/A	N/A
○ Affordable Housing Developers	N/A	N/A
○ Local Advocacy, Research, and Philanthropic Organizations	VT Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence	YHPPC voting member
○ Privately Funded Homeless Organizations	N/A	N/A

APPENDIX 2:
SYSTEM ENHANCEMENT OBJECTIVES AND ACTION STEPS

The Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee (YHPPC) identified a number of objectives and actions steps to respond to issues discovered through the needs assessment. YHPPC will use this information to develop an ongoing work plan that prioritizes action steps, identifies progress indicators and outcome measures, builds partnerships with stakeholders, and offers a timeline for moving forward. As we continue to improve the youth and young adult (YYA) housing system of care, we may add to these action steps or discover that some are unnecessary or redundant. “Responsible Parties” identified for action steps are only suggestions and plan drafters assume each action steps will need multiple partners at the table. The information below is meant to be a malleable outline that can be adjusted as our work progresses.

Prevention & Diversion:

The community will enhance the statewide system of identifying youth and young adults who are at-risk of homelessness by conducting annual assessments of needs, strengthening outreach and access points for assistance with housing and services so that youth who are experiencing housing instability are identified early and prevented from entering the homeless crisis response system.

Objective 1: Increase early identification of youth and young adults at-risk or experiencing homelessness.	
<i>Suggested Responsible Parties</i>	<i>Action Steps</i>
YHDP/ BoS CoC, ICA	I. Create and implement a statewide annual assessment of need. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Track inflow and outflow of YYA, including location prior to entry and at exit. b. Expand collection of current HMIS RHY measures to include all youth and young adults under 25, regardless of HUD or FYSB designation.
BoS CoC, AOE	II. Engage McKinney-Vento Liaisons in participating in the precarious housed count as part of the annual Point In Time count conducted by the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness.
BoS CoC, VCRHYP	III. Conduct a statewide Youth Count in the summer (in addition to annual PIT) that tracks both literally homeless as well as precariously housed, as well as captures “traveler” youth who may not have permanent connections in Vermont but are camping or otherwise staying for the warmer months.
DCF	IV. Work with the DCF to develop data to understand who is exiting child welfare and juvenile justice systems that go on to experience homelessness or housing instability within a year after exit.

Parent-Child Centers, DCF sub-contractors, Economic Services	V. Work with service providers supporting pregnant and parenting youth and young adults age 24 and under to identify YYA at-risk of precarious housing or homelessness and connect to prevention and diversion resources.
YAB, BoS CoC, VCRHYP	VI. Create training for community members that build knowledge around early warning signs, how to engage youth and young adults in conversations about homelessness, housing stability, and what resources are available including housing and financial supports, education, and health care.
Objective 2: Increase availability of low-barrier access points to services and housing supports.	
VCRHYP, Community Action Organizations, VT Teen Center Network, VT Afterschool Partners	I. Increase availability and youth-appropriateness of community-based resources that serve as access points to crisis and/ or housing programs, such as: drop-in centers, locations for community meals or food shelf pick-ups, clothing donations, hygiene supports like accessible showers and toiletries. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Build in opportunities for peer connections such as specific times for YYA or activities developed by and for YYA. b. Increase availability of support workers at these locations for brief contacts and consultations to build relationships with YYA prior to housing crisis. c. Expand availability of drop-in centers by expanding beyond site-based permanent entities to also including “pop-up” once a week or weekend only drop-in spaces. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Consider drop-in accessibility and appropriateness for 12-18-year olds and 18-24-year olds.
BoS CoC, VT 2-1-1	II. Ensure hotlines such as 2-1-1 and 24-hour hotlines for crisis services are aware of low-barrier supports and can make referrals.
BoS CoC, YAB, VCRHYP	III. Educate members of the community on providing information to youth before they are at-risk.
Objective 3: Improve outreach targeting youth and young adult populations to increase awareness of available assistance and housing supports.	
YAB, VCRHYP	I. Create a social media campaign that works across a variety of platforms and is used by partners statewide to support clear and consistent messaging about available resources and access points; outreach should work to dispel myths and stigmas surrounding housing crisis.
YAB, VCRHYP, partners	II. Ensure outreach activities are culturally appropriate and accessible for various sub-populations based on

representing culturally specific populations	<p>identity, race, and/or ethnic backgrounds.</p> <p>a. Make outreach materials available in different reading levels and languages.</p>
YAB, VCRHYP	<p>III. Identify “hot-spots” for youth outreach, places where youth congregate beyond schools.</p> <p>a. Conduct outreach activities that target these “hot-spot” locations, such as local libraries or other free wifi hotspots, skate parks, or other public spaces YYA gather.</p>
VCRHYP	<p>IV. Build specific support services targeting transient “traveler” youth who are often only passing through for warmer months.</p>
YHDP, YAB, Vermont Youth Services System Enhancement Council *	<p>V. Create a housing and services inventory that youth can access.</p> <p><i>* At the time of drafting, the Youth Services System Enhancement Council has launched a pilot for an interactive map that charts services across the state; YAB could be partners for providing feedback.</i></p>
<p>Objective 4: Increase partnerships with secondary and post-secondary institutions to help with early identification and crisis prevention for YYA at-risk of homelessness.</p>	
AOE	<p>I. Create guidelines and best practices for identifying and serving YYA in school systems.</p>
BoS CoC, AOE	<p>II. Train McKinney-Vento Liaisons on coordinated entry referral and assessment tools.</p>
VCRHYP, AOE, VT Colleges and Universities	<p>III. Develop a statewide workgroup for secondary and post-secondary entities and community-based stakeholders to further define statewide needs and resources for homeless youth.</p>
AOE, VT Colleges and Universities	<p>IV. Increase campus-based outreach and awareness activities.</p> <p>a. Include a segment in health classes around housing and housing instability where youth can learn about available resources and connect to local housing providers.</p>
Local YYA housing providers, VT Colleges and Universities	<p>V. Build partnerships between educational entities and local service providers that enable coordinated service provision on campus.</p>

AOE	<p>VI. Ensure McKinney-Vento liaisons are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Connected with local YYA service providers; b. Completing housing assessment tools for Coordinated Entry for unaccompanied youth and youth homeless with their family; c. Participating on local Housing Review Teams; d. Training other school staff, including volunteers and coaches, on identification of youth homelessness and available resources.
AOE	<p>VII. Connect youth in families who are McKinney-Vento eligible to youth-centered community-based service providers to address their unique individual needs.</p>
Objective 5: Increase youth homeless prevention resources.	
YHDP/ BoS CoC	<p>I. Create a YYA homelessness diversion fund available across the CoC to support YYA staying in place rather than losing housing, prioritize access for pregnant and parenting YYA.</p>
YHDP/ BoS CoC, VCRHYP, DCF	<p>II. Increase integration of youth-centered family reunification and permanent connection building activities into core case management for all YYA service providers, McKinney-Vento liaisons, and housing providers.</p>
VCRHYP, DCF, DMH, DOL	<p>III. Work with providers across the community to coordinate services and ensure youth’s needs are met before they escalate to homelessness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Service providers should consider co-location or co-planning so youth do not need to attend multiple case management meetings with different providers.

Continuum of Housing Supports:

The community will offer youth and young adults a variety of housing options that meet individual needs and empower youth and young adults to reach their full potential in a safe, youth-centered, and sustainable living situation.

Objective 1: Improve access to and responsiveness of existing housing options for youth and young adults.	
<i>Suggested Responsible Parties</i>	<i>Action Steps</i>
YHDP/ BoS CoC, ICA	I. Create and disseminate an annual report highlighting where YYA enter and flow through existing response system.
YHDP/ BoS CoC	II. Reduce or eliminate system-level barriers that prevent youth from accessing or staying in available housing projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify system-level barriers to housing and determine ways to address them. b. Modify current mainstream programs to incorporate best practices for working with YYA (e.g. addressing adultism and racism, using housing first approach, PYD, harm reduction, TIC, youth leadership within the agency). c. Increase education about the expanded definition of Category 4 for youth fleeing violence.
YHDP/ BoS CoC	III. Develop a general application for youth to access housing supports that is used by all housing programs.
YHDP/ BoS CoC, OEO	IV. Shorten the length of time pregnant and parenting YYA and Black YYA are in emergency shelter. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Examine exits from emergency shelter for White non-parenting youth for stability (are they leaving sooner b/c they are house or b/c they have other options for doubling up?)
YHDP/ BoS CoC	V. Identify and address barriers to youth and young adults accessing existing permanent housing subsidies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Determine estimated level of need vs. availability. b. Reduce length of time YYA with complex service needs are on Master List.
YHDP/ BoS CoC, VSHA	VI. Increase Identification and address barriers to YYA utilization of VT State Housing Authorities homelessness preference/Family Unification Program vouchers.
YHDP/ BoS CoC	VII. Improve youth and young adult referral process to project-based units.

YHDP/ BoS CoC, YAB	VIII. Work with the BoS CoC's Coordinated Entry (CE) workgroup to ensure the CoC's CE assessment and prioritization process is youth-centered and successfully identifies and prioritizes youths' needs for housing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Ensure HMIS capacity to monitor YYA coordinated entry outcomes. d. Create a mechanism for including youth voice in CE evaluative and design processes. e. Evaluate the process for YYA in comparison to older adult populations and identify where YYA are at disadvantage due to age or other barriers.
BoS CoC, AOE	IX. Provide technical assistance and professional development on Coordinated Entry and available services to the Agency of Education and McKinney-Vento Liaisons using multiple platforms to ensure statewide LEA participation.
BoS CoC, VCRHYP	X. Support the development of YYA-centered practices within existing mainstream housing including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. Employing youth and young adult peers in housing and support programs g. Building positive rapport with youth and young adults in agency settings through low-barrier engagement opportunities.
Objective 2: Develop new housing programs specifically for youth and young adult populations.	
YHDP/ BoS CoC	I. Work with local public housing authorities to develop youth preferences and policies that address common barriers such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lack of landlord references. b. Hard restrictions on visitors or activities that lead to eviction. c. Increased and simplified appeal process.
YHDP/ BoS CoC	II. Set aside an increased amount of Housing Choice Vouchers for YYA.
YHDP/ BoS CoC	III. Increase availability of Transitional Housing, Rapid Re-Housing and Permanent Supported Housing options for YYA. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explore options for these projects to serve unaccompanied youth who are 16 and 17 years old.
VCRHYP, OEO	IV. Develop YYA specific emergency shelter options, particularly focused on 18-24-year olds. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Target emergency options for category 4 eligible youth.
YHDP, VT Affordable Housing Coalition	V. Work with developers to explore the possibility of set asides for YYA within new site-based projects.

YHDP/ BoS CoC, OEO	VI. Explore Landlord liaison programs that help YYA find units and reduce barriers YYA may have to securing community-based housing. a. Develop a landlord mitigation fund for YYA housing.
VCRHYP	VII. Create a system of host homes/ home shares for young adults 18-24.
Objective 3: Incorporate low barrier and Housing First approaches across the homelessness response system.	
YHDP/ BoS CoC	I. Support youth and young adult specific low-barrier and Housing First approaches through CoC project funding. a. Address needs of young adults 18-24 who are not eligible for RRH or PSH options. b. Explore and address disadvantages to YYA in Coordinated Entry that results in those best served by medium- or long-term housing interventions remaining on the Master List for long periods of time due to low complex service need scores and an order of priority that is heavily informed by length of time homeless. i. Create a compatible YYA specific entry assessment.
BoS CoC, VCRHYP	II. Require that policies are in place to ensure youth are not screened out of housing programs due to: having too little or low income; active or history of substance use; having a criminal record; or history of victimization (e.g. domestic violence, sexual assault, childhood abuse).
BoS CoC, VCRHYP	III. Require that policies are in place to ensure youth and young adults are not terminated from housing programs due to: failure to participate in agreed upon supportive services; failure to make progress on a service plan; loss of income or failure to improve income; or any other activity not covered in a lease agreement typically found for unassisted persons.

Education and Employment:

The community will work to remove all barriers to success in education and employment for youth and young adults, and to support the pursuit of a variety of paths with an individualized approach.

Objective 1: Ensure that all youth and young adults in the homelessness response system have the tools and supports they need to find and/or maintain employment.	
<i>Suggested Responsible Parties</i>	<i>Action Steps</i>
YHDP/ BoS CoC	I. Require all projects applying for YHDP funds to identify how they will provide transportation and employment services to youth and young adults in their programs either directly or through an agreement with community partners.
YHDP/ BoS CoC, Parent-Child Centers	II. Require all projects applying for YHDP funds that serve pregnant/parenting YYA can identify how they will ensure services are available that support youth in employment settings (e.g. transportation, childcare, etc.) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish partnerships between homeless service providers and community providers serving pregnant/parenting youth and young adults (e.g. Parent Child Centers).
YHDP/ BoS CoC	III. VT YHDP housing and service providers will ensure protocols and practices are in place that prioritize supporting YYA in obtaining documentation needed for employment and housing, including identification and citizenship documentation.
DOL	IV. Create a tool-kit/resource guide marketed to youth and young adults that provides them with information to enhance their job readiness and connections to resources and programs available to support them. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The tool-kit/resource guide will be available to YYA both in print and electronically, as well as other modalities that will help enhance accessibility. b. Guide will also address resources for LGBTQ and Youth of Color who may be experiencing workplace harassment or discrimination.
DOL, BoS CoC	V. Strengthen partnerships between the housing system of care and the Vermont Department of Labor to enhance employment support options for YYA and utilization of WIOA resources. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create a workgroup with the Department of Labor to explore ways to connect more youth and young adults to low-barrier employment supports.

Objective 2: Ensure that all youth and young adults in the homelessness response system have the tools and supports they need to advance or complete their education, including GED or high school equivalency and post-secondary education.	
YHDP/ BoS CoC	I. Require all projects applying for YHDP funds to identify how they will provide transportation, educational, and employment services to youth and young adults in their programs either directly or through an agreement with community partners.
YHDP/ BoS CoC	II. Require all projects applying for YHDP funds that serve pregnant/parenting YYA to identify how they will ensure availability of services that support youth completing their education (e.g. transportation, childcare) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish partnerships between homeless service providers and community providers serving pregnant/parenting youth and young adults (e.g. Parent Child Centers)
YHDP/ BoS CoC, AOE	III. VT YHDP housing and service providers will ensure protocols and practices are in place that prioritize supporting YYA in obtaining documentation needed for educational advancement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure YYA and families know their rights under McKinney-Vento for immediate enrollment regardless of documentation availability, such as transcripts, proof of address, identification, etc.
VCRHYP, State Colleges and Universities	IV. Partner with VT State Colleges to retain open housing all year long, including summer and winter breaks, for youth with no alternative living arrangement.
VCRHYP, State Colleges of VT, VT student Assistance Cooperation	V. Explore opportunities for increased funding for Vermont YYA who have been verified homeless and are enrolled in post-secondary education to support additional college expenses, such as supplies, meal plans, clothing, hygiene products and other incidental needs.
Objective 3: Ensure all students eligible for McKinney-Vento supports are identified and receive equitable services across all service systems.	
AOE	I. Develop an effective strategy for providing ongoing professional development for liaisons, and basic education for other school personnel, resulting in effective McKinney-Vento programming statewide in all public, independent and private schools.
AOE	II. The Agency of Education will develop technical assistance for Homeless Liaisons, targeting unaccompanied youth services, including: formal site monitoring, workshops, annual sub-population conference, webinars, regular field memos to Statewide listserv, and other direct assistance as requested.

AOE	III. The Agency of Education will explore opportunities for providing the field with incentive grant funding for unaccompanied youth specific programs using evidence-based best practices.
AOE	IV. Enhance relationships between the youth homelessness response system and the Agency of Education to ensure coordination and shared understanding of resources and protocols for supporting school-aged youth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increase awareness of M-V eligibility and supports such as immediate school enrollment and transportation supports. b. Enhance statewide availability of AOE’s M-V parental and unaccompanied youth packets for eligible YYA and families.
Objective 4: Improve partnerships between alternative education programs and school districts/supervisory unions for the purposes of identification and equitable service delivery to McKinney-Vento YYA.	
AOE	I. The State Program Coordinator for McKinney-Vento will establish systems of collaboration with input from all stakeholders that includes program directors/principals of alternative school networks, independent and religious schools, CTE centers, and Adult Learning Centers serving 16 – 24-year olds.
AOE	II. Develop a clear process for youth and young adults in alternative settings to access a variety of educational programs based upon identified needs that are youth-centered, reflective of and supported by stated educational goals as outlined by the Vermont Educational State Plan authorized in spring of 2017.
AOE	III. The Agency of Education will collaborate with alternative education program staff to ensure activities comply with education requirements and appropriate resources are available to ensure program efficacy.
Objective 5: Ensure that youth and young adults are empowered to define their own education and employment goals and what supports/services they need to achieve them.	
YHDP/ BoS CoC	I. Create outcomes and performance measures for YHDP-funded projects that recognize success beyond traditional education and employment outcomes.
AOE	II. AOE McKinney-Vento training will include TIC and PYD principles.

Objective 6: Create, implement and annually evaluate a network of potential employers who support youth and young adult employment.

DOL, AOE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Department of Labor and Agency of Education will collaboratively establish employer professional development programs for serving YYA. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Include tips and ideas on how to strengthen and support successful youth and young adult employment. b. Department of Labor will work to enhance opportunities for progressive employment for YYA.
DOL, AOE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> II. Build partnerships with regional chambers of commerce to educate employers about the needs of youth and young adult employees and what resources employers can connect with to support YYA working for them.

Permanent Connections:

The community will support youth and young adults in establishing lasting connections with families, friends, communities, and other natural supports of choice, while cultivating opportunities and interests.

Objective 1: Youth and young adults exiting housing programs have permanent connections: stable, positive relationships with family, friends, and others who will be there for the youth and young adults when needed.	
<i>Suggested Responsible Parties</i>	<i>Action Steps</i>
YHDP/ BoS CoC and local CoCs	I. Increase collaboration and coordination between the community housing providers, youth service systems, education, and workforce organizations, etc.
YHDP/ BoS CoC	II. Peer and adult mentorship activities are built into housing and case management programs for YYA.
YHDP/ BoS CoC	III. Scattered-site, voucher-based and other non-site based housing programs work with community partners to create opportunities for YYA to connect with peers through shared activities, educational events, meals, and group counseling.
YHDP/ BoS CoC	IV. Housing and service providers assist youth and young adults in identifying areas of interest and support YYA connecting to participation opportunities within the community, such as cultural, faith-based, or recreational groups.
Objective 2: Integrate development of permanent connections and the use of family/natural support engagement into every aspect of service delivery system, reunifying families and/or connecting to other supportive adults.	
DCF/ Youth Development Program	I. Expanding services that facilitate permanent connections for youth exiting child welfare system involvement such as DCF’s extended foster care program and permanency pacts.
YHDP/ BoS CoC	II. Create policies and practices for all housing and services programs that include family and natural support engagement strategies and goals, including young adults aged 18-24.

Social and Emotional Wellbeing:

The community will embrace positive youth and young adult development, trauma-informed care, and resilience building; encouraging the ongoing development of skills, strengths, and hobbies among youth and young adults to ensure continued stability.

Objective 1: Incorporate youth-centered, culturally-informed approaches to service delivery across all housing and service providers, including those not specifically targeting youth and young adults, to ensure that no young person experiences re-traumatization.	
<i>Suggested Responsible Parties</i>	<i>Action Steps</i>
YHDP/ BoS CoC, VCRHYP	I. Train all support workers, including mainstream housing providers, in trauma-informed care, harm reduction, <i>Youth Thrive</i> /Strengthening Families/Positive Youth Development frameworks.
YHDP/ BoS CoC	II. Ensure all VT YHDP funded project have policies and protocols in place for training all housing support workers on cultural inclusiveness and how to support marginalized populations including LGBTQ youth, youth of color, unique needs of category 4 youth including safety planning, youth with behavioral or mental health disabilities, youth from various cultural backgrounds, etc.
YHDP/ BoS CoC, YAB	III. Incorporate youth-focused program evaluation, engaging youth who have gone through programs to provide feedback on efficacy and competency of services.
YHDP/ BoS CoC, YAB	IV. Establish clear avenues of accountability and policies that empower youth to act on their own behalf to address grievances with services or service providers.
Objective 2: Youth and young adults will receive ongoing support and connection to resources in their pursuit of social, cultural, community, and recreational areas of interest.	
YHDP/ BoS CoC, VCRHYP	I. Increase access to and supports for normalcy activities, including dedicated and flexible funds to pay for fees, clothing, or other resources needed to participate in day-to-day or one-time activities other YYA who aren't in housing crisis have access too.
YHDP/ BoS CoC, YAB,	II. Ensure that housing service providers and partners are taking a youth-centered approach to connecting

VCRHYP	youth with an array of opportunities that connect YYA to peers and their community.
Objective 3: Youth and young adults are provided with and engage in local and statewide leadership and advocacy opportunities, increasing youth voice throughout system.	
YHDP/ BoS CoC, YAB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Institutionalize the role of the VT-500 Youth Advisory Board (YAB) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish two-member seats on the CoC Board b. Identify a long-term financial support for YAB members consultation c. Support YAB to develop ongoing outreach and engagement activities to recruit and sustain membership d. Connect YAB with other youth leadership groups including YDP FORWARD group, WIOA youth group, VT9to26 youth coalition and other partners working to advance youth leadership across the state.
YHDP/ BoS CoC, YAB, local CoCs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> II. Mobilize local CoCs, YYA and housing providers to develop youth boards and opportunities for youth leadership in decision making processes, ensuring that youth voice is central to program development and assessment.
YHDP/ BoS CoC, YAB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> III. Ensure housing providers have avenues of accountability that empower youth to act on their own behalf to address grievances with services or service providers.
YHDP/ BoS CoC, YAB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IV. Ensure each local CoC creates opportunities that engage youth voices in project planning, development and evaluation.
YHDP/ BoS CoC, VCRHYP, YAB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> V. Provide resources to train YYA who have experienced homelessness in leadership, advocacy, and civic engagement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop or select a statewide youth leadership curriculum b. Connect precariously housed and homeless YYA to other organizations with leadership and peer councils.

Objective 4: All youth and young adults receiving housing or prevention supports will have access to adequate, timely and appropriate mental, behavioral, physical health services and substance abuse supports.	
YHDP/ BoS CoC, DMH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Integrate TAY focused health and substance abuse interventions into youth and young adult homelessness system of care. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop partnerships with local Mental Health Designated Agencies and housing providers to increase information sharing, care coordination, and referrals. b. Housing providers should support YYA in accessing health insurance and connecting to a primary care physician.
DMH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> II. Expand access to mental and behavioral health and substance abuse services.
DMH, VCRHYP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> III. Address challenges in transition from child-based MH services to adult system of care, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Warm hand-offs between youth and adult systems, b. Increased training for YYA housing providers around transition to adult services, c. Increase collaboration with community based mental health teams.
YHDP/ BoS CoC, DCF, Parent-Child Centers, VCRHP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IV. Provide communication and conflict mediation skill building into case management with YYA, particularly for pregnant and parenting youth to assist co-parenting relationships.
YHDP/ BoS CoC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> V. Ensure connections to mental health support for LGBTQ youth, connections to LGBTQ affirming sexual health information, substance abuse programming for VT YHDP funded projects.
Objective 5: Service providers screen for and identify YYA who are experiencing or at-risk of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, from program entry through aftercare.	
YHDP/ BoS CoC, VT Human Trafficking Task Force, VT Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Train YYA services and all housing providers on trafficking and exploitation red flags, community resources, and appropriate, non-stigmatizing responses.

<p>YHDP/ BoS CoC, VT Human Trafficking Task Force, VT Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence</p>	<p>II. Ensure youth who have been identified as having experienced potential trafficking or exploitation are connected to appropriate sexual health supports immediately.</p>
<p>YHDP/ BoS CoC, VT Human Trafficking Task Force, DCF</p>	<p>III. Work with the VT Department of Children and Families to share resources, such as screening tools, and information about trafficking with community partners.</p>
<p>Objective 6: Support youth to achieve goals that will help them achieve long-term stability.</p>	
<p>YHDP/ BoS CoC, AOE, YDP</p>	<p>I. Ensure YHDP funding projects are supporting YYA with long-term stability through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Specific educational supports for YYA who have been involved with the child welfare system and experienced housing instability should be available to help youth maintain an average GPA. b. Provision of case management or learning opportunities that enhance life skill development, from paying bills, cook and cleaning, to accessing resources. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Specific programming should be implemented with YYA who have been involved with the child welfare system at any point after age 12, including connections to the Youth Development Program for eligible YYA.

APPENDIX 3:

SERVICE PHILOSOPHY AND KEY PRINCIPLES FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

It is essential that traditional and non-traditional services available to youth and young adults incorporate key principles and philosophies into project design and implementation to enhance accessibility and relevancy of support available to YYA. Below is a brief overview of core concepts that have guided our planning work and which all funded projects will be expected to incorporate into service provision.

Housing-First Approach

Core principles of a housing first approach for youth include:

- A right to housing with no preconditions
- Youth choice, youth voice and self-determination
- Positive youth development and wellness orientation
- Individualize, client-driven supports with no time limits
- Social inclusion and community integration.¹

VT YHDP funded projects will need to define how they are incorporating these principles into project design. A further discussion of key principles is below.

Positive Youth Development and Youth Thrive (PYD/ YT)

According to Youth.gov:

Positive Youth Development (PYD) is an intentional, prosocial approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive; recognizes, utilizes, and enhances young people's strengths; and promotes positive outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths.²

Positive Youth Development favors client driven leadership and skill-building opportunities under the guidance of caring supporters. It looks at young people as assets to be developed and gives them the means to build successful futures. Some of the elements that can protect young people and put them on the path to success include family support, caring adults, positive peer groups, a strong sense of self and self-esteem, and involvement at school and in the community.³

¹ Homeless Hub, This is Housing First for Youth: a Program Model Guide, <https://www.homelesshub.ca/HF4Y>

² Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs, January 2019, <https://youth.gov/youth-topics/positive-youth-development>

³ <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/positive-youth-development>

In Vermont, YYA serving agencies have begun to adopt the Youth Thrive (YT) framework.⁴ There are trainers in each community that can support agencies adopting YT. Youth Thrive is a research-informed model that combines that most current science about adolescent brain development, trauma, resilience, and the importance of social connections into one framework to ensure young people in our care thrive as evidenced by: physical and emotional health; success in school and workplace; ability to form and sustain caring, committee relationships; hopefulness and optimism; compassion and curiosity; and service to community, school, or society.

These outcomes are achieved through ensuring programs:

- Build protective factors that support youth resilience
- Create opportunities for social connections that help youth find meaning in their lives
- Train staff in adolescent development
- Provide concrete supports in times of need
- Support YYA in developing cognitive and social-emotional competence.

Youth serving projects should be intentional about how programs and interventions will build in opportunities for youth to strengthen protective and promotive factors and reduce risks, and include youth in the planning process for such interventions. Projects will be strengthened when they involve and engage youth as equal partners. *A list of Youth Thrive protective and promotive factors is included in this appendix.*

Trauma-informed Care (TIC)

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has developed a working definition of trauma:

*Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.*⁵

Ensuring that care is trauma-informed requires youth care workers to recognize the impacts that traumatic experiences can have on youth, as well as how that trauma may present (such as through feelings of shame, guilt, rage, isolation, or disconnection).

VT YHDP funded projects need to tailor their services and interventions to each individual youth's needs and include strategies for building social supports and relationship building. Youth care workers need to be regularly trained to recognize the presence of trauma symptoms and to consider the unknown history of each youth during interactions, in addition to their known trauma points and triggers.

⁴ Center for the Study of Social Policy, <https://cssp.org/our-work/project/youth-thrive/>

⁵ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 2012

TIC in action looks like making sure a client is informed of their choices in a way they understand, given power and support to make those choices, and instilled with a sense that they have control over their own life. TIC practitioners make sure they are helping a youth see what next steps are ahead and help identify potential consequences and outcomes of different choices, but they do not make those choices for youth. They work with youth to avoid triggers by ensuring a youth knows what to expect out of meetings together, and help youth prepare for other community partner meetings through support for strategically sharing their stories without having to risk their sense of safety in doing so.

Trauma-informed practitioners can help the youth:

- Understand and frame their prior experiences
- Build resilience and positive beliefs about the future
- Address developmental strengths and deficits related to trauma and continue to develop along a health trajectory
- Transform maladaptive coping methods into healthy and productive strategies
- Develop protective factors, such as a sense of belonging and personal value
- Give youth power, choice and control over their own lives

Harm-Reduction

Harm-reduction methods support positive changes in youth by helping them recognize harmful situations and working with them to build transparent plans for how to reduce their risk through more informed decision-making. It neither condones nor condemns any behavior. According to the National Health Care for the Homeless Council, “a basic assumption in this approach is that clients want to make positive changes and the skilled clinician uses motivational strategies to help clients move along the change continuum as far as possible.”⁶

Harm-reduction takes the place of abstinence-only policies and procedures. Examples of harm-reduction procedures include:

2. Distributing sleeping bags and warm clothing to youth who choose not to enter shelter
3. Reviewing policies and procedures to determine if they create unnecessary consequences and barriers or place judgments on youth accessing supports due to substance use
4. Providing condoms, information about STD/HIV prevention and treatment, and supports for communicating sexual boundaries to youth who are engaging in risky sexual behaviors

Balancing harm-reduction approaches with safety of all participants in youth settings can be challenging, but creating programs that transparently address behaviors and consequences with youth and young adults builds respect, trust and dignity for YYA into service provision.

⁶ https://www.nhchc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/harmreductionFS_Apr10.pdf

Family Engagement

For youth and young adults for which it is safe, family engagement should be a priority part of programming, even for youth who are over 18. Family engagement is the systematic inclusion of families in activities and programs that promote youth's development and wellness. Just as youth voice should be central to case management, so should families. Families can also be key partners in design and development of projects designed to support youth and young adults.

Community Integration

Community Integration is the opportunity to live in the community and be valued for one's uniqueness and abilities, like everyone else.⁷ Through integration, we reduce the stigmatization of YYA experiencing precarious housing and homelessness and normalize their lives. Integration also provides opportunities to increase social connections and strengthen YYA's connections to people who care about them and can help when needed.

Community integration creates opportunities for YYA to connect with peers and caring adults, develop their skills, and use those skills to contribute to their community. Community integration offers programs an opportunity to not just focus on the problems a young person might be facing, but shift towards a strength-based approach that encourages and affirms their sense of value.

⁷ Salzer, M.S. (2006). Introduction. In M.S. Salzer (ed.), *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Skills in Practice: A CPRP Preparation and Skills Workbook*. Columbia, MD.: United States Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association.

APPENDIX 4:
HOUSING INVENTORY REPORT

INVENTORY OF HOUSING & SERVICES PROGRAMS TO ASSIST HOMELESS & AT-RISK YOUTH IN VERMONT

Prepared by:
The Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc., May 2017

Prepared for:
The Vermont Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee

Updated by:
Vermont's YHDP Leadership Team, **January 2019**

Introduction

This inventory was completed by the Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc. (TAC) in May 2017 for the Vermont Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee which is comprised of Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness (VCEH) and Chittenden Homeless Alliance (CHA) members, the Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA) and other stakeholders, and chaired by the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Providers (VCRHYP) and the Vermont Agency for Human Services' Department of Children and Families (AHS/DCF). **Vermont's YHDP Leadership Team updated the inventory in January 2019.**

The inventory primarily focuses on homeless-specific, affordable housing, and other service system resources that are targeted for youth, or for which transition age youth ages 18-24 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness may be eligible. Included are federal as well as applicable state programs as some programs blend federal and state funds. The inclusion of important state-specific programs and resources also ensures that the full range of housing and services that should be available to assist youth are represented.

The programs and resources included in the inventory range from prevention and outreach/drop-in services, to emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid-rehousing and permanent supportive housing, as well as family support

and engagement, life skills training, case management, health and behavioral health services, and education, training, and workforce/employment services. Resources to meet the needs of youth who are under 18, pregnant and parenting, LGBTQ, have experienced trafficking or domestic/sexual violence, are aging out of foster care and/or have been involved in the justice system are included as information was available.

This inventory can help begin to identify gaps in housing and services as well as opportunities for the best response to the needs of youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the state. As the Committee furthers its work, it may want to seek more specifics regarding eligibility for particular programs and resources included in the inventory as it pertains to youth. The inventory may be useful to inform mapping of the access and referral pathways to available programs and resources for youth. The Committee may also want to explore potential access and retention barriers for youth related to these programs and resources.

Homeless-Specific Resources Available to Youth

Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH)

Administering Agency:

Vermont Department of Mental Health

Funding:

Federal - HHS' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) PATH Program

Providers:

- Groundworks Drop-in Center (Brattleboro)
- Homeless Prevention Center (Rutland)
- Northeast Kingdom Community Action (Newport)
- Community Health Center of Burlington (Burlington)
- Addison County Community Action Group (Middlebury)
- Good Samaritan Haven (Barre)

Services/Eligibility:

Transition age youth ages 18-24 may be eligible for PATH program services if they also have a serious mental illness and are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. Services include those that may not be available through mainstream mental health programs, including:

- Outreach
- Screening and diagnostic services
- Habilitation and rehabilitation
- Community mental health
- Substance use treatment
- Referrals for primary healthcare, job training, education services, and housing
- Specifically allowable housing services (as specified in Section 522(b)(10) of the Public Health Service Act)

Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) Program

Administering Agency:

Community Health Centers of Burlington

Funding:

Federal – HHS' Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) Program

Provider:

Pearl Street Youth Health Center (Burlington); Safe Harbor Health Center (Burlington)

Services/Eligibility:

Pearl Street offers walk-in and scheduled appointments for youth and young adults ages 13 - 25, and special services for at-risk youth, homeless teens, and young adults. Services include primary health and dental care, mental health and

substance abuse counseling, outreach, referral, case management, family planning, and linkages to shelter and youth serving agencies.

Young adults may also receive services through Safe Harbor which offers primary and preventive health care, supportive housing programs, dental care, mental health and substance abuse counseling, outreach, and case management services.

General Assistance (GA) Emergency Housing Program

Administering Agency:

DCF Economic Services Division (ESD)

Funding:

State - General Funds

Providers:

Various throughout the state

Housing/Services Description:

Provides homeless people with temporary housing utilizing a hotel or motel with which the referring agency has a prior agreement. Also included are programs that provide vouchers for use in one or more of the community's homeless shelters.

Eligibility/Referral:

Must meet program eligibility criteria and have a household member considered to be part of a "vulnerable population" (i.e., 65 years of age or older; in receipt of SSI/DI; a child six years of age or younger; or in the third trimester of pregnancy) -OR- receive enough points via an established rating system which requires fitting into more than one vulnerable population category including having an open case in the DCF Family Services Division, SSI/DI applicants with documented disability, children between the ages of 7 and 17, recent hospital discharges with ongoing medical needs related to the hospitalization, over 18 years of age discharged from DCF custody in the past 3 years, Reach Up recipient, and/or on probation or parole with DOC after 12 consecutive months of incarceration and release within the past 6 months.

Intake and eligibility for GA emergency housing is determined in each of the DCF Economic Services Division's (ESD) 12 district offices. Households in need of emergency housing apply at the local ESD office where they are seen for an intake interview and eligibility determination the same day. Vermont 2-1-1 handles after-hour and weekend calls.

Other Relevant Information:

In August 2015, DCF issued an RFP seeking community-based alternatives to the GA motel voucher program with the goal of decreasing reliance on motels while meeting emergency shelter needs. In FY18, DCF awarded grants to 14 organizations to provide or increase the availability of seasonal warming shelters, emergency shelters, short-term transitional housing and services for homeless families with children, and emergency housing and services for victims fleeing violence.*

**Some of these community investments were funded through HOP.*

Housing Opportunity Grant Program (HOP)

Administering Agency:

Department of Children and Families' (DCF) Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO)

Funding:

Federal - Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)

State - General Funds

Providers:

Approximately 45 nonprofit emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid re-housing and prevention program providers across the state (see [FY18HOP awards](#) which includes all HOP grantees.)

Housing/Services Description:

- 1) Emergency (year round, seasonal, day and domestic violence) shelter operations and/or essential services
- 2) Homelessness prevention and rapid re-housing assistance
 - Relocation and stabilization services:
 - Housing search and placement, including work with nonprofit and private landlords
 - Housing stability case management, including follow-up and connection with post-lease supportive services
 - Landlord-Tenant mediation
 - Follow-up or supportive services to help maintain housing
 - Money management/credit repair
 - Tenant education
 - Financial assistance: security deposits, utility deposits/payments, last month's rent, moving costs
 - Rental assistance: rent arrears (up to 3 months), short-term rent assistance (up to 3 months), medium-term rent assistance (up to 24 months)
- 3) Transitional housing

Basic Eligibility:

Emergency shelter, rapid re-housing and transitional housing serve those who meet the AHS and HUD definition of homelessness. Prevention assistance is available to those who meet the AHS and HUD definition of "at risk of homelessness" as well as income guidelines.

Youth-Specific Capacity:

While youth ages 18-24 may qualify for HOP-funded housing and services not targeted for youth but for homeless and at-risk individuals and families more generally, youth-specific capacity exists in terms of emergency shelter and transitional housing beds (see Table 1 on page 7); HOP also funds some support services in these settings.

Other Relevant Information:

The HOP program's [FY17 Annual Report](#) indicates that approximately 17% of all adults served by HOP-funded shelters, homelessness prevention, or rapid re-housing programs were between the age of 18 and 24.

Runaway & Homeless Youth (RHY) Program

Administering Agency:

Washington County Youth Service Bureau, on behalf of the [Vermont Coalition of Runaway & Homeless Youth Programs \(VCRHYP\)](#)

Funding:

Federal - Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Program

Providers: VCRHYP member agencies:

- Addison County Parent Child Center (Middlebury)
- Lamoille Family Center (Morrisville)
- Northeast Kingdom Community Action (Newport)
- Northeast Kingdom Youth Services (St. Johnsbury)
- Northwestern Counseling & Support Services (St. Albans)
- Spectrum Youth & Family Services (Burlington)
- United Counseling Service of Bennington County (Bennington)
- Washington County Youth Service Bureau (Montpelier)
- Windsor County Youth Services (Ludlow)
- Youth Services, Inc. (Brattleboro)

Housing/Services Description:*

- 1) **Basic Center Program (BCP)** - helps create and strengthen community-based programs that meet the immediate needs of runaway and homeless youth under 18 years old. BCP tries to reunite youth with their families or locate appropriate alternative placements, and may provide up to 21 days of shelter, food, clothing and medical care, individual, group and family counseling, crisis intervention, recreation programs, and aftercare services after youth leave shelter.

Vermont operates the following types of BCP grants:

- **BCP – Prevention:** Goal is to keep the family together and prevent the youth from entering DCF custody; services include family counseling and case management.
- **BCP – Shelter:** Goal is to help reunify youth with their family and prevent them from entering DCF custody; services include short-term shelter (host homes or residential setting), case management, and family counseling.

- 2) **Transitional Living Program (TLP)** - provides long-term residential services to older homeless youth between the ages of 16 and 22. Living accommodations may include host-family homes, group homes or maternity group homes, and supervised apartments owned by the program or rented in the community. TLPs offer or refer for the following services: safe, stable living accommodations; basic life skills building, including consumer education, budgeting, housekeeping, food preparation and parenting skills; educational opportunities, such as GED preparation, post-secondary training and vocational education; job attainment services, such as career counseling and job placement; mental health care, including individual and group counseling; and physical health care.

Vermont's TLP grant provides case management and access to transitional apartments (up to 18 months) (see Table 1 on page 7).

Eligibility: RHYP is primarily targeted to serving homeless and runaway “non-systems” youth (e.g., youth not eligible or otherwise being served by systems such as DCF, DMH, DAIL, juvenile justice, etc.)

- BCP - Prevention: 12-17 year olds at risk of running away or being pushed out of the home; parental/guardian permission required
- BCP - Shelter: 12-17 year olds who have runaway or been pushed out of their home; parental/guardian permission required
- TLP: 16-21 year olds who are at risk of homelessness or are already homeless; parental/guardian permission required if youth is under age 18 and not emancipated. At-risk of homelessness includes youth living independently whose housing is jeopardized for any reason, youth living with family but likely to become homeless, and couch-surfing youth.

Other Relevant Information:

Vermont's network of RHY providers offer an array of safety net programs for youth using other funding sources as well. Examples of services provided include outreach, 24-hour crisis intervention, drop-in centers, housing and services for pregnant/parenting youth, educational services, substance use treatment, and transitional housing for youth involved with the justice system.

*Vermont does not currently have a Street Outreach Program (SOP) grant which supports work with homeless, runaway and street youth.

Continuum of Care (CoC) Program

Administering Agency:

Vermont has 2 HUD-recognized Continuums of Care (CoCs) that participate in the annual CoC funding competition:

- Vermont Balance of State (BoS) CoC which includes 11 of the 12 regional CoCs across the state (except Chittenden County); Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA) is the HUD-required Collaborative Applicant for the BoS CoC
- Burlington/Chittenden CoC; City of Burlington/CEDO is the Collaborative Applicant

Funding:

Federal - Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Continuum of Care (CoC) Program

Providers:

Each of the 12 regional CoCs - Addison, Bennington, Chittenden, Franklin/Grand Isle, Lamoille, Northeast Kingdom (Caledonia/Essex Counties), Orange/Windsor North, Orleans, Rutland, Washington, Windham South, and Windsor South/Windham North - has its own network of providers.

Housing/Services Description:

- 1) **Transitional Housing (TH)** - up to 24 months with services and rent subsidy in specific units
- 2) **Rapid Re-housing (RRH)** - rapid transition from homelessness (i.e. emergency shelter or the street) into scattered-site permanent housing with medium-term (up to 24 months) of rental assistance and voluntary services using a low barrier/housing first approach
- 3) **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** - comprehensive support services and long-term rental assistance (12+months) in permanent housing
- 4) **Joint Transitional Housing and Rapid Re-housing (TH-RRH)** – combination of services offered by a TH and a RRH project

Continuum of Care	Administrator	TH	RRH	PSH	TH-RRH
Balance of State	Vermont State Housing Authority	-	78	148	-
	Brattleboro Housing Authority	-	-	23	-
	Pathways Vermont	-	8	-	-
Chittenden	Steps to End Domestic Violence	-	22	-	-
	Burlington Housing Authority	-	-	73	-

Eligibility:

CoC program participants must meet the HUD definition of homelessness. Additional program component requirements:

- **RRH** – May serve families, youth and individuals; head of household must be literally homeless (i.e. streets or shelter). Maximum household income 50% AMI. Program is low-barrier meaning households are not screened out for having little or no income, current substance use, DV or criminal history, etc. Access is through local CoC Coordinated Entry systems with priority given to the highest need, most vulnerable households. Special needs populations include: Domestic/Sexual violence, LGBTQ youth, human trafficking, HIV/AIDS, Veterans ineligible or averse to VA services, substance use disorder.
- **PSH** - individuals (and their families if applicable) with a disabling condition who are literally Homeless (i.e. in emergency shelter or places not meant for human habitation), with a priority to first serve chronically homeless individuals

Youth-Specific Capacity:

The BoS CoC Program has RRH capacity dedicated to serving homeless youth (see Table 1 on page 7).

Other Relevant Information:

Youth ages 18-24 may also qualify for CoC-funded housing and services not specifically targeted for youth, such as PSH Shelter + Care rental assistance, dependent upon turnover/availability and prioritization, and RRH assistance subject to new resources coming on line and the referral/prioritization processes in place.

Table 1: Homeless Youth-Specific Bed Capacity

	Program/ Fund Source	Grantee/Provider	# Beds	Description
Emergency Shelter	HOP	Spectrum Youth & Family Services (Burlington)	8	Year-round facility-based shelter <i>*also supported with RHY BCP funds</i>
	RHY BCP	Addison County Parent Child Center (Middlebury)	1	Site-based
		Lamoille Family Center (Morrisville)	2	Host homes
		Northeast Kingdom Community Action (Newport)	1	Host home
		Northeast Kingdom Youth Services (St. Johnsbury)	1	Host home
		Northwestern Counseling & Support Services (St. Albans)	3	Host homes
		United Counseling Services (Bennington)	1	Host home
		Washington County Youth Service Bureau (Montpelier)	8	Host homes
		Windsor County Youth Services (Ludlow)	2	Year-round facility-based shelter <i>*also supported with HOP funds</i>
		Youth Services, Inc. (Brattleboro)	2	Host homes
		Private	Spectrum Youth & Family Services (Burlington)	10
		TOTAL	39	29 year-round, 10 seasonal
Transitional Housing	HOP	Spectrum Youth & Family Services (Burlington)	8	Site-based SROs for youth formerly in foster care
	RHY TLP	Addison County Parent Child Center (Middlebury)	10	Site-based SROs
		Northeast Kingdom Community Action (Newport)	3	Scattered site units
		Northeast Kingdom Youth Services (St. Johnsbury)	9	Scattered site units <i>*also supported with HOP funds</i>
		Northwestern Counseling & Support Services (St. Albans)	1	Scattered site unit
		United Counseling Service of Bennington County (Bennington)	1	Scattered site unit
		Windsor County Youth Services (Ludlow)	4	Site-based units <i>*also supported with HOP funds</i>
		Washington County Youth Service Bureau (Montpelier)	3	Scattered site units
		Youth Services, Inc. (Brattleboro)	7	Site-based units <i>*also supported with HOP funds</i>
		Other	Rutland County Parent Child Center (Rutland)	5
		TOTAL	51	51 year-round
Rapid Re-housing	CoC (BoS)	VSHA administers in 6 counties through sponsor agencies	9+	9 is an estimate of the total dedicated to serve youth
TOTAL Youth-Specific Beds			99+	89+ year-round, 10 seasonal

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)

Administering Agency:

University of Vermont

Funding:

Federal – U.S. Department of Veteran’s Affairs

Housing/Services Description:

SSVF provides supportive services to participants to help them obtain or retain stable housing. SSVF case managers assist the household to find or retain housing by working closely with them on housing placement, financial counseling, budgeting, employment, VA or state benefits, and linkage to services. In certain cases, case management may be augmented by temporary financial assistance with rent, rental deposits, utility deposits, and other eligible expenses related to secure housing.

Eligibility:

Eligible families must have a head of household or spouse who is a U.S. active duty military veteran with any discharge type other than dishonorable, and very-low family income (less than 50% of the Area Median Income, or AMI). The SSVF program targets the poorest families (less than 30% AMI) and veterans of the recent Iraq and Afghanistan deployments as priority cases. Typically, a family must be literally homeless or be facing eviction within 14 days to qualify.

Administering Agency:

DCF Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO)

Funding:

State - General Funds, Medicaid

Providers:

- Winston Prouty Center (WPC) - Brattleboro
- Homeless Prevention Center (HPC) - Rutland
- The Committee on Temporary Shelter (COTS) and Howard Center partnership - Burlington
- The Upper Valley Haven (The Haven) - Hartford
- Northeast Kingdom Community Action (NEKCA) - St. Johnsbury
- Sunrise Family Resource Center - Bennington
- Family Center of Washington County - Montpelier

Housing/Services Description:

FSH helps families who are homeless move into affordable housing and provides them with up to 24 months of home-based case management and service coordination aimed at helping them keep their housing. Permanent affordable housing is secured through MOUs with housing providers. Services are focused on maintaining stable tenancy and include intensive home-based case management and service coordination (e.g., twice per week) with small caseloads (i.e., 12-15 households).

Eligibility:

- Families with children under 18 years old who are homeless, staying in local emergency shelter, domestic violence shelters, on the street (or another place not meant for human habitation), or in a state-funded motel **AND**
- The parent(s) must agree to engage with services offered, set goals, and actively work towards them.

FSH prioritizes eligible families if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Multiple shelter or multiple state-funded motel stays
- An active case with Department for Children and Families, Division of Family Services or
- Family has a child under the age of six.

FSH programs have flexibility to identify up to 25% of eligible families outside the definition of homeless as long as the family income is at or below 30% of the area median income; the family is at-risk to be homeless within two weeks or 14 days; the family is likely to retain affordable or subsidized housing through FSH; the family has had at least one episode of homelessness in the past 24 months, and all local partners agree to these conditions in an MOU.

Family Supportive Housing (FSH) Program

Vermont Rental Subsidy Program

Administering Agency:

DCF in partnership with Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA)

Funding:

State - General Funds

Housing/Services Description:

Provides temporary rental assistance up to 12 months. Tenants receive ongoing support from a designated Housing Support Worker who serves as the landlord's point of contact should any issues arise that could jeopardize tenancy. Tenants are expected to actively work to increase their income or secure other forms of long-term rental subsidy by the end of the 12 month period of assistance. The program also establishes a local preference whereby eligible participants who remain in good standing with the program and their landlord may receive a preference for a federal Housing Choice Voucher.

Eligibility/Referral:

Transition age youth ages 18-24 who are at risk of homelessness may be eligible. Potential participants are referred to DCF by local Housing Review Teams consisting of housing, shelter, and service providers as well as AHS staff who pre-screen applicants. DCF has established eligibility criteria and a points system to rank all applicants on a statewide list that it maintains.

Education for Homeless Children & Youth (EHCY)

Administering Agency:

Vermont Agency of Education

Funding:

Federal – U.S. Department of Education (DOE) Education for Homeless Children & Youth (EHCY) Program

[Local Homeless Education Liaisons Listing](#)

Housing/Services Description:

This program ensures that homeless students have equal access to the same free, appropriate, public education (including public preschool) provided to other Vermont children, with the opportunity to meet the same challenging state content and student performance standards. Every school district is required to designate an appropriate staff person as a local Homeless Education Liaison. Liaisons must ensure that children and youth in homeless situations are identified by school personnel and through coordination activities with other entities and agencies, and that children and youth experiencing homelessness enroll and receive access to educational services for which they are eligible, as well as referrals to health, mental health, dental, and other appropriate services.

Eligibility: In accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, homeless children and youth are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, and includes:

- Children and youth who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because the children are living in circumstances described above.

Affordable Housing Resources for Which Youth May Be Eligible

Administering Agency:

Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA) administers statewide. There are also 8 local public housing authorities (pg. 11)

Funding:

Federal - Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program & Public Housing

Description:

Tenant-Based Vouchers: Often referred to as Section 8, HCVs assist low-income families, the elderly, and people with disabilities to obtain decent, safe, and affordable housing in the community. HCVs are tenant-based rent subsidies provided to eligible applicants to use in private market rental housing of their choice that meets the HCV program requirements. Households pay a portion of monthly housing costs that is based on the income of the household (usually 30-40% of monthly adjusted income).

Special Purpose Vouchers: Vouchers appropriated by Congress exclusively for people with disabilities, including Rental Assistance for Nonelderly Persons with Disabilities (“NED”) and 5-Year Mainstream Housing Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities vouchers.

Family Unification Program (FUP): FUP vouchers for available to eligible families and youth in partnership with DCF. In addition to providing HCVs, supportive services must be provided to FUP youth by DCF for the first 18 months that the youth participates in the program. The program does not require DCF to provide supportive services for families, but they may be made available to families as well. There is no time limitation on FUP family vouchers. FUP vouchers used by youth are limited, by statute, to 36 months of housing assistance; VSHA, one FUP administrator, has an 18 month limit on FUP vouchers after which youth may receive a preference on the HCV waiting list for a permanent voucher.

HUD-VA Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH): VASH is a joint effort between HUD and VA to move veterans out of homelessness and into permanent supportive housing. HUD provides housing assistance through its HCV Program, and the VA offers clinical and supportive services through its health care system.

Project-Based Voucher and Moderate Rehabilitation Programs: Project-based properties have a set number of units with a subsidy attached to them, rather than to the individual. Currently, VSHA funds several project-based properties.

Public Housing: Affordable housing units for low-income households that are owned and operated by the PHA.

Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA): Housing vouchers and supportive services for low-income persons living with HIV/AIDS and their families.

Eligibility/Referral:

HCV: Must meet HCV program eligibility requirements, including income eligibility. Applicants are selected from the PHA’s HCV waiting list. VSHA has preferences for homeless families with case management support, and a transitional housing preference for families/individuals participating in a variety of programs administered by VSHA for households experiencing homelessness, including FUP for Youth in Transition. Montpelier, Rutland, and Burlington Housing Authorities also have preferences for persons experiencing homelessness.

Special Purpose: Only income eligible families whose head of household, spouse or co-head is non-elderly (under age 62) and disabled may receive a voucher. Families with only a minor child with a disability are not eligible. Applicants are selected from the PHAs HCV waiting list.

FUP: DCF determines if the family or youth meets FUP eligibility requirements, and refers to VSHA for HCV program eligibility determination and placement on the waiting list. A youth may qualify for a FUP voucher if they are at least 18 years old and not more than 24 years old, currently working with the DCF Youth Development Program, are referred by their case manager, and meet standard definitions of homeless or at risk of homelessness. Youth qualify for a preference on VSHA’ HCV wait list when their FUP voucher ends, allowing them to potentially get a permanent voucher. Eligible families include those whose lack of adequate housing is the primary factor in either the imminent placement of the family’s child or children in out-of-home care, or the delay of discharge of a child or children to the family from out-of-home care.

Project-Based Voucher and Moderate Rehabilitation: Must meet HCV program eligibility requirements; waiting lists are managed by property. Owners/managers determine suitability and VSHA determines eligibility for the program; moderate rehabilitation properties use the same homeless preference as the HCV program.

Public Housing: Must meet federal public housing eligibility requirements including income eligibility and citizen/eligible immigrant status requirements. Each PHA has its own waiting list; Rutland and Montpelier HAs have preferences for homeless individuals and/or families.

Public Housing Agency (PHA) Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program

PHA-Specific Resources & Utilization Rates

Current utilization rates show that very few HCVs or public housing units are going toward households without minor children and are not elderly or disabled.

PHA	HCVs	HCV Utilization Rates		NED	Mainstream 5-Year	FUP	VASH	HOPWA	Multi-Family Project-Based
		<i>Non-elderly, no children, non-disabled</i>	<i>Non-elderly, no children, disabled</i>						
Burlington HA	2,179	4%	38%	527	100	100	unknown	unknown	-
Brattleboro HA	212	9%	40%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rutland HA	214	5%	33%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Springfield HA	61	4%	50%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barre HA	185	11%	36%	50	-	-	-	-	-
Winooski HA	335	10%	17%	70	-	-	-	-	-
Montpelier HA	122	4%	53%	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bennington HA	207	3%	39%	-	-	-	--	-	-
VT State HA	3939	6%	31%	275	265	418	213	55 (30 federal, 25 state)	3076

PHA	Public Housing Units	Public Housing Utilization Rates	
		<i>Non-elderly, no children, non-disabled</i>	<i>Non-elderly, no children, disabled</i>
Burlington HA	134*	-	-
Brattleboro HA	284	9	28
Rutland HA	218	5	30
Springfield HA	-	-	-
Barre HA	366	2	31
Winooski HA	238	9	20
Montpelier HA	60	0	45
Bennington HA	195	4	21
VT State HA	-	-	-

Other Relevant Info:

Some local PHAs may have contracts with affordable housing developments that provide units specifically for homeless households including youth/families. For example, the Burlington Housing Authority contracts for project-based units for homeless individuals and for youth/families participating in different programs in the area, including one Parent Child Center (Lund Family Center).

*From 2011 PHA Administrative Plan.

HOME Investment Partnerships & Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Programs

Administering Agencies:

HOME and CDBG are administered by states and localities or “participating jurisdictions” through community development departments that must have a HUD-approved Consolidated Plan (ConPlan) outlining plans for the use of these resources.

In Vermont, the state’s allocation of these funds are administered by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD); one participating jurisdiction (Burlington) also receives HOME and CDBG funds which are administered by the city’s Community & Economic Development Office (CEDO)

Funding:

Federal - Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Description:

HOME is a formula grant of federal housing funds that can be used to:

- Build, buy, and renovate rental housing;
- Finance homeownership opportunities;
- Repair homes, including making buildings physically accessible; or
- Provide rental subsidies to eligible households.

All housing developed with HOME funds must serve low- and very low-income individuals and families. HOME funds cannot be used to subsidize the operating costs of rental housing; people with extremely low- incomes (i.e., below 30% of the AMI) typically require ongoing subsidy funding through programs like HCV assistance or a state funded subsidy for affordability.

CDBG funds can be used to address critical and unmet community needs including those for housing rehabilitation, public facilities, infrastructure, economic development, public services and more. Each grantee receiving CDBG funds determines what activities it will fund as long as each activity is eligible according to HUD regulations and meets one of the following national objectives:

- Benefits persons of low- and moderate-income;
- Aids in the prevention or elimination of slums or blight; or
- Meets an urgent housing/community development need that the grantee is unable to finance on its own or with other funding sources.

States and communities may use up to 15% of their CDBG allocation to support essential public services such as employment services (e.g., job training), child care, health services, substance use services, services for homeless persons, and making accessibility modifications to housing for people with disabilities.

Vermont’s 2018 Allocations:

State/Locality	HOME	CDBG
Burlington	\$539,670	\$786,789
Vermont (State)	\$3,008,138	\$6,892,861

Housing Trust Fund (HTF) Program

Administering Agency:

Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

Funding:

Federal - Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Description:

The Housing Trust Fund (HTF) program is a new affordable housing production program intended to complement existing federal, state and local efforts to increase the supply of decent, safe, affordable housing, primarily for extremely low-income households. HTF dollars may be used by the State Designated Agency for the production or preservation of housing that is affordable to extremely low-income households (i.e. at or below 30% AMI) through the acquisition, new construction, reconstruction, and/or rehabilitation of affordable rental housing with suitable amenities. In addition, the State Designated Agency may choose to use HTF resources for ongoing eligible operating costs or to fund an operating reserve in order to create and sustain rental housing units for households at or below 30% of AMI.

Vermont's FY2017 HTF allocation was \$3,000,000 and it is expected to be the same for FY2018. The state intends to use HTF resources exclusively for rental housing to meet the priority housing needs as identified by the State's Consolidated Plan. The state's [2018 HTF Allocation Plan](#) outlines plans to award these funds statewide to eligible recipients (i.e. nonprofit and for-profit developers, public housing agencies, and municipalities) on a competitive basis for locally-driven projects that address the criteria outlined in the allocation plan, as well as the priority housing needs identified in the State's Consolidated Plan.

Some of the criteria include the extent to which projects have federal, state, or local project-based rental assistance so that rents are affordable to extremely low-income families, provide service enriched housing serving persons with disabilities, and/or serve individuals and families experiencing homelessness. In addition, owners of housing funded with HTF dollars may (but are not required to) limit occupancy or provide preference to:

- Homeless families or individuals
- People with disabilities (including people with mental illness)
- Victims of domestic violence
- Frail elders
- Veterans

Other Service System Resources Available for Youth

Vermont 2-1-1

Description:

Operated by United Ways of VT, [Vermont 2-1-1](#). Provides information and referrals to important community resources, such as emergency food and shelter, disability services, counseling, senior services, health care, child care, drug and alcohol programs, legal assistance, transportation, educational and volunteer opportunities, and more.

Parent-Child Centers

Administering Agency:

DCF

Providers:

Parent Child Centers (PCCs) are a network of 15 community-based nonprofit organizations, serving all of Vermont:

- Addison County Parent Child Center (Middlebury)
- Early Education Services/Windham County (Brattleboro)
- Family Center of Northwestern VT (St. Albans)
- Family Center of Washington County (Montpelier)
- The Family Place (Norwich)
- Lamoille Family Center (Morrisville)
- Lund (Burlington)
- Milton Family Community Center (Milton)
- VNA/Family & Children's Services (Colchester)
- NEKCA/ Parent Child Center North (Newport)
- NEKCA/ Parent Child Center South (St. Johnsbury)
- Orange County Parent Child Center (Tunbridge)
- Rutland County Parent Child Center (Rutland)
- Springfield Area Parent Child Center (North Springfield)
- Sunrise Family Resource Center (Bennington)

Description:

PCCs provide support and education to families with young children to make sure children get off to a healthy start. Services include early childhood services, home visits to families with young children, playgroups, parent education, parent support, and information and referral.

Teen/Drop-In Centers

Description:

Teen Centers provide outreach, drop-in and prevention services and may serve as an important access point into the system for youth. Several are connected to agencies offering RHY programming and may use some BCP funds. These include:

- Basement Teen Center (Montpelier), ages 13-18, run by Washington County Youth Service Bureau
- Spectrum's Drop-In Center (Burlington), ages 14-24, run by Spectrum Youth & Family Services
- "Tuesday Night Live" Drop-In Program (Brattleboro), ages unknown, run by Youth Services, Inc. at Boys & Girls Club of Brattleboro

Others not connected to agencies offering RHY programming include:

- The Bristol Hub Teen Center & Skatepark (Bristol), up to age 19
- Evening Drop-In at King Street Center (Burlington), ages 14-18
- Addison Central Teens (Middlebury), ages unknown
- LISTEN's Junction Youth Center (White River Junction), ages unknown
- Sara Holbrook Teen Center (Burlington), middle & high school students
- Essex Teen Center (Essex Junction), middle school students at Albert D. Lawton and Essex Middle School
- Outright Vermont's Youth Drop-In Space (Burlington), for queer, questioning, and allied youth ages 13-22

Community Action Agencies

Description:

Private, nonprofit human service and advocacy organizations established under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 that provide emergency assistance to people in crisis; address the causes of poverty through programs that fight unemployment, inadequate housing, poor nutrition and lack of educational opportunity; and provide training in advocacy skills. Community Action Agencies (CAAs), also known as Community Action Programs (CAPs), operate a variety of core services in the communities they serve. Included are GED and ESL education, job training programs, Head Start and day care, weatherization and energy assistance programs, health services, services for older adults (e.g., Foster Grandparents and RSVP), emergency food assistance and homelessness prevention programs. They are also involved in affordable housing creation and renovation and small business assistance.

- BROCC – Community Action in Southwestern Vermont (Rutland)
- Capstone Community Action (CCA) (Barre)
- Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, Inc. (CVOEO) (Burlington)
- Northeast Kingdom Community Action, Inc. (NEKCA) (Newport)
- Southeastern Vermont Community Action, Inc. (SEVCA) (Westminster)

Reach Up (RU) Program

Administering Agency:

Department for Children and Families (DCF), Economic Services Division (ESD)

Funding:

TANF and State General Funds

Housing/Services Description:

Reach Up helps parents on their path to financial well-being by providing opportunities to develop job skills, obtain training, find work, and address challenges such as housing, childcare, and transportation. Housing-related grants/services include:

- Grant with Lund Family Center (Burlington) – Independence Place provides transitional housing, case coordination services and supports to stabilize at-risk RU families. Capacity to serve 7 women and their children. Eligibility: low-income single women, ages 16-24 who are pregnant or parenting a child under the age of five. Women can remain in program for a maximum of 24 months.
- Funds two RU Case Managers at COTS in Burlington and one at the Samaritan House in St. Albans who can assist with housing.
- The RU Program also has Housing Case Managers in Springfield, Bennington and Brattleboro who can assist RU participants to find housing, assist with landlord-tenant mediation, and connect participants to rental subsidy programs.

Vermont Network against Domestic & Sexual Violence

Providers:

[Service map of programs and shelters](#)

Housing/Services Description:

Services of member organizations include:

- **Private Help:** Network member organizations will not share any information about individuals unless they allow it.
- **Hotlines/Support Line:** Pride Center of VT SafeSpace Program (available statewide) provides a support line 5 days/week. All other member organizations staff a free hotline 24 hours a day, every day.
- **Help to Meet Basic Needs:** Staff help people learn about resources to meet their basic needs.
- **Legal Help:** Staff give information about legal issues and go with victims to court.
- **Help at the Hospital:** Staff can meet people at the hospital after a sexual or physical assault.
- **Shelter:** Staff help victims find short-term shelter. Approximately 125 beds available statewide.

Youth Development Program (YDP)

Administering Agency:

DCF Family Services Division (FSD); administered through the Washington County Youth Services Bureau

Funding:

Federal – HHS Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)

State - Vermont Youth in Transition Law of 2007 (Act 74)*

Providers:

- Spectrum (Burlington, St. Albans)
- Easter Seals Vermont (Hartford, Springfield, Rutland, Middlebury)
- Northeast Kingdom Youth Services (St. Johnsbury)
- Youth Services, Inc. (Brattleboro)
- Washington County Youth Service Bureau (Montpelier)
- Northeast Kingdom Community Action (Newport)
- Sunrise Family Resource Center (Bennington)
- Lamoille Restorative Center (Morrisville)

Housing/Services Description:

YDP provides voluntary, extended care services to youth who have been in DCF custody to help them make the transition to adulthood. Youth are referred to YDP at age 15 by their DCF caseworker. Youth Development Coordinators who work for youth serving agencies in all of the regions of the state provide life skills classes and training to foster youth under the age of 18, and become their full time case manager when they turn 18. Services include educational, vocational, employment, housing assistance, transportation, and case management.

In addition to the support services provided to 18-21 year old former foster youth,** they are eligible for three types of direct housing-related supports authorized and funded through the Youth in Transition Act:

- 1) **Support for High School Completion** - offers youth who turn 18 while in care extended placement so long as they remain enrolled in high school or a GED program; includes full room and board costs as well as the costs of supplemental services provided to them prior to reaching 18.
- 2) **Adult Living Partners** – for youth who have completed high school but wish to continue living with a supportive adult or family, a room and board stipend is provided to the adults partnering with the youth in their home.
- 3) **Housing Supports** – for youth who have either moved through these other types of extended care or are looking to move directly into their own living arrangement, monthly stipends and incidental one-time grants may be provided to youth to cover part of the cost of their living; youth are required to be employed and cover at least a portion of their monthly living costs.

Eligibility:

Youth ages 15-22 involved or formerly involved with DCF-Family Services. Some services are only available to youth if they were in DCF custody on or after their 16th birthday, and some are only available if youth are already 18 years old.

Other Relevant Information:

FSD recently revised its policy on runaway, abducted, and missing youth to provide guidance on working with suspected victims of trafficking. A screening tool and standalone policy on sex trafficking cases and working with victims has been developed. FSD is collaborating with partners from the court, residential treatment programs, and other community providers to work together in identifying and supporting at-risk youth. Challenges include: Identifying and developing least restrictive placement options for victims of trafficking who are prone to running away; identifying a trafficking-specific victim advocacy organization to partner with FSD statewide; community awareness of state and federal laws and understanding of child/youth sex trafficking; and possible caseload implications.

YDP staff also received training from Outright Vermont, an LGBTQ education and advocacy organization, on issues and challenges faced by transition aged youth.

**Vermont elects to not participate in federal Title IV-E option to extend supports to age 21 because of the availability and flexibility of these funds.*

***Efforts are underway to expand eligibility to youth ages 22-25 in the process of completing a postsecondary education credential.*

DMH Housing & Services Programs

Administering Agency:

AHS Department of Mental Health (DMH)

Funding:

Blend of Federal (Medicaid) and State Revenue

Providers:

A network of nonprofit community-based agencies that serve as [Designated Agencies \(DAs\)](#) and provide statewide mental health services

Housing/Services Description:

Youth age 12-17 have access to age-appropriate intervention and treatment (e.g. motivational enhancement, substance abuse prevention, screening and intervention services, cognitive behavioral and family services) that address their developmental issues and provide comprehensive and integrated services.

DMH also has [protocols](#) in place to make the transition of youth who are receiving services from a DA, or are in custody of DCF, and are likely to be meet criteria for Community Rehabilitation Treatment (CRT) services as seamless as possible. The protocol begins upon a youth's 17th birthday if they will likely meet CRT criteria by the time they turn 18 years old. CRT services include housing supports, employment, and other services and supports.

DMH operates the following state-funded housing programs for which transition age youth may be eligible:

- **Housing Subsidy + Care** - provides tenant- and project based rental assistance and security deposits for households with serious mental illness who are homeless and residing in an acute care bed in the mental health system. VSHA administers 101 of these vouchers on behalf of DMH.
- **Mental Health Contingency Fund** – provides rental subsidies, security deposits and move-in costs for households with serious mental illness who are enrolled in CRT services.

Other Relevant Information:

The Vermont Youth Treatment Enhancement Program is implementing a pilot two evidence-based practices, the Seven Challenges (serving adolescents) and Seeking Safety (serving transition-aged youth), to enhance Vermont’s capacity to provide behavioral health services to youth and their families. The Program is making adjustments to the service system to support the replication and expanded use of these practices across the state of Vermont.

At the systems level, changes are guided by the Youth Service System Enhancement Council. This Council is hosted and supported by AHS and includes representatives from state agencies that manage substance abuse, mental health, health, child welfare, Juvenile Justice and Medicaid services. It also includes representatives of the treatment provider community, and the youth and families who are being served.

Department of Corrections (DOC) Transitional/Re-Entry Housing

Administering Agency:

AHS Department of Corrections (DOC)

Providers:

[Transitional Housing & Housing Placement Assistance Providers](#)

Description:

DOC provides transitional housing with supportive services for offenders reentering the community from incarceration. In FY2018, there were approximately 343 beds available statewide. Transitional Housing provides temporary (generally up to 24 months) housing for offenders in need of a stable living environment and provides support for a transition to independent living. Supportive Services include, but are not limited to, case management, structured daily schedules, phased supervision levels, community referrals, transportation, employment support/training, and life skills education. Some beds are for individuals who are over age 21 and in recovery from substance abuse, and for individuals with co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorder; many consider sex offenders for placement.

In addition to funding transitional housing beds and case management, DOC also funds assistance with housing search and retention.

Youth-Specific Capacity:

Return House, located in Barre and operated by Washington County Youth Service Bureau, has 10 beds dedicated to male youth under the age of 25.

ADAP Housing & Services Programs

Administering Agency:

AHS Department of Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs (ADAP)

Providers:

The 7 contracted sober living providers include:

- Phoenix House - RISE (Bellows Falls/Brattleboro)
- NEKCA – Aries House (St. Johnsbury)
- Recovery House – Grace House (Rutland)
- Covered Bridge Therapeutic Community (St. Johnsbury)
- Morningside House (Brattleboro)
- Springfield Supported Housing (Springfield)
- Second Wind Foundation - Willow Grove (Wilder)

Housing/Services Description:

Among the treatment and services ADAP offers for which youth may be eligible include screening for drug and alcohol use and co-occurring disorders, services for pregnant and parenting women, and school-based substance abuse services.

ADAP also contracts for roughly 66 sober, transitional housing (3-24 months) beds annually for substance involved individuals and families throughout the state.

Eligibility/Referral:

Individuals or families are typically referred by treatment providers and there are admissions requirements related to the duration of abstinence prior to admission. In many cases, providers require admission to be subsequent to residential treatment or concurrent to intensive outpatient treatment to ensure the individual is not at risk of detoxification symptoms.

Other Relevant Information:

Feedback from providers suggests wide variations in individuals/families accessing transitional housing services, though most providers agreed that the psychiatric co-occurrence is much greater than they have historically been accustomed to, both in terms of acuity and frequency. Additionally, some providers have reported challenges related to the increasing admissions for individuals receiving medication assisted treatment (MAT) while others providers have developed policies and procedures to monitor and support the safe, self-management of any psychotropic or anti-addiction medications.

Chafee Education & Training Voucher (ETV) Program

Administering Agency:

Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) on behalf of DCF

Funding:

Federal - HHS Chafee Educational & Training Voucher (ETV) Program

Description:

ETV provides resources specifically to meet the education and training needs of youth aging out of foster care and provides post-secondary educational and training vouchers for youth likely to experience difficulty as they transition to adulthood after the age of 18. The program makes available vouchers of up to \$5,000 per year for post-secondary education and training for eligible youth.

Eligibility: The ETV Program is intended to serve:

- Youth who are likely to remain in foster care until age 18,
- Youth who were adopted or under kinship guardianship at age 16 or older, and
- Youth 18–21 who have aged out of the foster care system

Jump on Board for Success (JOBS) Program

Administering Agency:

Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in partnership with the Departments of Corrections, Mental Health and Children and Families

Funding:

Federal - U.S. Department of Education Vocational Rehabilitation State Grants, coordinated with Medicaid funded non-vocational services considered essential for individuals' employment success

Housing/Services Description:

JOBS is an innovative supported employment and intensive case management service that targets youth ages 16 – 21 with severe emotional disturbance who are already estranged from the community. The targeted youth are out of school or seriously at risk of dropping out and are at high risk for involvement with corrections, substance abuse, homelessness, physical abuse or abusive behaviors, or other concerning behaviors.

Eligibility:

Youth experiencing or at risk for the most severe disabilities, eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation and be out of school at the time of program initiation. Out of school is defined as:

- A drop-out; a graduate or General Education Development Certificate (GED) recipient; an enrollee in Community High School or Vermont Adult Learning; OR
- Seriously at risk for leaving public high school or an alternative school program prior to successful completion due to:
 - Being 6 months or less prior to graduation and having multiple risk factors (homelessness or impending homelessness, lack of parental involvement, involvement with State Department of Corrections, OR
 - Having a history of school suspensions or expulsions, school violence, truancy or other serious ongoing disciplinary actions, OR Being scheduled to be in school less than half time, OR Having a serious lack of accumulated credits.

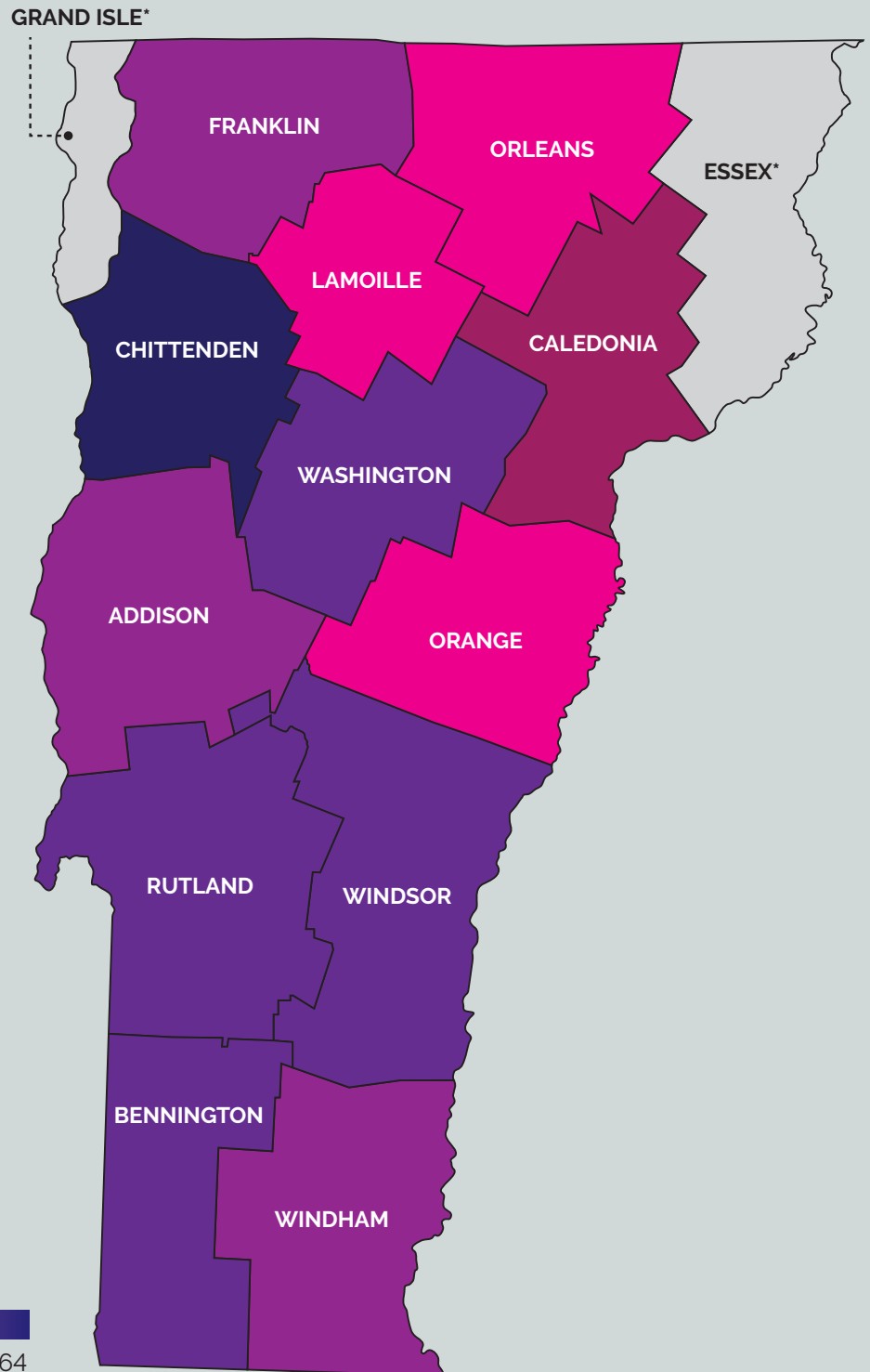
“At risk” may include one or more of the following issues:

- Being homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, OR
- Receiving SSI, OR
- A history of involvement with State/DOC (are or have been under community supervision and/or have been incarcerated), OR
- A history of involvement with DCF (foster care, juvenile justice, economic services).

VERMONT EMERGENCY SHELTER & TRANSITIONAL HOUSING BEDS

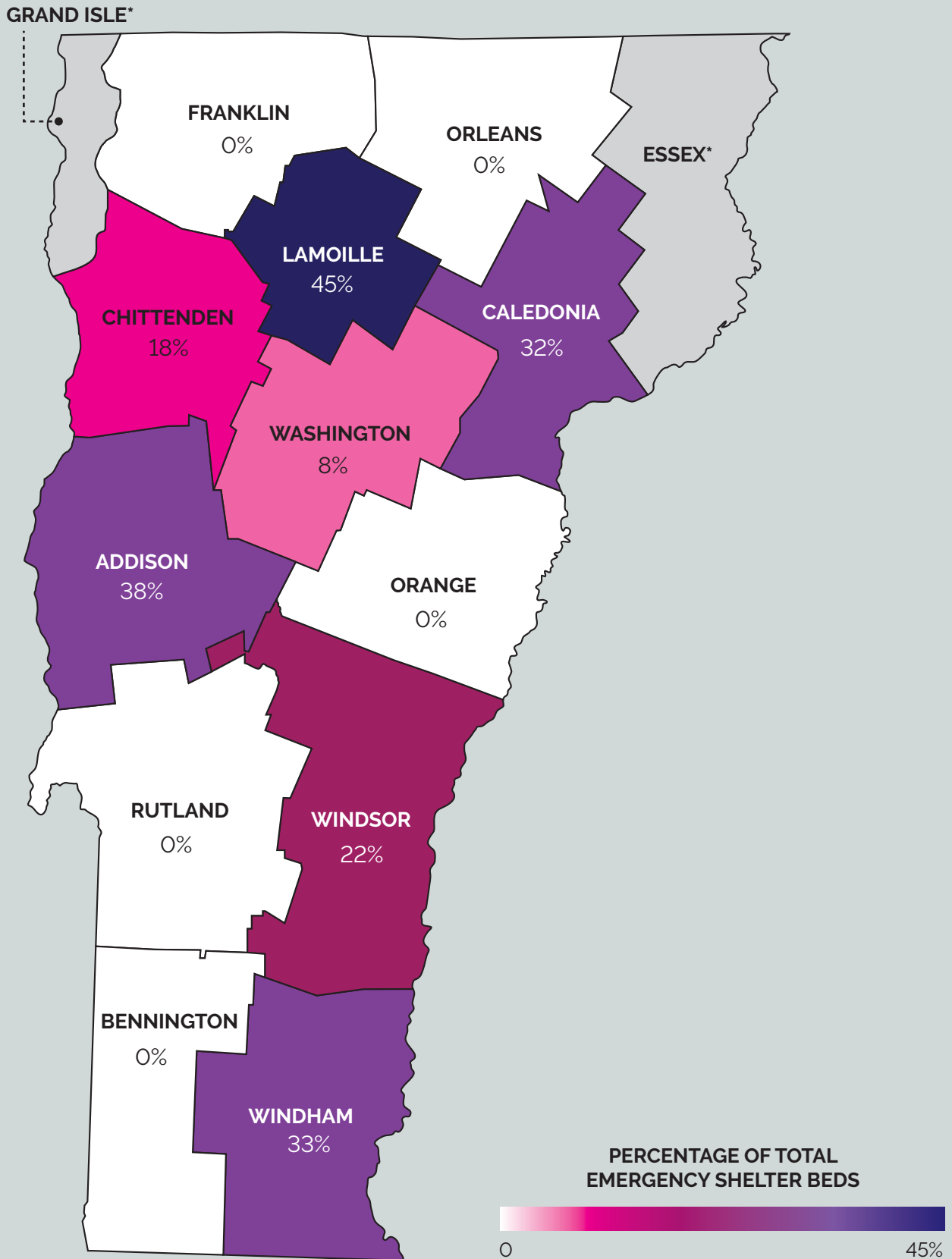
TH: TRANSITIONAL HOUSING
 ES: EMERGENCY SHELTER
 YD: YOUTH DEDICATED

County	Bed Type	Total	YD
Addison	ES	103	1
	TH	25	10
Bennington	ES	145	1
	TH	1	1
Caledonia	ES	31	1
	TH	9	3
Chittenden	ES	190	8
	TH	74	8
Franklin	ES	94	3
	TH	17	1
Lamoille	ES	22	2
	TH	0	0
Orange	ES	0	0
	TH	20	0
Orleans	ES	17	1
	TH	3	3
Rutland	ES	113	0
	TH	35	0
Washington	ES	158	8
	TH	29	3
Windham	ES	101	2
	TH	13	7
Windsor	ES	144	2
	TH	15	4



* NO BEDS REPORTED; GRAND ISLE SERVED BY FRANKLIN, ESSEX SERVED BY ORLEANS AND CALEDONIA

VERMONT SEASONAL EMERGENCY SHELTER BEDS



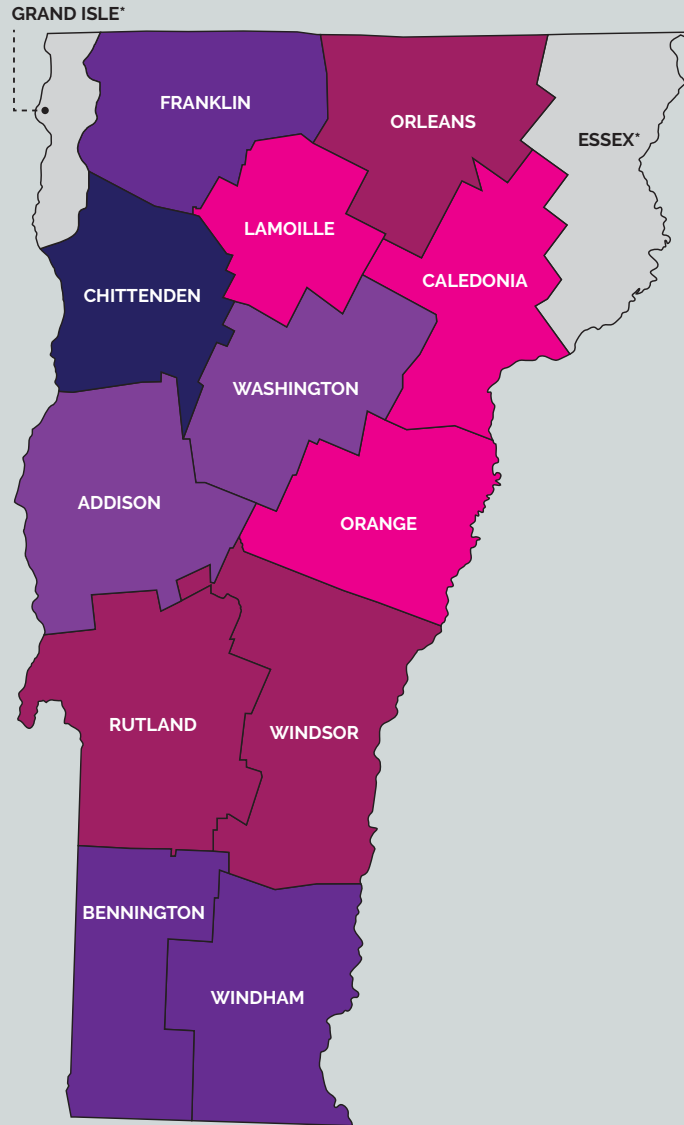
* NO BEDS REPORTED; GRAND ISLE SERVED BY FRANKLIN, ESSEX SERVED BY ORLEANS AND CALEDONIA

VERMONT PERMANENT HOUSING BEDS

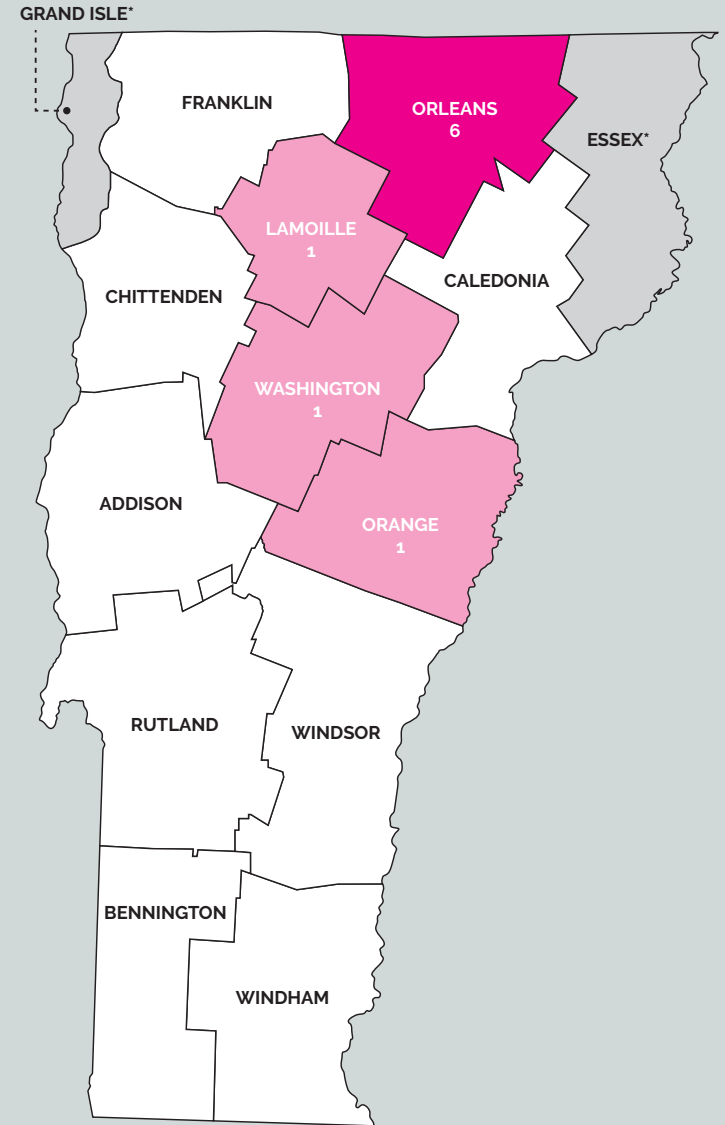
RRH: RAPID REHOUSING
PSH: PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

County	Bed Type	Total
Addison	RRH	30
	PSH	27
Bennington	RRH	76
	PSH	9
Caledonia	RRH	8
	PSH	5
Chittenden	RRH	96
	PSH	147
Franklin	RRH	98
	PSH	23
Lamoille	RRH	8
	PSH	13
Orange	RRH	4
	PSH	12
Orleans	RRH	33
	PSH	2
Rutland	RRH	14
	PSH	21
Washington	RRH	44
	PSH	23
Windham	RRH	47
	PSH	56
Windsor	RRH	12
	PSH	27

TOTAL PERMANENT HOUSING BEDS



YOUTH DEDICATED BEDS



TOTAL BEDS



* NO BEDS REPORTED; GRAND ISLE SERVED BY FRANKLIN, ESSEX SERVED BY ORLEANS AND CALEDONIA

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:

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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.

Stakeholder Priorities for Addressing Youth Homelessness in Vermont- September 2018

Vermont Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program Coordinated Community Plan - Appendix 6

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 permanent 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 from 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 from 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.

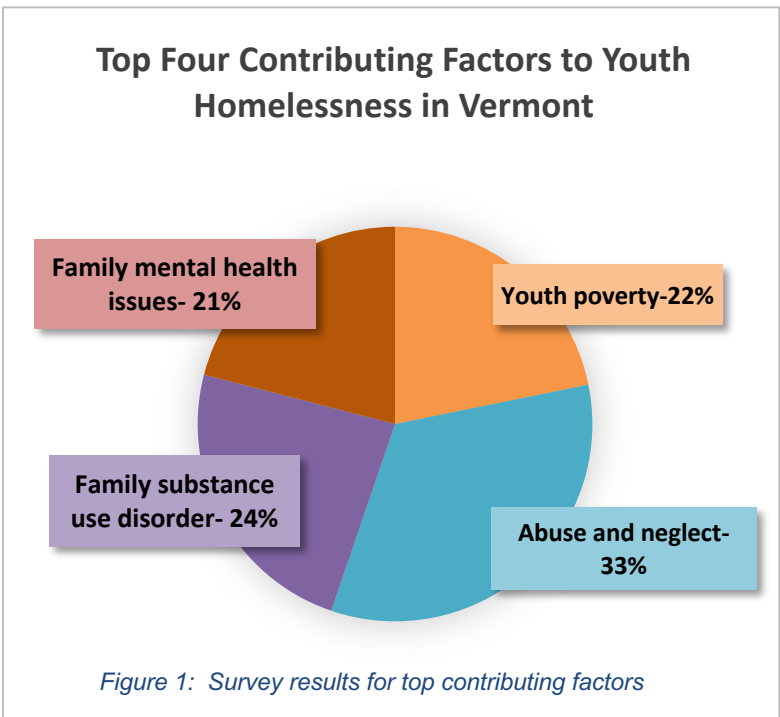
INTERVIEW AND SURVEY FINDINGS:

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 8th and 9th 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, 11th 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 contrast 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 experiences 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.¹ 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.

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:

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

- 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 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 Lamöille
- 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!

Assessing Youth Defined Needs for Housing Supports in Vermont

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

July 2018

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INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT OVERVIEW:

The Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee began meeting in 2017 to create a plan for reducing the occurrence and length of youth homelessness in Vermont. Incorporating the experience and recommendations of youth who have experienced homelessness and housing insecurity was identified as an essential component of any plan and, as such, the youth engagement subcommittee was formed.

The subcommittee developed two tools aimed at capturing youths' voices around housing challenges in Vermont: a series of peer-facilitated focus groups and an online survey. Subcommittee members collected data from focus groups and online surveys over the course of eight months by coding audio recording transcriptions and notes taken during focus groups and grouping survey results into overarching issues, categories, and themes.

FOCUS GROUPS

Outreach strategy

Subcommittee members felt it was important to incorporate input from youth who live in multiple areas of the state in order to assure that a multitudinous array of experiences with housing instability was captured. Five VCRHYP-funded agencies were contacted, from as wide of a geographic range as possible, to serve as host sites for the focus groups. The Groups were hosted by the following local youth serving agencies: Youth Services, Inc. in Brattleboro; Outright Vermont in Burlington; Northeast Kingdom Youth Services in St. Johnsbury; and The Junction Youth Center in White River Junction.

The subcommittee recruited youth for the focus groups by contacting local service providers and asking them to identify potential participants. These service providers included housing support partners as well as agencies providing other kinds of youth services. Several follow-up emails and social media posts were made in the months leading up to each focus group.

Compensation:

Focus group participants were given a \$25 gift card at the conclusion of the focus groups. Dinner, childcare and transportation were provided for participants as needed.

Peer facilitators were provided a \$125 stipend for participating in a brief training¹, co-facilitating the group and then debriefing at the conclusion of the group.

Demographic:

Focus groups were open to youth aged 14 to 25 with personal experiences of housing instability or homelessness, or with self-identified high-risk factors for either.

Participants:

Participation was capped at 12 total youth per location in order to assure that focus group conversations were naturally flowing. In total, thirty-one youth aged 14 to 26 participated in focus groups from October to December of 2017. A break down of age and location of participants can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Age Group	# of Participants	Focus Group Location	# of Participants
14-17	5	Brattleboro	11
18-21	19	Burlington*	1
22-25	6	St. Johnsbury	10
25+	1 (26 yo)	White River Junction	9

**Due to low turn-out the Burlington focus group consisted of a one-on-one interview.*

Facilitation:

Subcommittee members solicited assistance from VCRHYP member organizations to locate peer facilitators from each community. Peer facilitators were trained and then worked with an adult partner to lead the focus group in their area. A second subcommittee member was present to take notes and observe. Each focus group was recorded.

Length and scope:

Each focus group lasted for approximately 1.5 hours with a half-hour allotted for both set-up and debriefing/clean-up.

¹ See appendix for facilitator guide

Before each focus group, peer facilitators were provided a list of questions and coached on how to guide the conversation while providing enough space for all participants to answer each question. Participants were given the choice to pass for any reason. Questions focused primarily on youth's challenges while homeless and/or precariously housed and solicited input about what was or would be most helpful for securing and sustaining stable housing.

ONLINE SURVEY

Outreach:

Subcommittee members sought the assistance of key personnel at the state and local levels to assist with the wide distribution of the online survey. The survey was distributed electronically through collaborative partners across Vermont with several reminder emails to encourage participation and highlight the importance of consumer feedback.

Compensation:

Survey respondents were given optional entry into a random drawing for \$100.

Timeline and demographic:

In early 2018, an online survey was released to solicit feedback from young people aged 14-25 with lived experiences of being homeless or precariously housed. The survey was open from January 16 to February 8, 2018 and participation was anonymous.

Participants:

Fifty-nine respondents started the survey and thirty-eight respondents completed the survey. Of the 59 respondents who started the survey, 10 (17%) were 14-17 years old, 33 (56%) were 18-21 years old, 11 (19%) were 22-25 years old, and 5 (8%) were older than twenty-five. Twenty-one participants were screened out after answering the first two questions, which indicated that they were either younger than fourteen, older than twenty-five or did not have lived experiences of homelessness or housing instability.

SUMMARY OF THEMES

Unique experiences mean unique needs

Each youth has their own unique experiences with housing instability, which results in needing a unique and flexible system of support. One theme that appeared was that youth in these situations often lack both the concrete supports and community supports that would create a "safety net" to protect from risks and unmet needs. Critical resources that make up this "safety net" include: Flexible Housing Supports; Employment and Life Skills Development; and Healthy Adult and Peer Relationships. We found that most youth learn about services through their social networks, which evidences the need for services to support social capital.

FINDINGS

1. Youth in VT have multiple & varied experiences with homelessness.

Across the board, both survey respondents and focus group participants reported a wide and varied spectrum of experiences with homelessness and housing instability. Table 2.1 shows the types of housing instability survey participants have experienced since their 13th birthdays.²

Table 2.1

#	<i>Literally Homeless:</i>
15	Lived on the street or outside in a tent or other arrangement by myself or with friends
15	Lived in a place not meant for housing (car, abandoned building, etc.) by myself or with friends
14	Stayed at a youth shelter
10	Been homeless while living with parent/guardian
9	Stayed at an emergency or warming shelter for adults
#	<i>Precariously Housed:</i>
33	Couch-surfed at a friend's house
24	Couch-surfed at a family member's house

The fact the thirty-eight respondents chose a total of sixty-three experiences indicates that youth frequently have more than one, if not several, types of experiences with literal homelessness and precarious housing.

Similarly, Table 2.2 illustrates that events which precipitate homelessness are often multifaceted, with the majority of respondents reporting that they were kicked out from where they were living or left foster care without stable housing.

² Participants could select more than one option

Table 2.2

# of youth	
35	Been kicked out from someplace where you had been living
11	Left foster care without a place to go
4	Exited an institutional setting (like a detention center or mental health facility) without housing
2	Been evicted because of owing rent
3	Been evicted for other reasons
<i>A follow up question for “been evicted for other reasons” and an open ended comment box resulted in these additional responses:</i>	
3	experiences of domestic or sexual violence
3	family instability
1	law enforcement involvement

2. Young people need flexibility, skills, and supportive relationships.

What do young people need? “Maybe a little love” - Brattleboro Youth

When asked during the focus groups and in the online survey what young people need to avoid homelessness, youth responded within a couple different themes: Being able to practice independent living skills, having supportive employment, having opportunities to grow relationships, having real conversations about the future and personal goals, and having access to flexible financial support for housing and basic needs. From these themes, we identified three main critical support categories: Flexible Housing Supports; Employment and Life Skills Development; and Healthy Adult and Peer Relationships.

Flexible housing supports

Survey respondents ranked flexible and long-term financial supports as the most important supports needed to avoid homelessness - rental assistance vouchers for private housing, rental down-payments, and more localized affordable housing were ranked in the top three. Respondents indicated a strong preference for private housing over public housing and, contrary to focus group participants, felt emergency youth shelters are least likely to help. Finally, although not an articulated option on the survey, participants wrote-in a preference for

work-trade housing and assistance navigating systems in *Other*.

Table 3

Housing Support Needs	Priority
A rental assistance voucher I can use for any apartment/house	71%
Help with a rental down payment, without any ongoing financial help	60%
More affordable housing where I live	53%
A housing voucher I can use at a local housing project	42%
A long-term (up to 18 months) program where I live with other people and get support services	37%
Help catching up with rent so I don't get evicted	29%
A short term (less than 90 days) program where I live with other people and get support services	21%
An emergency youth shelter that's only open at night	13%
None of the above	13%
Other: Work-trade options Assistance with disability applications	8%

Employment, life skills, and relationships

Both survey respondents and focus group participants were given a list of resources related to daily care, personal well-being, relationships, and education/employment. They were asked to rank items into three categories - essential, helpful, or unnecessary - based on how much of a priority they were for supporting success among young people struggling with housing instability.

Very few resources were categorized as *unnecessary* - only thirty-five votes identified any item as *unnecessary* between both focus group and survey responses - compared to 256 items categorized as *helpful* and 212 as *essential*.

Table 4.1: Top 10 resources in each category

Essential (212 total votes)	Helpful (256 total votes)	Unnecessary (35 total votes)
1. Getting a job	1. Getting a job	1. Romantic relationships
2. Keeping a job	2. Keeping a job	2. Higher education
3. Physical safety	3. Physical safety	3. Relationship with co-workers
4. Budgeting skills	4. Budgeting skills	4. Relationship with family
5. Good mental health	5. Good mental health	5. Exploring hobbies
6. Emotional safety	6. Emotional safety	6. Family planning
7. Earning a livable wage	7. Earning a livable wage	7. Relationships with friends
8. Having a safe person	8. Family planning	8. Landlord relationships
9. Cooking skills	9. Cooking skills	9. Access to phone/wifi
10. Transportation	10. Having a safe person	10. Planning for future

Weighted averages: The subcommittee also analyzed scores based on weighted averages. Ratings were assigned numerical values (Essential = 2; Helpful = 1; Unnecessary = 0). Each resource rating was calculated based on total votes across all three categories, and those individual resources were grouped into rated resource types.

Table 4.1 Category color key

Daily Care/Skills	Personal Well-being	Relationships	Ed/Employment
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Table 4.2 Rating by weighted average

Type of Support	Score (0-2)
Getting a job	1.87
Keeping a job (not quitting or getting fired)	1.85
Physical safety	1.76
Budgeting skills	1.74

Emotional safety	1.72
Good mental health	1.70
Earning a livable wage	1.69
Having a safe person to reach out to	1.63
Good physical health	1.59
Transportation - rides or public transit (buses, etc.)	1.57
Cooking skills	1.56
Setting and maintaining healthy boundaries	1.54
Grocery shopping skills	1.53
Driving - my own car and license	1.48
High school (tutoring, graduation, etc.)	1.47
Family planning (sex education, etc.)	1.46
Home maintenance skills (cleaning, simple repairs, etc.)	1.46
Child care	1.46
Access to phone/computer/wifi	1.44
Landlord relationships	1.37
Making plans for the future	1.35
Relationships with friends	1.26
Relationships with co-workers	1.22
Relationships with family	1.20
Relationships with adults (non-family)	1.20
Exploring hobbies and passions	1.15
Relationships with a romantic partner	1.06
Higher education (college, trade programs, etc.)	1.05

Table 4.3: Weighted averages by category

Daily Care 1.51	Personal Well-Being 1.58	Relationships 1.35	Ed/Employment 1.5
Cooking Driving Grocery Shopping Home Maintenance Phone/Computer/Wifi Transportation	Good Mental Health Good Physical Health Emotional Safety Exploring Hobbies Physical Safety	Adults (Non-Family) Boundaries Childcare Family Family Planning Friends Landlord Romantic Partner Safe Person	Co-Worker Relations Future Planning Getting a Job Higher Education High School Keeping a Job Livable Wage

Based on this analysis, it becomes apparent that youth have a broad and varied sense of what they need to successfully live independently. The ability to earn wages and then successfully manage their money are key components to avoiding housing crises, but youth also recognize that there are less obvious factors that contribute to sustained housing stability: taking care of their minds and bodies through supporting their mental health, knowing how to buy groceries and cook, having safe people to lean on, etc.

Surviving before thriving

It was interesting to note, if not unsurprising, that participants prioritized having their basic needs met and ranked survival items (work, health, food) as necessary while items linked to thriving (hobbies and relationships) were viewed as less important. A known protective factor for young people in the age group surveyed is the ability to have a vision for the future.³ Youth in crisis do not always have the luxury of envisioning the future as they struggle to get their needs met. During the focus group conversation, facilitators were able to delve into this topic in more depth - asking youth what things they would want to be able to focus on if their basic needs were met. The top responses were hobbies and passions, higher education, and building relationships. It wasn't that these items were unnecessary to their life overall, they were just seen as privileges that they could not prioritize or access while they struggled to survive.

While personal relationships ranked lower overall, all youth reported that having at least one safe and supportive person was important. Where conventional wisdom often tells us that

³ Masten, A. S., Herbers, J. E., Cutuli, J. J., & Lafort, T. L. (2008). Promoting competence and resilience in the school context (79).

youth don't want adults in their lives, the youth we talked to reported a different story, identifying non-family adult supporters as vital to their success.

3. Youth need and want good supports

Focus group participants reflected on the transformations they experienced after finding a good support system, whether through building up natural supports like peers or family, or through relationships with service providers. Many youth described "good support" as someone who cares about you unconditionally, who pushes you forward, and believes in your ability to succeed.

Relationships with peers who have similar experiences

Youth valued their networks and connections to peers. One major theme was how important it is for young people to have time with peers who have experienced similar things. This was both articulated and enacted within the focus groups - many youth used this as a time to share and compare their stories with others who might understand, and hear what resources had worked for their peers.

Person-centered, reliable and non-judgemental service provision

Youth expressed an appreciation for flexible and creative services. Particularly, participants valued workers who are flexible when it comes to seemingly arbitrary boundaries, who do what needs to be done to make the youth feel cared for and listened to, and who get things done quickly. Participants valued supporters who took time to ensure that youth understood services, talked with them to identify goals, trusted their opinions about what was best for them, celebrated successes, recognized their hard work, and acknowledged mistakes while offering positive support.

Youth expressed that community-based programs, friends, and other people experiencing housing instability, are more helpful than state services, and that these community resources feel better to be connected to. Many youth mentioned wanting more targeted supports to help them continue to live with their families - supports that included overarching support not just for them but also for their families.

When asked how they feel they are perceived by service providers and how this affects their access to services, youth reported having a wide range of experiences with providers. They expressed gratitude for those they had strong relationships with, but many youth stated that they feel they are viewed negatively or impartially by service providers. To describe this negative view they used phrases like, "I'm just another kid/case," [they think I'm] "fragile and in

need of help,” or [they think I’m] “trying to work the system.” They reported that many service providers don’t see them as individuals.

Youth felt that some service providers focus too heavily on program goals and requirements, even if those requirements cause unintentional barriers or don’t match with the youths’ needs. Participants talked about how some workers take it personally when a youth doesn’t comply to all program expectations - which then might result in the worker not being helpful or supportive. Participants also reported that bias exist based on individuals’ reputations or how well they can follow directions, and these biases seem to impact the support they receive. Navigating program expectations as well as provider relationships were both hurdles that youth reported having to navigate to receive ongoing strong support. The importance of being able to make mistakes without fear of consequences was brought up multiple times.

Well-trained workers

Youth want strong agencies and well-trained staff. They were very aware of the impact undertrained and rotating staff have on their progress in a given program. Youth explained that they want staff who were not only well-trained in the aspects of their work, but also in cultural sensitivity and youth-centric approaches, and who have clear and reasonable boundaries. Facilitators noted that this theme - well-trained and versatile workers - was discussed in various ways in every focus group despite it not being a direct question from the facilitators.

Subcommittee members heard stories from youth about unclear expectations that seem to change from worker to worker and program rules or boundaries that don’t make sense to them. Participants expressed a need for organizations that have good professional development and oversight of their programs. Additionally, youth espoused a need for good internal communication - agencies and workers who communicate with transparency and clarity directly with the youth they serve. Participants want youth-centric and flexible services that focus on what youth prioritize as necessary instead of youth having to fit into the specific molds created by many different programs and patchwork together services.

Targeted services

Participants highlighted groups that need targeted support due specific and/or unique needs. These conversations focused on comprehensive and non-judgemental services for LGBTQ youth, youth struggling with substance-use, and pregnant and parenting youth.

Streamlined services, especially when transitioning out

Finally, youth relayed the importance of better better organized case management, where youth have one person who helps them keep track of everything else they’re connected to and can guide them through a smooth transition out of services.

4. Outreach isn't working and it's hard to ask for help

What might help and where to find it

Youth feedback in this area highlights that youth-serving agencies need to both increase outreach efforts and clarify the scope and target of services. When asked what makes it difficult for young people to get help when they need it, 63% of respondents told us that a large barrier was that they didn't know what would be helpful, and 57% said they didn't know where to go for help.

Youth were asked to tell us how they learn about helpful services and programs, rating specific information sources from *most* to *never*.⁴ *Most* was rarely selected, only soliciting 24 total votes, compared to *never* which gathered 108 votes. *Some* and *rare* were selected 76 and 72 times respectively.

Web-based information, including websites and social media, and word of mouth through friends and family were reported as the primary sources of information. When reviewers combined the responses for *most* and *some*, *online other than social media* garnered the most votes [20]. Social media [19] was a close second. Friends [14], family [13] and school [13] were tied for third most frequent sources of information. Traditional forms of media - radio, tv or newspapers - were the least likely to be seen as resources for information about services.

The survey did not offer a choice for referrals from other service providers, but did offer an open ended comment section, in which a majority of comments were linked to information coming from other social service connections.

Table 5: Overview of top three choices in each frequency category

I get Most or All information here [24]	I get Some information here [76]	I Rarely get information here [72]	I Never get information here [108]
1. Online - other than social media (7) 2. Friends (4) Family (4)	1. Social media (16) 2. Online (13) 3. Friends (10)	1. Family (12) 2. TV (11) Friends (11) 3. School (8)	1. Radio (21) 2. TV (19) 3. Newspaper (17)

⁴ The scope of frequency include a four-point scale: Most, Some, Rare and Never.

3. Social media		Newspaper (8) Radio (8)	
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To increase successful targeted outreach, participants recommended that organizations make information available at the following sites:

- Social media
- Schools
- Facebook
- Local wifi hotspots, like libraries
- Places where youth hang out - bus stops, churches or malls

Asking For Help: Natural and peer supports are most important

“For a while I thought I shouldn’t reach out to anyone, I could handle it by myself, but then I realized need to take initiative.” - St. Johnsbury Youth

Respondents were asked to report on how comfortable they would be asking different types of supports for help in the event of housing insecurity.⁵ Reviewers found that overall there was a strong discomfort with asking for help from identified potential supports, with more youth ranking connections in the *uncomfortable* or *no way* categories than the *super* or *pretty comfortable* categories. *I don’t know* outranked any other response. In focus groups, many youth reported that they would not have anyone to go to if they didn’t have somewhere to sleep. There was a sense that services from support organizations take too long and many youth didn’t feel as though reaching out for help to service providers was an option.

Participants reported feeling most comfortable with personal connections (parent, friend, sibling, grandparent, or other family member), with peers and family members ranking highest. Youth in focus groups explained that they would be most likely to ask someone who had also experienced homelessness for advice, and word of mouth was an important tool for youth trying to access resources. Overall youth were least comfortable asking service providers⁶ and people they work with.

⁵ A five-point scale to assess comfort level was used: super comfortable; pretty comfortable; I don’t know, uncomfortable but I would; and no way.

⁶ Defined here as: someone at school, a police officer, a youth worker, a local youth homelessness service agency.

Table 6

Potential helpers ranked by comfort level of asking for help				
Super comfortable:	Pretty Comfortable:	I don't know:	Uncomfortable but I would:	No way:
Parents (9) Friends (7) Youth Worker (7) Local Youth Homeless Service Agency (6) Sibling (5) Grandparent (5) Police Officer (4)	Friend (11) Sibling (10) Parent (8) Grandparent (7) Friend's Family (7) Another Family Member (6) Youth Worker (6)	Another Family member (14) Friend (10) Grandparent (10) Friend's Family (9) Siblings (8) Local Housing Agency (8) Local Youth Homeless Service Agency (7)	Coworker (12) Local Housing Agency (12) Friend's Family (11) Friend (9) Local Youth Homelessness Service Agency(11) Youth Worker (5)	Someone at School (26) Police Officer (24) Coworker (18) Youth Worker (15) Local Youth Homelessness Service Agency (14)
43	55	156	60	97

Many helpers received multiple ranking categories, for instance police officers ranked in both the *super comfortable* top tier with four votes and also the *no way* top tier with twenty-four votes. Reviewers noted that *youth worker* showed up in every comfort level ranking, echoing the above findings that youth have varied experiences with youth care workers - some having supportive and successful connections, and others feeling like their needs were not met.

Through the course of the focus group series, observers noted that there was a strong contrast between youth who had access to a youth center, like a teen center or youth-centric space, and those who didn't. Youth with access seemed far more connected to other youth, adult staff, and services and relied heavily on the teen space for both emergency intervention and ongoing support.

5. Emotional barriers create concrete barriers

“There’s nothing more detrimental than feeling like it’s hopeless” - St. Johnsbury Youth

Self-perpetuating stigma

Focus group participants were animated when discussion arose about the stigma attached to homelessness. Many reported feeling that homeless youth are targeted by local law enforcement or perceived as a “burden” on society and described situations that illustrated this point. Additionally, many youth talked about how the stigma often creates barriers to accessing services. Youth reported being afraid of judgement from others and felt there was a lack of understanding in their communities about the realities of homelessness. Many felt isolated and vulnerable. Participants also discussed internalizing these stigmas and harboring self-judgement and poor opinions of themselves. Youth provided insight highlighting that the stress of instability perpetuates housing instability - often feeding the stigma around homelessness.

Unreliable services

Participants also expressed frustration at long wait-lists and unreliable services, reporting that workers often say they’ll do something that doesn’t come to fruition. There was a concern that staff and services would disappoint them as well as a general distrust of institutions. Respondents reported feeling as though services were not client-centered and service providers who maintain their own agenda, despite a client’s self-identified goals, instilled distrust. Clear communication, transparency and valuing youth’s wants and needs was recommended.

Communication and Transportation

Across the board, participants reported more concrete barriers such as lacking a phone, computer, and transportation, which makes it harder to access resources. Unsurprisingly in our rural state, 43% of responses affirm struggles with accessing supports due to unreliable or nonexistent public and/or alternative transportation.

Half of survey participants didn’t want to admit they needed help, and a third were worried about the stigma attached to accessing services. There is an implication here for stereotypes faced by young people at risk and how service providers can make themselves more approachable and less stigmatized.

In the open ended comment section, we also heard from participants that people from marginalized populations, such as LGBTQ or people of color, are not being served well and feel like services need to be adjusted to serve them well.

6. “If I had three wishes for my community...”

*“[I wish for] less judgement. Not all young homeless people are thugs.”
-Survey Respondent*

In both the focus group discussion and survey, youth had a holistic and nuanced understanding of their experiences as part of a larger community. When participants were asked to share three wishes they would use to improve their community, overwhelmingly the responses were related to communities being more affordable overall - including housing, healthcare, food, and access to jobs that paid livable wages.

Youth also wanted to see more youth-friendly activities and events, more opportunities to learn basic skills in school or at youth service agencies, better sexual health services, more access to emergency shelter, better public transportation, kindness between community members, and safer, healthier communities that could ease the drug issues affecting so many.

We categorized each wish into five different domains: Affordable Communities, Supportive Public Services, Community Spaces and Recreation, Kindness and Understanding, and Health and Safety (Police Relations). Each individual wish is listed in **Table 7** by domain, as well as broken into how directly it relates to housing. Looking at the wishes in this light, highlights how many services, supports, and adult actions that don't seem to be connected to housing are actually key components to wellbeing and housing stability.

*(#) - Number of times response was given when there were multiple similar wishes
Others not included in the chart: no bed bugs (maybe referring to shelters?); more animals*

Table 7

Wishes Directly Related to Housing/Homelessness	Wishes Indirectly Related to Housing Stability
Affordable Communities	
More affordable housing* (5) Free dignified housing (2) Cheaper places to live Affordable access to basic needs <i>*Some Section 8 waiting lists are over a year</i>	More jobs/wider variety of jobs (5) Better jobs/better paying jobs (4) Free food for the community (2) Affordable daycare (2) Free public transportation Universal basic income Free health care
Supportive Public Services	
More shelters (2) Housing supports Build houses for people in need Shelters open all day (especially in winter)	More public transit options (4) More substance abuse support (3) Extra help for abuse victims (2) Better mental health coordination

<p>More support for homeless college students</p> <p>More public/government help (2)</p> <p>More funding for services that help</p>	<p>Help for postpartum mothers</p> <p>Transportation to childcare</p> <p>More support for finding work</p> <p>Education and life skills supports</p> <p>School Choice</p>
<p>Community Spaces and Recreation</p>	
	<p>Better and safer community areas (3)</p> <p>Better and more activities for teens (2)</p> <p>More community groups</p> <p>More adult sports teams/programs</p>
<p>Kindness and Understanding</p>	
<p>Less judgement about homelessness(2)</p> <p>More awareness about homelessness</p>	<p>Supportive and caring adults/parents (2)</p> <p>Open minds for everyone</p> <p>More gender-free public restrooms</p> <p>More love for other humans regardless of race, creed, or sexual orientation</p> <p>Professionals putting person before paycheck</p>
<p>Health and Safety</p>	
<p>Privacy</p> <p>Slumlords not renting unsafe buildings</p>	<p>Less drugs/drug use (6)</p> <p>Support for family planning</p> <p>More resource officers at schools</p> <p>Better police support</p> <p>Less cyclical familial abuse</p>

CONCLUSION:

**APPENDIX 7:
YOUTH RIVE PROTECTIVE AND PROMOTIVE FACTORS**



Protective & Promotive Factors Constructs	Core Meanings
<p>Youth Resilience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. managing the stressors of daily life and functioning well when faced with challenges, adversity, and trauma b. calling forth one’s inner strength to proactively meet personal challenges, manage adversities, and heal the effects of trauma c. having a positive attitude about life and oneself d. believing that one’s life is important and meaningful e. becoming more self-confident and self-efficacious f. having faith; feeling hopeful and optimistic g. envisioning positive future possibilities h. believing that one can make and achieve goals i. working with purpose to achieve goals j. facing challenges and making productive decisions about addressing challenges k. seeking help when needed l. thinking about and being accountable for one’s actions and the consequences of one’s actions m. managing anger, anxiety, sadness, feelings of loneliness, and other negative feelings n. learning from failure
<p>Social Connections</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Building a trusting relationship with at least one caring and competent adult who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listens in a non-judgmental manner • is dependable/can be counted on • provides well-informed guidance, advice, and help in solving problems • promotes high expectations • sets developmentally appropriate limits, rules, and monitoring • provides emotional support (e.g., affirming good problem-solving skills) • provides instrumental support/concrete assistance (e.g., transportation) • provides informational support (e.g., post-secondary educational opportunities) • provides spiritual support (e.g., hope and encouragement) • provides an opportunity to engage with others in a positive manner • helps buffer youth from stressors • helps reduce feelings of isolation • promotes meaningful interactions in a context of mutual trust, respect, and appreciation b. Being constructively engaged in social institutions (e.g., school, religious communities, recreational facilities) that are safe, stable, and equitable c. Building a trusting relationship with positive, optimistic, mutually respectful peers who have similar values d. Having a sense of connectedness that enables youth to feel loved, secure, confident, valued, and empowered to “give back” to others


Protective & Promotive Factors Constructs	Core Meanings
<p>Knowledge of Adolescent Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Encouraging parents, adults who work with youth, and youth themselves to increase their knowledge and understanding about adolescent development b. Seeking, acquiring, and using accurate information about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adolescent brain development • physical and emotional changes that occur during puberty • one's culture • societal rules, demands, expectations, and threats • one's personal developmental history and needs, including one's trauma history • sexual behavior, responsibility, choices, and consequences • essential life skills (e.g., managing money) • developing abstract thinking and improved problem-solving skills • developing a belief system and sense of morality • engaging in positive risk-taking and avoiding negative risk-taking • forging a personally satisfying identity • identifying productive interests, realistic goals, and steps to achieve goals • developing mature values and behavioral controls used to assess acceptable and unacceptable behaviors • building and sustaining healthy relationships with peers and adults • gaining independence from parents and other adults while maintaining strong connections with them
<p>Concrete Support in Times of Need</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. being able to identify, find, and receive the basic necessities everyone deserves, as well as specialized services (e.g., medical, mental health, social, educational, or legal) b. being resourceful c. understanding one's rights in accessing eligible services d. navigating through service systems e. seeking help when needed f. being treated respectfully and with dignity when seeking and receiving services
<p>Cognitive and Social-Emotional Competence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. developing executive function skills (e.g., considering potential consequences; seeing alternate solutions to problems) b. engaging in self-regulating behaviors (e.g., control of thinking and feelings; staying on task in the face of distractions) c. developing character strengths (e.g., persistence, gratitude, integrity) d. experiencing positive emotions (e.g., joy, optimism, faith, compassion for others) e. taking responsibility for one's self and one's decisions f. developing self-awareness, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-compassion g. committing to and preparing to achieve productive goals h. having both positive images of the person one wants to become and negative images of the person one wants to avoid becoming, as well as plans to achieve the possible selves

APPENDIX 8: HUD DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS

CRITERIA FOR DEFINING HOMELESS	Category 1	Literally Homeless	(1) Individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not meant for human habitation; (ii) Is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs); <u>or</u> (iii) Is exiting an institution where (s)he has resided for 90 days or less <u>and</u> who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution
	Category 2	Imminent Risk of Homelessness	(2) Individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance; (ii) No subsequent residence has been identified; <u>and</u> (iii) The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing
	Category 3	Homeless under other Federal statutes	(3) Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Are defined as homeless under the other listed federal statutes; (ii) Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing during the 60 days prior to the homeless assistance application; (iii) Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during in the preceding 60 days; <u>and</u> (iv) Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time due to special needs or barriers
	Category 4	Fleeing/ Attempting to Flee DV	(4) Any individual or family who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence; (ii) Has no other residence; <u>and</u> (iii) Lacks the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing

RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS



<h1>RECORDKEEPING REQUIREMENTS</h1> 	Category 1	Literally Homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written observation by the outreach worker; <u>or</u> • Written referral by another housing or service provider; <u>or</u> • Certification by the individual or head of household seeking assistance stating that (s)he was living on the streets or in shelter; • For individuals exiting an institution—one of the forms of evidence above <u>and</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ discharge paperwork <u>or</u> written/oral referral, <u>or</u> ○ written record of intake worker’s due diligence to obtain above evidence <u>and</u> certification by individual that they exited institution
	Category 2	Imminent Risk of Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A court order resulting from an eviction action notifying the individual or family that they must leave; <u>or</u> • For individual and families leaving a hotel or motel—evidence that they lack the financial resources to stay; <u>or</u> • A documented and verified oral statement; <u>and</u> • Certification that no subsequent residence has been identified; <u>and</u> • Self-certification or other written documentation that the individual lack the financial resources and support necessary to obtain permanent housing
	Category 3	Homeless under other Federal statutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certification by the nonprofit or state or local government that the individual or head of household seeking assistance met the criteria of homelessness under another federal statute; <u>and</u> • Certification of no PH in last 60 days; <u>and</u> • Certification by the individual or head of household, and any available supporting documentation, that (s)he has moved two or more times in the past 60 days; <u>and</u> • Documentation of special needs <u>or</u> 2 or more barriers
	Category 4	Fleeing/ Attempting to Flee DV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>For victim service providers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An oral statement by the individual or head of household seeking assistance which states: they are fleeing; they have no subsequent residence; and they lack resources. Statement must be documented by a self-certification or a certification by the intake worker. • <i>For non-victim service providers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Oral statement by the individual or head of household seeking assistance that they are fleeing. This statement is documented by a self-certification or by the caseworker. Where the safety of the individual or family is not jeopardized, the oral statement must be verified; <u>and</u> ○ Certification by the individual or head of household that no subsequent residence has been identified; <u>and</u> ○ Self-certification, or other written documentation, that the individual or family lacks the financial resources and support networks to obtain other permanent housing.

APPENDIX 9:
LIST OF ACRONYMS USED AND DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

At-risk youth/young adult – individuals age 24 or younger who are at an increased risk of running away from home or becoming homeless due to a variety of factors, such as family conflict or poverty

BARJ: Balanced and Restorative Justice – a program, administered by Vermont’s Department for Children and Families, that serves youth who are on juvenile probation, at risk of becoming involved with the juvenile justice system, or truant from school

BCP: Basic Center Program – a program, funded by the Family & Youth Services Bureau, that provides emergency shelter and homelessness prevention services to youth between the ages of 12-17, with the goal of family reunification

BoS: Balance of State – a type of state-based Continuum of Care (CoC) which includes all the jurisdictions in a state that are not covered by any other CoCs¹ (*Vermont’s Balance of State CoC covers the entire state except Chittenden County*)

CE: Coordinated Entry - a process through which people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness can access the crisis response system in a streamlined way, have their strengths and needs quickly assessed, and quickly connect to appropriate, tailored housing and mainstream services within the community; the most intensive interventions are prioritized for those with the highest needs²

Chronically homeless – when a homeless individual with a disabling condition has either been continuously homeless for a year or more OR has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years³

CoC: Continuum of Care – a community-based local planning group, the purpose of which is to promote community wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, and state and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families and communities by homelessness; promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness⁴

Crisis housing – immediately accessible, developmentally appropriate, low-barrier shelters, host homes, or other temporary housing; options are not contingent on school attendance,

¹ [HUD's Balance of State Continuum of Care Toolkit](#)

² [USICH's Opening Doors - Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness](#)

³ [Glossary of HUD Terms](#)

⁴ [HUD's Balance of State Continuum of Care Toolkit](#)

sobriety, minimum income requirements, absence of a criminal record, or other unnecessary conditions⁵

DCF: Department for Children and Families

D/SV: domestic violence/sexual violence

ES: emergency shelter – a facility the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary or transitional shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless⁶

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid

FYSB: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Family & Youth Services Bureau

GA: General Assistance – a program, administered by Vermont's Department for Children and Families, that helps people meet their emergency basic needs, such as: personal needs and incidentals; housing; fuel and utilities; medical, dental, prescriptions, and medical supplies/equipment; or burial costs

GED: General Educational Development test

GPA: grade point average

HMIS: Homeless Management Information System - a computerized data collection application designed to capture client-level information over time on the characteristics and service needs of people experiencing homelessness, while also protecting client confidentiality⁷

HOP: Housing Opportunity Grant Program – a program administered by Vermont's Office of Economic Opportunity that funds operations, staffing, homelessness prevention, and rapid re-housing assistance at non-profit emergency shelter, transitional housing, and prevention programs around the state

Housing First – a model of housing assistance that prioritizes rapid placement and stabilization in permanent housing that does not have service participation requirements or preconditions (such as sobriety or a minimum income threshold)⁸

HUD: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

IEP: Individualized Education Program

⁵ [USICH's Criteria and Benchmarks for Achieving the Goal of Ending Youth Homelessness](#)

⁶ [Glossary of HUD Terms](#)

⁷ [Glossary of HUD Terms](#)

⁸ [HUD Youth Homeless Demonstration Project \(YHDP\) NOFA Appendix A](#)

JJ: juvenile justice

LGBTQ: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer

Literally homeless – when an individual or family:

- Has a primary nighttime residence that is a place not meant for human habitation, or
- Is living in a shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangement, or
- Is exiting an institution where they have resided for 90 days or less and who resided in a place not meant for human habitation or emergency shelter immediately before entering the institution⁹

M-V: McKinney-Vento

PIT Count: Point-in-Time Count – an unduplicated one-night estimate of both sheltered and unsheltered homeless populations, conducted by Continuums of Care nationwide during the last week in January of each year¹⁰

Precariously housed – when a person is couch surfing, doubled-up with friends/relatives, living in a hotel/motel while paying out of pocket, or at imminent risk of losing their housing

Pregnant or parenting youth/young adult – individuals age 24 or younger who are pregnant or who are the parents or legal guardians of one or more children who are present with or sleeping in the same place as that youth parent, where there is no person over age 24 in the household¹¹

PSH: Permanent Supportive Housing - permanent housing with indefinite leasing or rental assistance paired with supportive services to assist homeless persons with a disability or families with an adult or child member with a disability achieve housing stability¹²

RHY: runaway and homeless youth

RRH: Rapid Re-housing – a housing model with up to 24 months of rental assistance; a Housing First approach that provides immediate access to stable housing, low-barriers to entry and to keep assistance, and voluntary but persistent services with high expectations and high levels of engagement¹³

SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – a U.S. Department of Agriculture

⁹ [HUD's Homeless Definition](#)

¹⁰ [HUD Glossary of Terms](#)

¹¹ [HUD Youth Homeless Demonstration Project \(YHDP\) NOFA Appendix A](#)

¹² [HUD's CoC Program Eligibility Requirements](#)

¹³ [HUD's Ending Youth Homelessness Guidebook Series: Promising Program Models](#)

program that offers nutrition assistance to low-income individuals and families (*In Vermont, SNAP is called 3SquaresVT and administered by the Department for Children and Families.*)

TANF: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families – a U.S. Department of Health & Human Services program that assists families with children when the parents or other responsible relatives cannot provide for the family’s basic need (*In Vermont, TANF is called Reach Up and administered by the Department for Children and Families.*)

TAY-VI-SPDAT: Transition Age Youth-Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool

TLP: Transitional Living Program - a program, funded by the Family & Youth Services Bureau, that provides transitional housing and supportive services to youth between the ages of 16-21, with the goal of independent living

TH: transitional housing – time-limited (up to 21-24 months) supportive housing for youth who are not ready to live independently; this model has a focus on developing life skills and staying in school or securing work; possible housing types include:

- congregate housing with overnight staff
- clustered units with or without a supervisor on-site (sometimes referred to as Single-Room Occupancies/SROs)
- scattered site apartments or shared units in which a youth may hold the lease¹⁴

Unaccompanied youth/young adult – an individual between the ages of 12 and 24 who is not part of a family with children and who is not accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or caretaker during their episode of homelessness¹⁵

UVM: University of Vermont

VCEH: Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness – Vermont’s Balance of State Continuum of Care (CoC), which supports the work of local CoC’s, connects them to a broader network of stakeholders, administers federal funds, and advocates for funding and policy changes

VCRHYP: Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs – a non-profit coalition of service providers who serve runaway and homeless youth (*In Vermont, VCRHYP is the only organization funded by the Family & Youth Services Bureau to administer Basic Center and Transitional Living Programs.*)

VI-SPDAT: Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool

WIOA: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

¹⁴ [HUD’s Ending Youth Homelessness Guidebook Series: Promising Program Models](#)

¹⁵ [USICH’s Criteria and Benchmarks for Achieving the Goal of Ending Youth Homelessness](#)

YHDP: Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program

YHPPC: Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee

YYA: youth and young adults