**Requests for Proposals for YHDP Projects**

**Applications Due: May 6, 2019**

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**Section A: RFP Overview**

**YHDP Background:**

In November 2016, a team from the Vermont Department for Children and Families 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. Throughout the day, the team heard voices of youth and young adults impacted by homelessness and inspiring stories from neighboring states on innovative programs. From this meeting emerged a shared desire to develop a plan for ending youth and young adult homelessness in Vermont.

In 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 (YHDP) 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.

In February 2019, we submitted Vermont’s Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program Coordinated Community Plan, which can be found here: [www.helpingtohousevt.org/yhdp](http://www.helpingtohousevt.org/yhdp). This plan prioritizes and directs program implementation funding, laying out a framework of assessed needs, priority populations, goals and a service philosophy to guide YHDP funded projects. The plan and subsequent funding aims to make youth and young adult homelessness rare, brief and one time; no young person in Vermont should go without a safe place to call home.

**Vermont YHDP 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 nonrecurring. 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.**

**Vermont YHDP System-level 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:

1. **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.
2. **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.
3. **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.
4. **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.
5. **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.

***Additional Vermont YHDP Goals and Objectives can be found in Section E.***

**Eligible Applicants**

* Eligible project applicants are nonprofit organizations, states, local governments, and instrumentalities of state and local governments. For-profit entities are not eligible to apply for grants or to be sub-recipients of grant funds.
* Applications shall only be considered from project applicants in good standing with the state and federal government, which means that the applicant does not have any open monitoring or audit unresolved findings, or outstanding obligation to the government that is in arrears or for which a payment schedule has not been agreed upon.
	+ For applicants with past or current CoC-funded projects, any of the following must be resolved or adequately addressed in the application: history of slow expenditure of grant funds, history of serving ineligible program participants, expending funds on ineligible costs, or failing to expend funds within statutorily established timeframes.
* Applications shall only be considered from applicants who are not in corrective action status as a result of FFY 2017-2018 VT BoS project evaluation.

**Eligible Localities:**

Projects must be located within the VT BoS CoC regions of the state. This includes all cities and towns in the following counties: Addison, Bennington, Caledonia, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, Orange, Orleans, Rutland, Washington, Windham, and Windsor.

**Eligible Populations:**

Projects awarded funds under the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) can serve unaccompanied youth up to the age of 24, including pregnant and parenting youth, who meet Category 1, 2, OR 4 of homelessness in HUD’s Final Definition of Homeless. YHDP-funded projects can also serve youth meeting Category 3 of the Final Definition of Homeless if they can meet all of the requirements identified. Up to 10% of statewide (all) YHDP funds awarded can be used for youth eligible under Category 3 Homelessness.

***More details about eligible populations can be found in Section B.***

**Eligible Projects**

The Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness is seeking applications from eligible providers for the following projects:

1. Rapid Rehousing: Short or Medium-term Tenant-based Rental Assistance or Site-Based Vouchers with Master-lease Waiver
2. Support Services/Coordinated Entry: Youth Housing Navigators
3. Support Services/Coordinated Entry: Landlord Liaisons
4. Transitional Housing/ Rapid Rehousing Joint Component
5. Rapid Rehousing: Short-term Diversion Support

***More details about these projects can be found in Section C.***

*These projects will implement housing first principles for youth and young adults:*

1. A right to housing with no preconditions
2. Youth choice, youth voice, and self-determination
3. Positive Youth Development/YouthThrive (PYD/YT) and a wellness orientation including
	1. Trauma Informed Care
	2. Harm Reduction
	3. Family Engagement
4. Individualized, client-driven supports
5. Social inclusion and community integration

*Vermont YHDP funded projects will need to define how they are incorporating these principles into project design.*

***Further discussion of these principles can be found in Section F.***

**Waivers**

Project applicants are encouraged to submit any waivers they believe will enhance their project. Applicants are encouraged to seek technical assistance from the YHDP Technical Assistance providers (see page 9) prior to project application, and if awarded. Some waivers will be renewable, while others may not be, based on whether it requires a waiver of the CoC Interm Rule or Hearth Act. Waivers will not be in place at the start of project implementation, and applicants must be able to implement a project without a waiver. [See HUDs FY18 YHDP NOFA Appendix A for more information about Waivers.](https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/SPM/documents/FY18_AppendixAFINAL_YHDP.pdf)

Examples of Waivers that have been approved in previous YHDP communities:

1. Waives the requirement to have a 12-month lease in Rapid Re-Housing
2. Allow youth to maintain initial eligibility for assistance (no annual assessment) in Rapid Re-Housing
3. Allow Rapid Re-Housing rental assistance for up to 36 months (24 months current)
4. Combining leasing and rental assistance in a single housing structure.
5. Allow Master Leasing in Rapid Re-Housing project.

**Project Requirements**

Selected Project Applicants are required to meet the following requirements (<https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/coc-program-eligibility-requirements/>) (<https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/SPM/documents/FY18_AppendixAFINAL_YHDP.pdf>)

**VCEH/HUD Administrative Requirements**

* Selected applicants will be required to complete full applications in HUD’s e-snaps grant management system and are solely responsible for ensuring applications are successfully submitted. If awarded, HUD will grant funds directly to applicants (recipients) for all YHDP funding. *A one-time technical assistance from the Collaborative applicant (VSHA) will be provided for e-snaps. Ongoing technical assistance will be available from YHDP Technical Assistance providers to assist with project applications and post-award project technical assistance.*
* Enter client data into the VT Homeless Management Information System (VT HMIS), participate in the annual homeless and precariously housed youth counts in the BoS regions, participate in the CoC, and comply with all other VT BoS CoC Policies and Procedures (unless there is a YHDP-specific exception).
* Comply with program requirements per the HUD Continuum of Care interim rule (unless there is a HUD-approved YHDP waiver), the FY2017 YHDP NOFA, and any additional applicable HUD guidance. As well as VT BoS policies unless otherwise noted.
* The recipients must collect and report data on their use of CoC Program funds in an Annual Performance Report (APR) and any additional reports required by HUD. For more information on the APR, see [HUD’s APR Training Materials.](https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/e-snaps/guides/apr/#guides-and-tools)
* Recipients of CoC funds are required to have a person with lived experience on their board/equivalent policy making body.

**Vermont YHDP Requirements**

* Work collaboratively with the YHDP Leadership Team on project design and implementation once awarded, including the application submission to HUD through e-snaps. This includes finalizing project scope and budget.
* Have a plan for rapid implementation of the program. The project narrative MUST document how the project will be ready to begin housing the first program participant within 3 months of the award.
* Participate in VT YHDP and national learning community by engaging in local YHDP training opportunities, participation in monthly national and Vermont learning community calls, and participating in VT YHDP Coordinated Entry workgroup and quarterly Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan Committee meetings.
* Implement a Housing First model that incorporates Trauma Informed Care and Positive Youth Development models of housing and services delivery. ***See Section F for additional details.***
* Selected applicants and partner agencies will need to become involved in their local community’s Coordinated Entry Partnership as a lead agency, assessment partner, or referral partner. ***See Section G for Coordinated Entry Partnership role descriptions.***
* Youth and young adults will enter YHDP projects through the current coordinated entry process and selected applicants and/or partner agencies will participate in the YHDP Coordinated Entry workgroup to help identify, share, and adjust coordinated entry to better serve youth and young adults.
* Selected projects are required to incorporate the YHDP service philosophy into service provision for all YHDP funded or sub-contracted service providers. See Section F for additional details.
* All VT YHDP funded project have/will create 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.
* Selected project applicants are required to work collaboratively with DCF on the design and implementation of TH-RRH projects serving 16-17 year-old youth. A license with the state of Vermont, Department for Children and Families (DCF), Residential Licensing and Special Investigations (RLSI) may be required depending on the design of the proposed project. Applicants will need to describe how different age groups including young children of parenting youth will be served within the project
* Applicants should have policies in place or a plan to create policies 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).
* Applicants should have policies in place or a plan to create policies 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
* 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). Establish partnerships between homeless service providers and community providers serving pregnant/parenting youth and young adults (e.g. Parent Child Centers).

**Youth Collaboration**

Including youth voice in all levels of program development, monitoring and assessment is a foundational element of the YHDP. All funded projects will need to have or develop mechanisms for youth and young adults served by the project and/or representatives of the target population to provide meaningful and ongoing input on project design, rules, service practices and policies; as well as a formal grievance policy that all participants are informed of. All YHDP funding recipients will need to have a person with lived experience on their board or equivalent governing body, and for boards that already have a person with lived experience, it will be encouraged that an additional board position is created for a youth or young adult with lived experience. The project narrative must include the ways in which the project will include youth as collaborative partners in project implementation including how the project plans to incorporate youth-focused program evaluation, engaging youth who have gone through programs to provide feedback on efficacy and competency of services.

**Match Requirement**

HUD requires all YHDP applicants to contribute a 25% match on all budget items, except leasing. Match is actual cash or in-kind resources (or a combination of the two) contributed to the grant. All costs paid for with matching funds must be for activities that are eligible under the YHDP, even if the recipient is not receiving YHDP grant funds for that activity. In-kind match is the value of any real property, equipment, goods, or services contributed to YHDP would have been eligible costs under the YHDP if the recipient/sub-recipient was required to pay for such costs with YHDP grant funds. Match may be from public or private resources, as long as they are not statutorily prohibited from being used as match and not otherwise leveraged. Cash match with state funding may require pre-approval from the state agency administering the respective funds.

**Reporting and Evaluation Requirements**

Applicants are responsible for complying with all HUD Continuum of Care and YHDP reporting requirements. Modified programs specific to VT BoS’s YHDP projects are being created within VT HMIS. Given that this is a demonstration program, projects may be required to track additional information inside and outside of VT HMIS. YHDP recipients must collect and report data on their use of CoC Program funds in an Annual Performance Report (APR) and any additional reports required by HUD. For more information on the APR, see [HUD’s APR Training Materials (link).](https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/e-snaps/guides/apr/#guides-and-tools) Ongoing technical assistance will be available for all YHDP funded project throughout project implementation.

**Application Process Overview & Project Selection:**

YHDP project selection will be accomplished in accordance with HUD’s CoC conflict of interest requirements under 24 C.F.R. § 578.95. The YHDP Project Selection Team, comprised of subject matter experts without YHDP funding-related conflicts, will score the proposals, and make the final applicant selection decision. YHDP projects will be selected through this competitive RFP and will need to work in consultation with the Leadership team and Collaborative Applicant to apply to HUD through e-snaps. All project selections through this RFP will be made pending approval from HUD and may be amended based on HUD input.

Selected projects will be awarded for a **two year term** with potential for renewal through future HUD CoC competitions as part of the VT BoS CoC.

All applicants will go through a threshold review to ensure the projects application and applicant meets the minimum thresholds outlined by HUD to be awarded YHDP funds. Applicants MUST complete all questions in the threshold review form. Applicants that do not pass the threshold will not be further reviewed under the competition.

***See Section D YHDP Scoring Criteria***

**Appeals Process**

Eligible applicant may send a written response to the YHDP Project Selection Team if there is an objection to the determination (rejected, reduced funding, lower priority, or other reason) by 2pm on June 6, 2019 sent to andrea@vsha.org on behalf of the YHDP Project Selection Team.

**Submission Requirements:**

* Project Application Form
* Threshold Form
* Match Letter(s)

**Timeline (Subject to Change):**

March 25 YHDP RFP Released

April 1 9:00-11:00: Webinar: YHDP Project implementation & HUD CoC Program Grants

April 10 1:30-3:00 Rutland Region Commerce

 50 Merchants Row, Rutland, VT 05701

April 11 9:30-11:00 Barre regional RFP meeting @ McFarland State Office Building,

5 Perry Street, Barre, VT 05641

April 11 1:30-3:00 White River Junction regional RFP meeting @ VT Dept of Health in Hartford district office building.

118 Prospect St #300, White River Junction, VT 05001, 3rd floor

April 12 Written Questions Due (responses provided next week)

April 19 Written Questions Due (responses provided next week)

April 26 Written Questions Due (responses provided next week)

April 29 Written responses to questions provided (if not already provided)

**May 6 Project Applications due to VCEH andrea@vsha.org**

May 31 9-4 YHDP Selection Team Meeting *(Applicants are encouraged to attend or be available for phone conferencing to answer questions)*

 Waterbury State office, Cherry B

June 3 Initial notice of Project Selection

June 6 Appeals Due to VCEH by 2:00pm EST

June 7 YHDP Selection Team will Review over phone at 3:00pm

June 10 Final notice of Project Selection

June 10-28 Selected project application technical assistance

June 26 2:00pm e-snaps submission of selected Projects to HUD (VCEH deadline)

July 1 e-snaps submission of selected projects to HUD (final deadline)

August - Development of grant agreements

**Contact Information:**

**For Application Questions and Technical Assistance:**

VCEH CoC Support Specialist: Andrea Hurley, andrea@vsha.org, 802-828-5525 \*Phone Checked Periodically

YHDP Technical Assistance Providers: Lauren Knott, lknott@tacinc.org, 617-266-5657 x117

**For Additional YHDP Information:**

Collaborative Applicant: Daniel Blankenship, daniel@vsha.org, 802-828-0294

VT YHDP Coordinator, VCRYHP: Bethany Pombar, BPombar@vcryhp.org, 802-229-9151

**SECTION B: Eligible Populations under YHDP**

**Category 1 – Literal Homelessness**

Youth, including pregnant and parenting youth, in the following living situations:

* Shelter including emergency shelter, transitional housing, or hotel or motel paid by government or charity;
* Street or other place not meant for human habitation (ex. car, garage, park, abandoned building); OR
* An institution (ex., jail, hospital, juvenile detention) that the youth is exiting and where the youth was a resident for 90 days or less AND the youth resided in emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately prior to entering that institution.

**Category 2 – Imminent Risk of Homelessness**

Youth, including pregnant and parenting youth, in the following living situations:

* In own housing, but being evicted within 14 days;
* A hotel or motel paid for by someone other than a government or charitable organization, including the youth, family, or friends where the youth cannot stay for more than 14 days (often due to lack of ability to continue paying);

OR

* With family or friends and being asked to leave within 14 days, which includes:
* Youth staying with their biological parents, relatives, any individual they identify as family or a friend
* Youth who are moving from one home to another “couch surfing” and cannot stay at their current home or “couch”
* Youth who are in a legal guardianship.

Additionally, the youth must have no safe alternative housing, resources or support networks to maintain or obtain permanent housing.

**Category 3 – Homeless under other Federal Statutes**

Youth, including pregnant and parenting youth, who do not qualify as homeless under the other 3 Categories but meet ALL of the below criteria:

* Are homeless under other federal statutes including the Runaway & Homeless Youth Act (see “Other Federal Definitions of Homeless” section for further guidance);
* Have not had their own place with a lease, ownership interest or occupancy agreement in the last 60 days;
* Have moved two or more times in the last 60 days;

AND

* Can be expected to have continued housing instability because of a disability, substance use addiction, history of domestic violence or child abuse, or two or more barriers to employment.

**Category 4 – Fleeing Violence**

Youth, including pregnant and parenting youth, fleeing or attempting to flee their housing or the place they are staying because of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life threatening conditions related to violence that has taken place in the house or has made them afraid to return to the house, including:

• Trading sex for housing;

• Trafficking;

• Physical abuse;

• Emotional abuse, such as threats, intimidation, and exposure to trauma;

• Family conflict that has caused a youth to feel physically or emotionally unsafe and unable to stay in their current living situation;\*

• Financial abuse, such as controlling a youth’s income or stealing a youth’s identity in order use their credit;

• Violence (or perceived threat of violence) because of the youth’s sexual orientation or gender identity;

• Active drug/illegal substance use in the youth’s current housing;

• Gang or neighborhood violence that is being directed to a youth in their home;\*\* OR

• Other illegal activity in the household that is putting a youth or a youth’s child at risk

Additionally, the youth must have no safe, alternative housing, resources or support networks to maintain or obtain permanent housing.

*\*If youth are under the age of 18 you may be required to report family conflict resulting in abuse or neglect to the local child welfare agency. It is important to understand the mandatory reporting laws for child abuse and neglect in your local jurisdiction.*

*\*\*Gang or neighborhood violence has to be directed at the youth in their home not just in the general community to be eligible under category 4.*

**SECTION C: Project Details**

**Anticipated 2-Year Funding Availability**

The Vermont Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan has prioritized the following five project types. In addition to $60,000 for YHDP planning. **The remaining $1,942,131 (2-year total) is available to be put towards the remaining five projects:**

1. Rapid Rehousing: Short or Medium-term Tenant-based Rental Assistance (& Master Leasing Rental Assistance, with a Waiver)
2. Support Services/Coordinated Entry: Youth Housing Navigators
3. Support Services/Coordinated Entry: Landlord Liaisons
4. Transitional Housing/ Rapid Rehousing Joint Component
5. Rapid Rehousing: Short-term Diversion Support

**Rapid Rehousing (RRH): Tenant-based rental assistance (& Master Leasing Rental Assistance, with Waiver)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program Description** | **Timeframe for Participants** | **Population Served** | **Desired Outcomes** |
| **RRH low barrier housing that:*** Supports YYA in their own apartments through tenant-based\* 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

\* Master-leasing sponsor-based vouchers may be allowable with approved waiver, please see waiver section  | * Between 3 and 24 months, up to 36 months with waiver approval
* Site-based with waiver for Master-leasing.
 | * Unaccompanied young adults and minors ages 18\*-24 experiencing literal or imminent homelessness, fleeing violence, pregnant or parenting or who are precariously housed

*(HUD Categories 1, 2, 4)**\*and emancipated 16 + 17 youth** Preference for pregnant and parenting youth and youth fleeing violence *(including domestic, sexual, human trafficking or sexual exploitation)*
 | * 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
 |

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program Description** | **Timeframe for Participants** | **Population Served** | **Desired Outcomes** |
| **Youth Housing Navigators SSO:** * 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

  | * Up to 12 months
 | * Unaccompanied young adults and minors experiencing literal or imminent homelessness, fleeing violence, pregnant or parenting

*(HUD Categories 1, 2, 4)* | * 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
 |

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program Description** | **Timeframe for Participants** | **Population Served** | **Desired Outcomes** |
| **Landlord Engagement/ Landlord Liaison (SSO/ CE):*** 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
 | * Unlimited
 | * Project will not work directly with youth but will cover BoS CoC communities
 | * 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
 |

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program Description** | **Timeframe for Participants** | **Population Served** | **Desired Outcomes** |
| **TH-RRH:** * Combines Transitional Housing, a service-intensive, frequently congregate-care component, with a pathway to RRH, a scattered site independent living component
* 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
 | * 24 to 36-months with waiver approval
 | * 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)*(note, cap of 10% for category 3 youth) | * 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
 |

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program Description** | **Timeframe for Participants** | **Population Served** | **Desired Outcomes** |
| **RRH/ Diversion:*** 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

  | * 3 months
 | * 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)*(note, cap of 10% for category 3 youth) | * 75% of participants are independently housed at exit
* < 25% of participants enter the housing response system during the 3-months they receive diversion support
 |

**SECTION D: YHDP Project Scoring Criteria**

The applications will be scored based on the following criteria, for a more detailed version of scoring please refer to the scoring sheet posted at: [www.helpingtohousevt.org/yhdp](http://www.helpingtohousevt.org/yhdp)

Experience – 25 points

Project Approach – 48 points

Project Scope/Implementation – 12 points

Budget – 15 points

Total 100 points**.**

**SECTION E: Vermont YHDP Goals**

For a complete list of YHDP Goals and Objectives please refer to the [Coordinated Community Plan](http://www.helpingtohousevt.org/yhdp). Below are a brief list of the goals and objects the Youth Homeless Demonstration Program and its funded projects will be working towards achieving collaboratively.

* 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.
* Reduce or eliminate system-level barriers that prevent youth from accessing or staying in available housing projects.
	1. Identify system-level barriers to housing and determine ways to address them.
	2. 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).
	3. Increase education about the expanded definition of Category 4 for youth fleeing violence.
* Develop a general application for youth to access housing supports that is used by all housing programs
* 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.
* Increase collaboration and coordination between the community housing providers, youth service systems, education, and workforce organizations, etc.
* Peer and adult mentorship activities are built into housing and case management programs for YYA.
* 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.
* 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.
* 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.
* Ensure that housing service providers and partners are taking a youth-centered approach to connecting youth with an array of opportunities that connect YYA to peers and their community.
* Ensure connections to mental health support for LGBTQ youth, connections to LGBTQ affirming sexual health information, substance abuse programming for VT YHDP funded projects.
* Ensure YHDP funding projects are supporting YYA with long-term stability through:
	1. 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.
	2. Provision of case management or learning opportunities that enhance life skill development, from paying bills, cook and cleaning, to accessing resources.
		1. 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.

**SECTION F: Philosophy and Key Principles**

**A Right to Housing with No Preconditions:** A fundamental aspect of the Housing First model is the paradigm that housing is a right and youth should be provided housing without first having to prove they are “ready” (often through abstaining from substance use, engaging in treatment or counseling programs, or having a certain level of income to be able to contribute to housing costs). Everyone is ready for a home. Service plans can include building independent living skills and gaining employment, or other goals as appropriate for each youth, but obtainment of those goals should not be a barrier to housing.

**Youth Choice, Youth Voice and Self-Determination:** Choice means young people have a say in their housing and supports. Youth voice means young people with lived experience have an input in how services they use are designed, there should be adequate means to provide feedback. Self-determination means the young person is supported in setting their own goals, with timelines that are developmentally appropriate.

**Positive Youth Development/ Youth Thrive (PYD/ YT**) **and a Wellness Orientation:** 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*.

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.

In Vermont, YYA serving agencies have begun to adopt the Youth Thrive (YT) framework. 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.

In addition to building services centered around these frameworks, an over-all wellness approach should be integrated into services. Working in partnership with local service agencies, housing providers should ensure availability of individual and peer counseling, substance use treatment, health care, mental health care, dental care, and other wellness services to ensure client needs are addressed holistically. All services available for youth should be delivered through Trauma-Informed Care and Harm Reeducation models. And whenever possible and in the best interest of the client, work should be done to engage a client’s family.

**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.

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.

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 o 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.”

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

1. Distributing sleeping bags and warm clothing to youth who choose not to enter shelter
2. Reviewing policies and procedures to determine if they create unnecessary consequences and barriers or place judgments on youth accessing supports due to substance use
3. 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.

**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.

**Individualize, Client-Driven Supports:** Young people are unique, and so are their needs. Housing services should realize that young people’s needs evolve and develop over time. How we support them will therefore change and needs to be flexible. Supporting vulnerable youth in the transition to adulthood requires time to build a trusting relationship, and acceptance from the support worker that what the young person may want is not what they themselves would want.

**Social Inclusion and Community Integration:** Community Integration and social inclusion is the opportunity to live in the community and be valued for one’s uniqueness and abilities, like everyone else. 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 and inclusion 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.

**SECTION G: Coordinated Entry**

As described in the Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness Coordinated Entry Partnership Agreement the roles and responsibilities are as followed; for more information on Coordinated Entry within Vermont BoS CoC please refer to [www.helpingtohousevt.org/whatwedo/coordinatedentry/overview](http://www.helpingtohousevt.org/whatwedo/coordinatedentry/overview)

**Lead Agency**

* Provide leadership, coordination and oversight of Coordinated Entry Processes.
* Ensure that all Partners are involved in and informed of evaluation and reporting aspects
* Seek out funding to help with costs associated with the continued development and implementation of the Coordinated Entry partnership
* Ensure that all requirements (programmatic and fiscal) for grant funds received to underwrite any part of expenses associated with the continued development and implementation.
* Provide training and technical assistance to Partners to ensure standardization of information, assistance and referral offered to potential households
* Provide training and technical assistance to all Partner staff administering the VCEH Housing Crisis Referral Tool, and the VCEH Housing Assessment Tool
* Promote the process and outcomes of Coordinated Entry to the public, local officials, state and federal agencies, officials and other interested parties.
* Convene local CE Partnership Meetings
* Ensure the evaluation of the local CE Partnership
* Liaison with the VCEH Coordinated Entry Committee or delegate participation
* Act as a local clearinghouse for persons experiencing or at risk of homelessness and in search of support to find or retain housing
* With Partnership committee support, maintain a local inventory of homeless assistance resources
* Follow up with clients referred by Referral Partners within 3 days (target).
* Complete VCEH Housing Assessment for households experiencing or at risk of homelessness, prior to enrolling clients in the programs/projects in Attachment A
* Ensure that all Agreements and Partner Staff Confidentiality Agreements are signed and kept in a secure central location; to be kept on file for a minimum of five year.

**Assessment Partner**

* Complete VCEH Housing Assessment for households experiencing or at risk of homelessness, prior to enrolling clients in the programs/projects
* Maintain high level of communication and coordination with the Lead Agency and other Assessment Partners
* Share assessment information, as needed, to coordinate referrals and ensure that consumers are not completing the assessment multiple times

**Referral Partner**

* Complete the VCEH Housing Crisis Referral tool for households they identify as homeless or at-risk of homelessness
* Submit completed VCEH Housing Crisis Referral tool to the Lead Agency within one business day.

**Shared Responsibilities**

* Make Coordinated Entry Partnership processes, including those related to access, assessment and referral to homeless programs and services, well-known to clients
* Agree to make appropriate staff available for the training on protocols and procedures to follow for Coordinated Entry in their agency. To the extent possible, the training will focus on standardizing the level of information and understanding that Partners staff have, in order to give consistent and accurate information through Coordinated Entry
* Agree to distribute information to the public regarding ow to access homeless assistance. Brochures, fliers, websites, public services announcements may be created by the Partnership for this purpose
* Agree to have a representative on the Coordinated Entry Partnership committee, to provide input into the operations and continuous refinements and evaluation of the Coordinated Entry processes. When issues arise, agree to joint problem solve with individual Partners, the Local Lead Agency, and the Partnership committee
* Partners shall agree to follow guidelines for referring clients in a manner that is compliant with HIPPA (Public Health Information) and 42 CFR Part 2 (Substance Abuse Treatment Information). This includes informing households that they are receiving intake and referral under the Partnership, completing the Housing Crisis Referral form (with release of information), and forwarding any information to agencies in a compliant manner.
* Agree to use established Coordinated Entry protocols and processes to refer and accept clients into projects and programs. Agree to communicate with partners when/if a referred household is not accepted into a project/program.