Positive Youth Development (PYD): focuses on meeting youth at their own developmental stage and supporting positive growth. A PYD approach ensures that young people have opportunities to contribute within the community and develop transferable skills and competencies through healthy interactions with adults and other youth. PYD is centered on strengths and personal goals, which guide youth to make healthy choices, build confidence and maintain self-control.⁵

Trauma-Informed Care (TIC): provides services appropriate for youth who have experienced abuse and/or trauma. Moreover, it places an emphasis on the creation of appropriate settings and relationships within which a young person can heal. Given that YYA experiencing homelessness are often exposed to significant trauma, it is essential that interventions are trauma-informed. Early indicators suggest that TIC may have a positive effect on housing stability. ⁷

Cultural Competence: refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, particularly in the context of human resources, non-profit organizations and government agencies. Cultural competence includes four components: (1) awareness of one's own cultural worldview, (2) attitude toward cultural differences, (3) knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews and (4) cross-cultural skills. Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across cultures.⁸

Client-Centered Care: is an approach to service provision rooted in an understanding of each client's needs and perspectives. Customized individual treatment "starts where the youth is at," allowing the client to identify strengths, clarify goals and set a path toward achievement.⁹

Strengths-Based Services: describes an assessment and treatment model that identifies individual core strengths across life domains. Additionally, it builds upon those strengths to overcome issues that youth believe to require positive change. As a result, young people develop a greater understanding of the strengths, skills and resources that can be used in everyday life after service completion.¹⁰

You can download our full Proposed System to End Youth and Young Adult Homelessness and accompanying publications at www.nn4youth.org/learn/what-works.

- 1 Transition-aged youth are commonly referred to as TAY, older youth or young adults. The term describes 18 to 24 year-olds.
- 2 Criminal justice includes law enforcement, court, probation and detention professionals.
- 3 Rapid Rehousing and Housing First are popular housing models that focus on quickly moving individuals and families into permanent housing, with supportive services if necessary. For youth, these approaches need to be adapted in order to provide housing in developmentally appropriate models. Additionally, youth-appropriate supportive services, case management and life-skills training must be provided, along with re-engagement with education and workforce development programs. For homeless minors, these approaches are greatly challenging because minors are not the age of majority to consent to a lease in many states and are often unprepared to live successfully on their own.
- 4 Special consideration must be made for pregnant and parenting minors and TAY, many of whom have no adequate emergency crisis shelter options due to age restrictions codified in state youth shelter regulations. Vouchers, Congregate Transitional Housing, Community-Based Transitional Housing, Extended Rental Assistance, Permanent Supportive Housing, Transition in Place and Permanent Affordable Housing can all be appropriate for pregnant and parenting youth.
- 5 National Resource Center for Youth Development. The University of Oklahoma OUTREACH. Retrieved from http://www.nrcyd.ou.edu/youth-engagement/positive-vouth-development.
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Proposed System to End Youth and Young Adult Homelessness



Introduction

Youth and young adults (YYA) are defined by a complex and critical stage of personal growth. Unfortunately, YYA experiencing homelessness lack safety, stability and other basic life needs. Moreover, many of these individuals are unable to access systems, services and resources designed to support healthy development.

For these reasons, YYA experiencing homelessness require a combination of developmentally-appropriate housing and service options. At the systematic level, this approach depends on close collaboration between government agencies, philanthropists and community-based organizations.

Background

In 2013, the National Network for Youth (NN4Y) first released our Proposed System to End Youth and Young Adult Homelessness. This effort was intended to document current knowledge and practices about preventing homelessness and caring for YYA who become homeless. We partnered with a diverse array of experts, who continue to provide guidance. This version of our Proposed System has been revised to more clearly depict the relationship between various housing and service options.

A youth-centric approach

Needs-based interventions are essential to providing all YYA with the support they need to avoid or quickly exit homelessness. Upon entering the system, each young person should receive a comprehensive needs assessment. These assessments should be repeated as necessary to connect youth with age-appropriate housing and services. In practice, this approach requires communities to identify and eliminate gaps in the availability of local resources. Through policy and funding, lawmakers can support the existence of these fully-resourced systems at the community level.

Research indicates that housing assistance for YYA is most effective in conjunction with social, health and educational services. However, each service or housing option must be well-timed and youth-centric to ensure success. For this reason, our system includes primary, secondary and tertiary interventions divided between different stages of delivery. Each component belongs to one or more stage, spanning from prevention to aftercare. We encourage communities to act before (primary and secondary interventions) and soon after (tertiary interventions) YYA experience homelessness. Once youth return home or find appropriate housing placements, services should remain available to prevent future episodes of homelessness.

To address both the causes and consequences of a national epidemic, our proposed system includes a full range of developmentally-appropriate service and housing options for youth and their families. It empowers YYA to lead fuller, healthier lives. Within this system, youth experiencing homelessness will spend less time worrying about basic needs and more time pursuing education and healthy interpersonal relationships. Collectively, our recommendations provide multiple opportunities for youth to undergo safe and healthy transitions to adulthood.

Flexible implementation

Although necessarily comprehensive, the proposed system is still flexible in several ways.

- It is designed to accommodate all YYA, regardless of how many times or where they enter or exit the system. Policies and outcome measures should be structured to welcome youth back whatever programs they need, whenever they seek assistance.
- It is envisioned only as a source of general guidance. Local leaders are encouraged to prioritize service and housing
 recommendations in whichever order befits their community. Likewise, communities should implement a system
 that responds to local needs and is compatible with population dynamics.
- It is intended and expected to evolve over time. Although the current version has been reviewed by providers and
 other experts, we welcome additional feedback. As new research and data becomes available, NN4Y will update our
 resource accordingly.

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Proposed System to End Youth and Young Adult Homelessness

All support services & housing models should be implemented according to the following principles, defined on page 4: Positive Youth Development, Trauma-Informed Care, Cultural Competence, Client Centered Care & Strengths-Based Family Services



Early childhood services

Identification & expedited priority access to: prenatal care; quality childcare; Head Start/Early Head Start; early intervention (i.e. IDEA Part C) & preschool programs Medica

Case management
Planning & goal-setting
exercises; care coordination;
advocacy & referrals to
additional services

Medical care

Doctor appointments & checkups; substance abuse services & other treatment

Mentoring

Mental health care

wellness

Services Available Throughout the Entire System

Individual & group counseling;

suicide prevention & emotional

Ongoing guidance & support from peers or adults, with an emphasis on healthy, long-term relationships

Family support services

All-family counseling; parenting assistance & affordable/accessible childcare for young parent families

Legal services

Direct representation for civil & criminal matters, record expungement and assistance obtaining ID

School-based services

Adequately trained and resourced McKinney-Vento homeless liaisons; case management; health care; sexual health education & student support communities (i.e. Gay/Straight Alliances)

Postsecondary education

Financial aid; priority for work study; tuition waivers; priority for housing; housing during academic breaks; single points of contact & campus support services (i.e. food, health & counseling)

Prevention Services Early & Crisis Intervention Services **Long-Term Services Aftercare Services** In-home care Centralized communications Life skills building Workforce development Respite care **Drop-in centers** Therapeutic family services **Education & technical** Post-family reunification Post-housing support Follow-up Counseling, activity Counseling & crisis Providing a safe environment with Phone hotline such as National Individual & group counseling to Self-care, money & Skills training, employment Counseling, supportive Case management, Periodic contact with youth training supportive services including meals, Runaway Safeline (1-800- RUNAWAY) & household management; assistance, internships, career groups & substance intervention to safely & appropriately reunite services & referrals to address counseling & referrals & family to determine Support & re-engagement for students; middle, high school goal-setting & problem provide a "break" for showers, health care & counseling to instant message, email or text services planning & other abuse prevention to youth with family ongoing needs progress & provide keep youth with family to connect youth & family to housing & vouth and family help build trust & offer options for solving development professional preparation additional services or & postsecondary instruction; GED & technical programs referrals **Public education** Community & street outreach Systems-based approaches **Nurturing** permanent connections Post-exit community outreach Outreach and communications to increase Peer advocates & others identify youth in School, child welfare, health care & Family reunification, kinship care Opportunities for youth to re-engage public awareness & information about need to build trust, provide services (i.e. criminal justice1 professionals identify placements, legal guardianships & with needed services at any given time available resources drop-in center & shelter referrals) & help youth in crisis & provide counseling, supportive services to build long-term prevent abuse/exploitation substance abuse services, housing relationships with caring adults assistance & other resource referrals Family crisis housing [minors] Time-limited rental assistance [TAY] Crisis intervention programs [minors & TAY] Host-family home [minors & TAY] Extended rental assistance [TAY] Transition in place [TAY] Congregate transitional housing Supportive housing [TAY] Permanent affordable Temporary housing while family undergoes Short-term rental assistance to either Temporary housing with basic needs provision & External family provides youth with Non-time-limited housing [TAY] May include 24-hour access to [minors & TAY] Full to partial rental assistance, basic life intensive therapeutic interventions; available prevent youth or young parent families from youth-appropriate services (i.e. Basic Center Program safe & stable housing on a temporary Congregate setting with preparation for needs provision & supportive services accommodations & supportive Long-term, deed-restricted staff & independent living skills losing current shelter, or to facilitate quick before youth is ejected from home or runs for minors & emergency shelter programs for TAY) training, with option of taking on independent living (i.e. Transitional while youth pursue education or services for youth with the most rental housing for very away (i.e. Basic Center Program, host home & return to stable housing3 significant challenges apartment lease before or after Living Program, Transitional Housing & vocational training low-income youth short-term foster care) Maternity Group Homes⁴) program completion

Prevention Housing

Early & Crisis Intervention Housing

Longer-Term Housing

Core Outcomes to Measure Success

Stable housing: safe, stable & developmentally appropriate housing with access to supportive services as necessary

Permanent connections: healthy attachments to peers, mentors, family & other caring adults

Education, training & employment: employability through supported academic success, development of workplace skills & connections to employers

Health & social/emotional well-being: physical health; ability to create & maintain positive relationships with others, solve problems, experience empathy & manage emotions

Self-sufficiency: self management with regard to finance, cooking, shopping, laundry, transportation, parenting & household management

Key

Support services or housing models that belong to one stage are identified by one color.

Support services or housing models that belong to two or more stages are identified by two or more colors. Each color appears in sequential order, beginning with the stage of origination.