Mapping a Way, Defining Directions
Community based Survey

Advancing Community and Systems Level Goals to End Youth Homelessness: A Survey to Understand Local Capacity and Readiness

Much work has been done to advance our understanding of HOW to prevent and end youth homelessness through game-changing initiatives and demonstrations like the 100 Day Challenge, YHDP, and USICH Benchmark and Criterion Pilot. Building off the experience, insights, and impact of runaway and homeless youth providers, we have learned what it takes to pivot from business as usual to a coordinated response, essential elements of coordinated responses, and guiding principles for high impact system improvements.

With this survey, Youth Collaboratory seeks a deeper understanding of what it takes for communities to pivot to a coordinated response to prevent and end youth homelessness.

You have been intentionally selected to complete this survey based on your individual experience, and your understanding of and engagement in your community's efforts to advance goals to prevent and end youth homelessness.

The results of this survey will be used to inform the tools, strategies, and resources that could be prioritized to support more communities pivoting to a coordinated response to prevent and end youth homelessness. Your responses will not be individually identified.

The survey should take you no more than 35 minutes. If you have any questions, please contact Josephine Pufpaff at Josephine@youthcollaboratory.org.

Thank you.

The first set of questions help us learn a bit about you and your community. We appreciate you letting us know who you are. We don’t want to spam you in any way; the data we collect will be used only for this project.

First name *

Last name *

Email address *

State *

City *

Organization *

Continuum of Care name *

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Community based Survey

Please select the option that best describes your role. *
- Youth or Young Adult
- Service Provider
- Continuum of Care Staff
- Homeless Student Liaison
- Philanthropic Partner
- City Staff
- County Staff
- Other:

Select the youth-specific initiatives and/or projects your community is participating in or has participated in. Select all that apply. *
- 100 Day Challenge
- Upstream
- Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project
- USICH Criterion Benchmark Pilot
- Coordinated Entry Learning Collaborative
- Pathways Forward Challenge
- True Colors Inclusion Assessment
- Anchor Community Initiative
- Not involved in any of these initiatives and/or projects

Did your community apply for or were invited to participate in but were not selected or did not join? Select all that apply. *
- 100 Day Challenge
- Upstream
- Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project
- USICH Criterion Benchmark Pilot
- Coordinated Entry Learning Collaborative
- Pathways Forward Challenge
- True Colors Inclusion Assessment
- Anchor Community Initiative
- Did not apply for or were not invited to participate in any of these initiatives and/or projects

Select the adult-specific initiatives and/or projects your community is participating in or has participated in. Select all that apply.
- SPARC Equity Initiative
- Other: 

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Collective Ownership in a Common Goal: It is widely believed that ending youth homelessness is nearly impossible without a community level commitment to a common goal, and partners who are persistently committed to that goal. Commonly cited components of “collective ownership” in a common goal are included in the questions below.

There is a widespread belief in the ability to end youth homelessness. *

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] Strongly agree [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

There is a shared vision for change, one that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed-upon actions. *

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] Strongly agree [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Core leader(s) and main stakeholders are bought into solving homelessness at the system level and focus on measurable system level goals. *

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] Strongly agree [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

The community has a community level set of indicators that align with the community goals to end youth homelessness. *

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

[ ] A set of indicators are in development.

The community has a set of guiding principles that community partners agree upon that facilitates the collective effort to end youth homelessness. *

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

[ ] A set of guiding principles is in development.
## Mapping a Way, Defining Directions
Community based Survey

The community (including youth and young adults with lived experience) convenes frequently and consistently to review progress, and to discuss trends, new challenges, and opportunities to end youth homelessness.

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**Strong Leadership:** In every conversation that took place to build this assessment tool, 100% of participants cited “strong leadership” as a critical component to success. Not only is it critical to have a respected leadership team and action-oriented staff to carry out the vision, but it’s critical to set leadership teams up in a sustainable structure so they can withstand leadership turnover. The following questions focus on how strong leadership does or doesn’t show up in your community.

Is there a commitment to ending youth homelessness demonstrated by a local action plan? *

- Yes
- No
- The community is developing its first local action plan dedicated to ending youth homelessness.

There is a clear leader or leaders who move/act with urgency, adapt, make decisions, and are respected and aligned with a community plan.

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Is there a specific entity responsible for implementing the action plan? *

- Yes
- No
- A responsible entity is in development.

If the response is yes, please list the entity responsible for implementing the action plan. *

Short answer text

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Community based Survey

The lead or leading entity above has the capacity to make and/or influence decisions that advance an end to youth homelessness.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree 〇 〇 〇 〇 〇 Strongly agree

If your response was between 1-2: please share a few thoughts on what gets in the way of the lead/leading entity’s ability to make and/or influence decisions that advance an end to youth homelessness.

Short answer text

Implementation of the plan is facilitated by a leadership team comprised of the following stakeholders.

☐ Service Providers

☐ Government Staff

☐ Continuum of Care Staff

☐ Youth and young adults with lived experience of homelessness or housing instability

☐ Funders

☐ Other...

The leadership team includes individuals with authority to create systems changes to support the implementation of the action plan.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree 〇 〇 〇 〇 〇 Strongly agree
Mapping a Way, Defining Directions
Community based Survey

The leadership team has opportunities to network with and learn from other communities nationally. For example, they participate in communities of practice, national convenings, and learning collaboratives.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ A process to engage in peer learning is in development.

There is a deliberate plan to develop the leadership of people most impacted by youth homelessness and to share decision-making authority.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly agree

Authentic Youth

To ensure the next section is relevant to your community, please answer the following question.

There is a convening body of youth and young adults for the purpose of designing, monitoring, and evaluating homeless responses and strategies in the community. For example: a Youth Advisory Board, Youth Leadership Council, or Youth Action Board.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ We're in the process of building one.
Authentic Youth Collaboration: The national movement for youth experts to be a driving force in the work has produced many lessons learned in the last few years. We’re far beyond having something like a “Youth Action Board” – it’s about truly authentic collaboration, inclusive decision-making processes, and system capacity to support and compensate youth for their expertise. This section asks questions that dig a little deeper into this concept to better understand where your community is at.

Check below all that applies to the current convening body. *

☐ It has a governance structure.

☐ It has by-laws.

☐ It has a mission and vision in place that was developed by youth and young adults with lived experience.

There is an up-to-date recruitment and retention strategy for members, specifically identifying  *
LGBTQ+, youth of color, and differently-abled young people?

☐ LGBTQ+ Youth and Young Adults

☐ Youth and Young Adults of Color

☐ Differently-abled Youth and Young Adults (Youth with disabilities)

☐ A recruitment and retention strategy is in development but not in place.
Mapping a Way, Defining Directions
Community based Survey

Please select all that apply. The CoC and/or partner youth-service organizations support the convening body of youth and young adults in the following way(s)?

- Cash or gift cards as stipends for participation in meetings, phone calls, and/or other related activities
- Transportation support (rides, bus passes, gas cards)
- Provide an hourly rate of pay
- Older adult staff support
- Consistent space to meet
- Accessible space to meet
- Youth and young adult friendly space to meet
- Provide a hot meal
- Provide information and/or an info sheet on local resources
- Offer professional development and workforce training
- Offer additional training and opportunities youth and young adult members ask for

Does the CoC board have at least 2 voting seats dedicated to youth and young adults with lived experience of homelessness or housing instability? *

- We have zero voting seats dedicated
- We have at least one voting seat dedicated
- Yes we have at least two voting seats dedicated
- Yes we have more than two voting seats dedicated
Are there regular opportunities in place in collaboration with the governing body and the CoC to * voice the opinions, perspectives, and recommendations of young people? For example, a standing agenda item or dedicated time is scheduled on a quarterly timetable.

- Yes
- No
- Opportunities for young people are in development.

**Youth Collaboration and Leadership in Advancing Goals to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness**: Youth collaboration and leadership showed up over and over again as we conducted the stakeholder interviews regarding key components to a community’s readiness and capacity to have a coordinated response to ending youth homelessness. The following section means to dig in a bit more into what that means from the perspective of a youth action board, advisory, and/or council member (recently or currently), and understand differences between how young people and adults perceive such collaboration.

Older adult providers respect the thoughts and recommendations of youth and young adults with lived experiences. *

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly agree

Older adult partners (providers, organizations, consultants, etc.) appropriately respond and adapt to issues identified by the youth governing body. *

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly agree

There is a process in place to address disagreements that come up between the youth convening body and the older adult partners. *

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly agree
Mapping a Way, Defining Directions
Community based Survey

There is a person or specific entity responsible for helping the youth convening body (i.e. YAB) with setting and tackling goals that go beyond youth homelessness specific work. *

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly agree

I feel that members of our convening body have equal decision making power within our group. *

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly agree

Providers are transparent with the youth and young adult leaders. *

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly agree

Providers understand, prioritize, and most importantly support the individual goals of youth and young adults participating in the convening body. *

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly agree

Youth and young adult leaders are provided training on the current homeless response system, the role of key stakeholders, and the decision-making process. *

Yes
No
A training process is in development.
Mapping a Way, Defining Directions
Community based Survey

The lead entity responsible for supporting the youth convening body provides info sheets/information on local resources to respond to needs identified by youth on the convening body. *

- Yes
- No
- Materials are in development.

Could you describe your goals and purpose when it comes to your community's work on ending youth homelessness?

Your answer

In your opinion, who has the most power when it comes to the final say about what happens in your community to advance the goals of preventing and ending youth homelessness?

Your answer

If you could change the decision-making power in your community, how would you?

Your answer


Having & Using Quality Data: There is a national dashboard through A Way Home America that 12 communities actively use on a monthly basis – this in itself is a bold statement around the importance of having and using quality data. Using data goes beyond the dashboard and is action-oriented within local planning and refinement efforts. Questions in this section hone in on the extent to which you have quality data, and how you’re using it to further the end goal.

Please select all that apply in response to the following statement. Data is available on the following data points to understand the experience of young people accessing your homeless response system during a specific time period.

*  

☐ The total number of homeless youth and young adults known to the system.

☐ The annual inflow of homeless youth and young adults into the homeless response system.

☐ The annual outflow of homeless youth and young adults into the homeless responses system.

☐ The housing placement rate.

A community assessment has been completed in the last year to develop a thorough understanding of youth and young adult homelessness in the community.*

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ A community assessment will be completed in the next year.

The community has a developed strategy to identify youth and young adults who may never enter the shelter system, and those experiencing "hidden" homelessness (doubled up, couch surfing, fleeing from violence, immigrants)? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ A strategy is in development but not in place.
Mapping a Way, Defining Directions
Community based Survey

The community assessment includes a focus on the following subpopulations of youth at risk of experiencing homelessness and housing instability.

☐ Youth and young adults who are differently abled
☐ Youth and young adults with chronic health conditions
☐ Youth and young adults involved in the juvenile justice system
☐ Youth and young adults involved in the child welfare system
☐ Other:

Does your community use diverse sources of information and data systems from different locations (partners, services providers, organizations) to analyze and build community priorities?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ A process for gathering data for comprehensive analysis is in development.

Not including HMIS, please list diverse data sources used to build community priorities.

Your answer

There is a positive level of confidence in the data available.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly agree

The community’s primary data system complies with confidentiality requirements for youth under 18 years of age and victim services providers.

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly agree
The community collects data on youth and young adults with chronic or disabling health conditions including those with developmental disabilities. *

- Yes
- No
- A process is in development.

**Centering Equity:** National data shows clear disparities among youth of color and LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness. If we don’t scale up to end homelessness among LGBTQ and youth of color, we will not end youth homelessness. The following questions focus on efforts to center equity within your work to end youth homelessness.

*Is there a shared analysis and language about race and racism among the coordinating body advancing the community goals to end youth homelessness?*

- Yes
- No
- A shared analysis and/or language about race and racism is in development.

**Has your community identified goals for racially equitable community level outcomes?** *

- Yes
- No
- Racially equitable community level outcomes are in development.

**The community has access to training on the following:** *

- Racial equity
- LGBTQ equity
- Trauma-informed care
- Authentic youth engagement
Mapping a Way, Defining Directions
Community based Survey

Youth and young adults with lived experiences of homelessness and/or housing instability participate in determining community level goals towards ending youth homelessness.

Strongly disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly agree

There has been a shared analysis of who has decision making power and who does not within the coordinating body of stakeholders advancing goals to end youth homelessness.

Yes ○ No ○ A process is in development.

The community has culturally responsive policies and practices about collecting data on the racial identity of young people.

Strongly disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly agree

The community has culturally responsive policies and practices about collecting data on the LGBTQ+ identity of young people.

Strongly disagree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly agree
Local Capacity to Drive System Change: To reach the end goal, communities have to be all in. This requires dedicating all possible resources to youth homelessness, from staff capacity within a lead entity, to funding, to planning capacity. The questions in this section focus on system level prioritization of resources toward ending youth homelessness.

There an entity at the State level (office of homeless youth services, homeless youth state coordinator, commission on homeless youth, etc.) that focuses solely on youth homelessness. *

- Yes
- No
- An entity is in process of being identified/developed.

There is an up-to-date systems map of services, housing opportunities, and key stakeholders available to inform decisions related to ending youth homelessness. *

- Yes
- No
- An up-to-date systems map is in development.

Available funding has been prioritized for youth-specific interventions. For example, youth-specific housing models, youth-specific job training and career pathways opportunities, health-related services, etc. *

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree

Please select all that apply in response to the following statement. Available funding has been prioritized for the following interventions and/or system capacity. *

- Prevention interventions
- Youth housing models
- Data quality and management systems
- Other:
Cross System Partnership: The homeless system cannot alone end youth homelessness. Critical cross-system partnerships are necessary to better identify youth experiencing homelessness, connect youth with services and housing options, and support long-term housing retention. The following questions focus on specific system partnerships and non-traditional partner engagement as well as willingness to move forward in alignment around common goals.

Does the community have a set of strategies to identify unaccompanied youth who are doubled up or couch surfing and considered to be experiencing homelessness under any federal definition? *

- Yes
- No
- A set of strategies are in development.
Mapping a Way, Defining Directions
Community based Survey

Please select all that apply in response to the following statement. To advance ending youth homelessness goals, there is an effort to enhance policy coordination with... *

☐ Child Welfare- Child Protection
☐ Child Welfare- Foster Care
☐ Homeless Student Services
☐ Juvenile Justice
☐ Adult Corrections
☐ Behavioral Health
☐ Healthcare
☐ Workforce Development
☐ Faith-Based Partners
☐ Other:

Please select all that apply in response to the following statement. There are mechanisms in place to coordinate funding streams to fund services and interventions with the following systems partners... *

☐ Child Welfare- Child Protection
☐ Child Welfare- Foster Care
☐ Homeless Student Services
☐ Juvenile Justice
☐ Adult Corrections
☐ Behavioral Health
☐ Healthcare
☐ Workforce Development
☐ Faith-Based Partners
☐ Other:
Mapping a Way, Defining Directions
Community based Survey

Please select all that apply to the following statement. A high level decision maker within the system is engaged in cross system strategies to advance goals to end youth homelessness. *

☐ Child Welfare- Child Protection
☐ Child Welfare- Foster Care
☐ Homeless Student Services
☐ Juvenile Justice
☐ Adult Corrections
☐ Behavioral Health
☐ Healthcare
☐ Workforce Development
☐ Faith-Based Partners
☐ Other:

Entities are motivated to change and are willing to share the risk and responsibilities. *

1  2  3  4  5

Strongly disagree  ○  ○  ○  ○  ○  Strongly agree

Our coordinated entry system utilizes information beyond vulnerability scoring to support a housing stability plan. *

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Additional information/data elements are in process of being identified.
Mapping a Way, Defining Directions
Community based Survey

**Prevention:** The homeless system cannot alone prevent homelessness. As we make progress to end literal homelessness among young people and move toward more concerted prevention efforts, multiple systems must be involved. These questions focus on specific system partnerships and non-traditional partner engagement.

The community has dedicated programs for minor youth that can serve as a diversion intervention. *

- [ ] Outreach
- [ ] Drop-in center
- [ ] Emergency shelter
- [ ] Family reunification services
- [ ] Other: __________

Please select all that apply. The following public systems have screening and early identification processes for identifying youth at-risk for homelessness. *

- [ ] Child Welfare
- [ ] Juvenile Justice
- [ ] Education
- [ ] Behavioral Health
- [ ] Healthcare

Does the community have a public awareness campaign (Ex: Safe Place), to mitigate the stigma associated with youth homelessness and direct youth who need help to common entry points to access information and services? *

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] A public awareness campaign is in development.
Mapping a Way, Defining Directions
Community based Survey

Do non-traditional partners engage in informing and designing community-based strategies to improve identification and response to youth at risk of homelessness? For example, community-based after school programs, community centers, and sporting clubs.*

- Yes
- No
- I am not sure.

If you responded yes to the previous question, please share a few examples of non-traditional partners and how they are engaged.

Your answer

What are 1-3 opportunities in your community that may impact your goals to prevent and end youth and young adult homelessness over the next year?

Your answer

What are 1-3 barriers you can see ahead in your community over the next year of advancing your goals to prevent and end youth and young adult homelessness?

Your answer

Please share anything else you believe is important to advance your community's goals in ending youth homelessness.

Your answer

Thank you!

Your participation and recommendations of colleagues to participate will help shape and mold our work to end youth homelessness. If you have any questions, please reach out to Josephine Pufpaff at josephine@youthcollaboratory.org.