

Image by Jakya Ellison, Youth Action Board member

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

**YOUTH
HOMELESSNESS
DEMONSTRATION
PROGRAM**

**COORDINATED
COMMUNITY PLAN**

Points of Contact:

Bethany Pombar, VT YHDP Coordinator, Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs, BPombar@vcrhyp.org

Daniel Blankenship, VT BoS CoC Collaborative Applicant, Vermont State Housing Authority, daniel@vsha.org

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.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	5
VISION	6
GOALS	6
STATEMENT OF NEED	7
YHDP Target Population	7
General Demographic Information	7
Poverty and Rurality in Vermont	7
Homelessness and Risk in Vermont	8
CAPACITY AND UTILIZATION	12
Where Youth and Young Adults Are Currently Being Served	14
Where Youth Are Entering Homeless Response System	17
Length of Time in Emergency Shelter and Housing Projects	21
YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS AND COORDINATED ENTRY	21
Integration of Youth into the CoC's Coordinated Entry System	21
Data on Youth Accessing Coordinated Entry	22
Housing Assessment and Youth Needs	25
SERVING THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF SPECIFIC SUB-POPULATIONS AND INTERSECTIONAL ISSUES	27
Sub-Populations: Unaccompanied Minors	27
Sub-Populations: Pregnant and Parenting Youth	29
Sub-Populations: LGBTQ	31
Sub-Populations: Child Welfare and Justice Involvement	32
Sub-Populations: Youth Connections to Secondary and Post-Secondary Education	37
Sub-Populations: Youth Connections to Employment Supports	40
Sub-Populations: Youth with Mental Health, Physical, Developmental or Substance Use Disabilities	42
Sub-Populations: Race and Ethnicity	44
Sub-Populations: Domestic and Sexual Violence	45
Sub-Populations: Exploitation and Trafficking	47
Sub-Population: "Urban Travelers"	48
BLUEPRINT FOR YHDP FUNDED PROJECTS	49
RFP SELECTION PROCESS OVERVIEW	60
CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT	61

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: VERMONT YOUTH HOUSING & SERVICES INVENTORY

Appendix 5: COORDINATED ENTRY LEVEL OF ASSISTANCE AND COMPLEX SERVICE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Appendix 6: YOUTH BEDS BY COUNTY

Appendix 7: YHPPC STAKEHOLDER WORKGROUP FINAL REPORT

Appendix 8: YHPPC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT WORKGROUP FINAL REPORT

Appendix 9: YOUTH THRIVE PROTECTIVE AND PROMOTIVE FACTORS

Appendix 10: HUD DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS

Appendix 11: DEFINITION OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

Appendix 12: SIGNATURES FROM OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES

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 explored how youth are accessing housing through coordinated entry and how we may improve that process; 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/Diversions: 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 Home-Based 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 24.³ Table 1 shows population by age groups in BoS CoC counties.

<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,

¹ Further information on HUD definitions of homelessness can be found in the appendices.
² *ibid*
³ 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
⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, County Rurality Level, 2010

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.

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

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

⁵ Public Assets Institute, State of Working Vermont, 2017

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

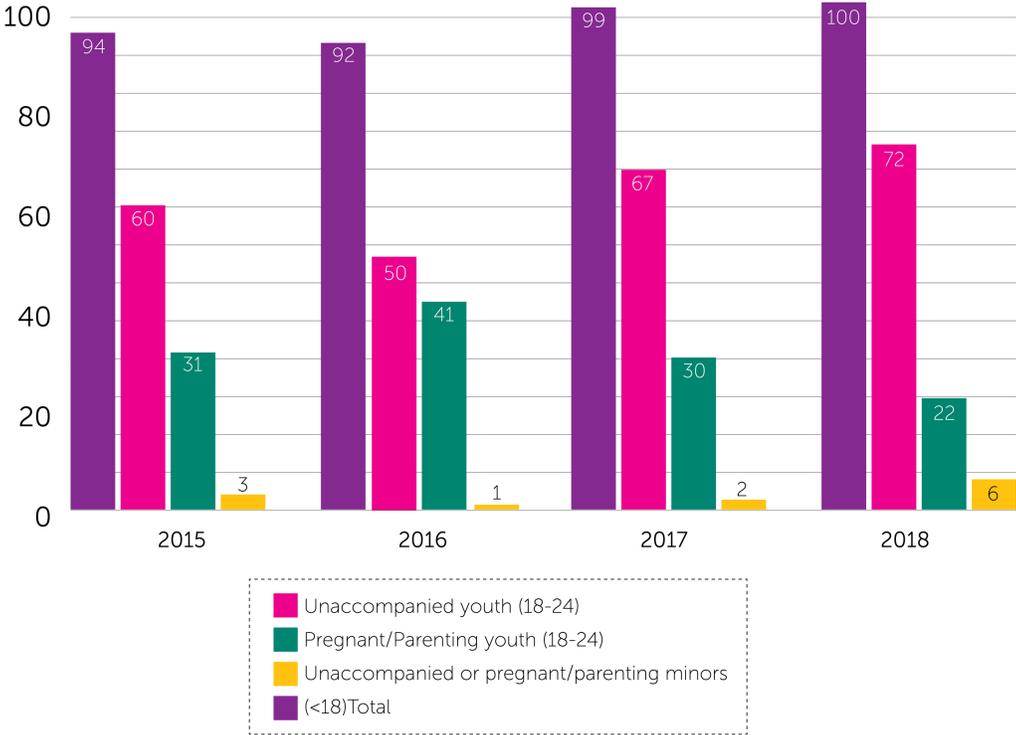
¹⁰ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, SNAP factsheet, Vermont, 2018

¹¹ National Alliance to End Homelessness, State of Homelessness in America, 2017,

<https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-report/>

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.

Figure 1:
2018 BoS POINT IN TIME COUNT YOUTH DATA



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

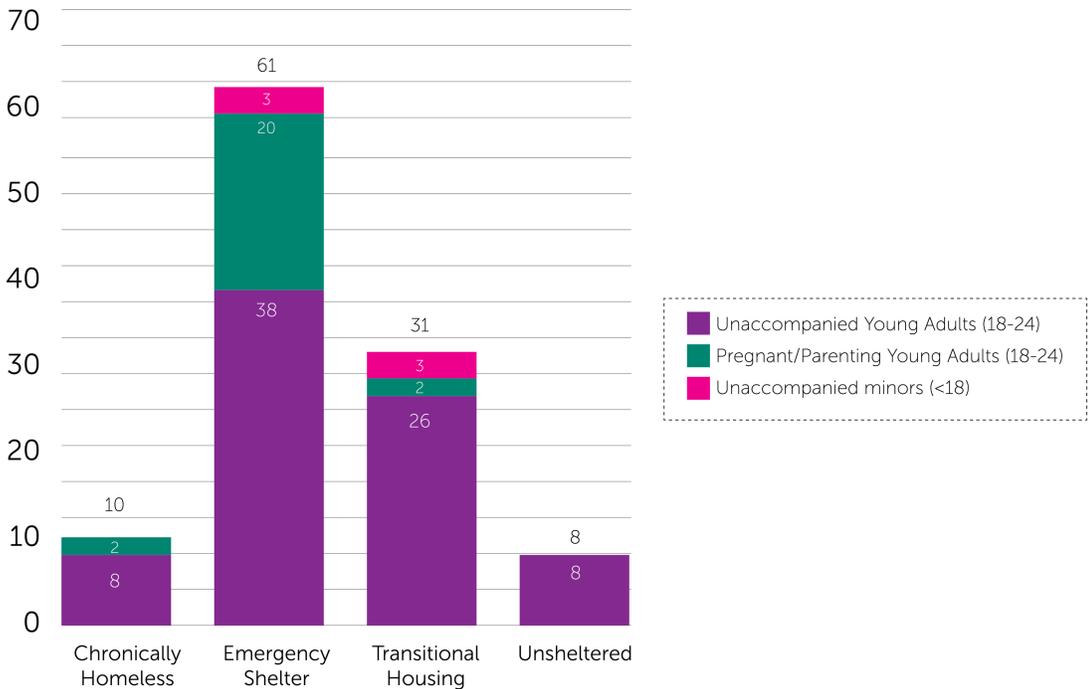
¹² Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness, 2018, <http://helpingtohousevt.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/2018-PIT-Report-FINAL-5-30-18.pdf>

¹³ Institute for Community Alliances, October, 2018

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

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.

Figure 2:
2018 POINT IN TIME COUNT LOCATION OF YOUTH



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

- 276 YYA were in CoC, RHY BCP, RHY TLP and the state's Housing Opportunities Program (HOP) funded housing projects entering into HMIS
- 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 that do not enter data 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.

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.

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) <i>(OUTSIDE OF BoS CoC)</i>	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) <i>(OUTSIDE OF BoS CoC)</i>	10
		Statewide TOTAL	39	29 year-round (21 in BoS),10 seasonal
	Transitional Housing	HOP	Spectrum Youth & Family Services (Burlington) <i>(OUTSIDE OF BoS CoC)</i>	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 66 youth with transitional housing.¹⁷ 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>

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.

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.

In FY18, young adult “head of households” 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.

Table 4: FY18 Mainstream Crisis Bed Utilization for BoS CoC					
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
<i>BoS CoC Total</i>	<i>546</i>	<i>223</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>219</i>	<i>91* see notes</i>

**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 YVA served by UVM's statewide RRH project for veterans, which can't be associated with a particular county.*

***Note: A total of 13 YVA, 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. The Vermont Department for Children and Families contracts with 2-1-1 to administer the General Assistance Emergency Housing (Motel) program after-hours. 46% (901) of calls by young adults aged 18-24 were calls seeking housing or shelter supports, making it the number one issue callers in this age group 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.

People ages 18-24 called VT 2-1-1 over 900 times in the past year to access after-hours emergency housing support.

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 (which excludes all DV/SV shelters and General Assistance Emergency Housing (Motels) but represents 93.2% of all emergency shelter beds, including youth -specific beds and mainstream) shows us that the majority of youth and young adults aged 12-24 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

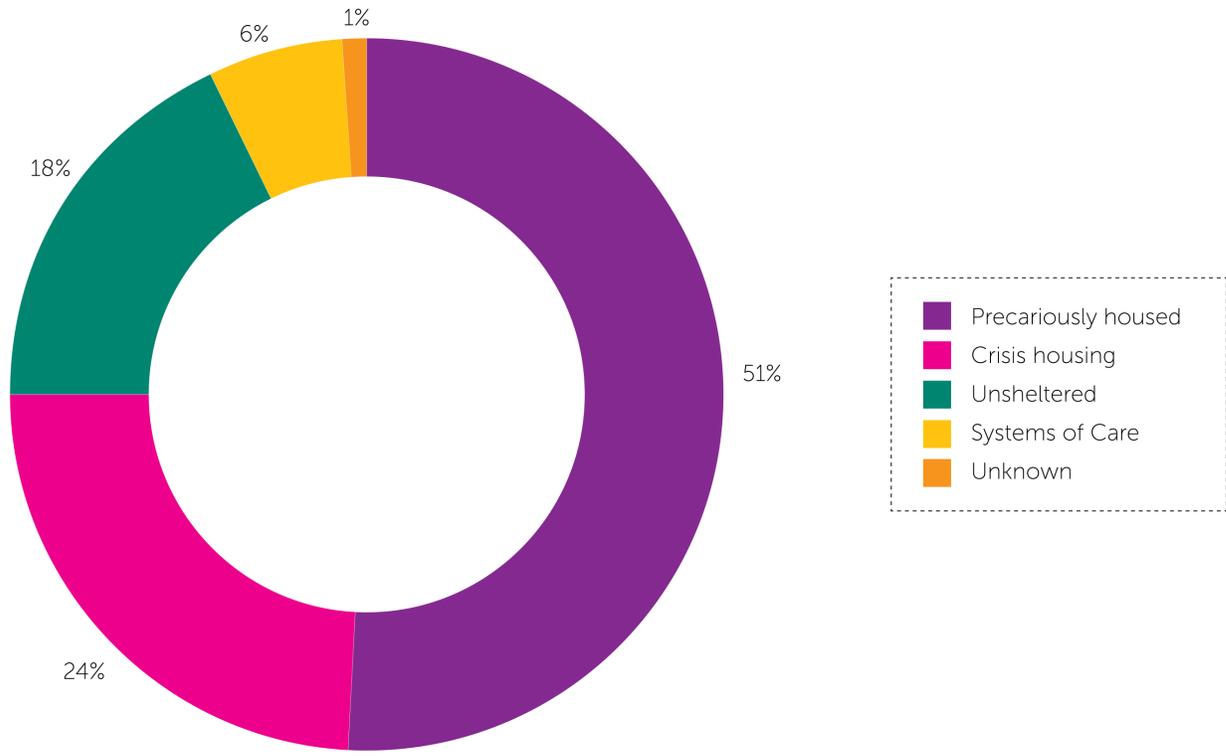
- Nearly a quarter of youth and young adults were already in some form of crisis housing:
- 21% were in emergency shelter or a hotel/motel paid for with a General Assistance voucher
 - 3% were in transitional housing
 - 0.37% were in a Safe Haven project

- 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:

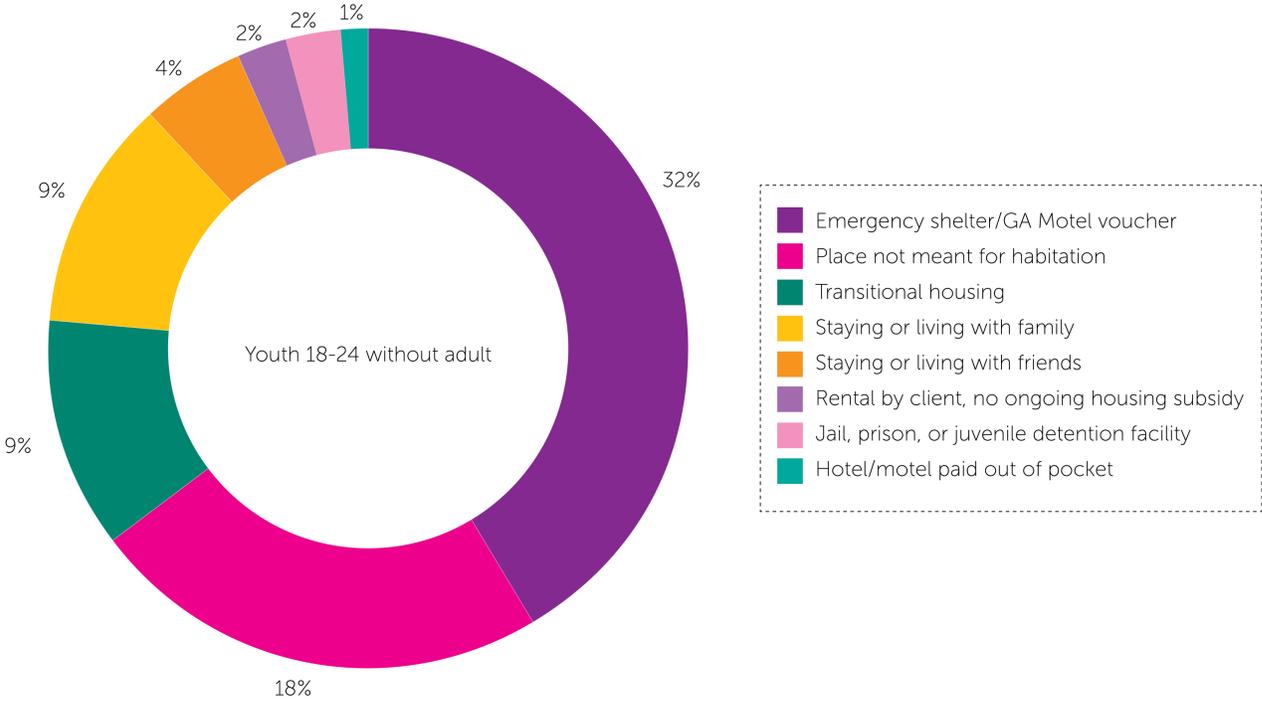
HMIS CATEGORIZED LOCATION NIGHT BEFORE ENTRY INTO CRISIS BEDS



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.

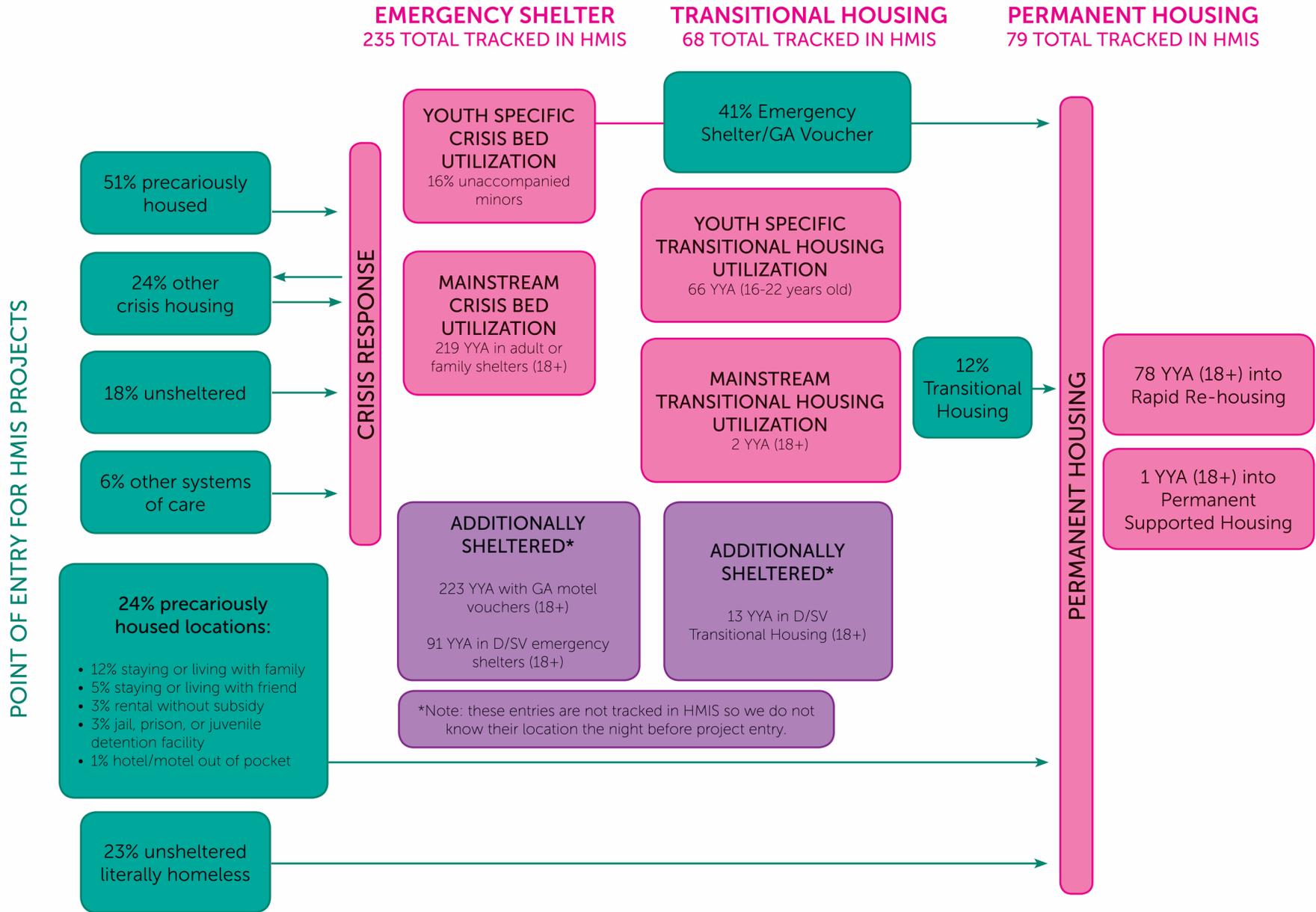
Figure 4:

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 in HMIS Enter the System From



Note: this chart is for illustrative purposes only; more data is needed to contextualize the flow of YYA into housing and appropriateness of placements.

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 (n=52) stayed in emergency shelter in FY18 was 79 days, while the median for non-parenting YYA (n=142) was just 25 days. Similarly, the median length of time Black YYAs (n=15) stayed in emergency shelter in FY18 was 74 days, while the median for White YYAs (n=165) 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 may fail to equitably prioritize youth and young adults on the Master List. The Committee will continue to evaluate what CE is identifying as needs for youth, explore issues of equity and make recommendations on how to address any found lack of equity. Recommendations 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

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

the Master List to prioritize access to additional housing resources, but a statewide order of 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 (3- 24 months) 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

In FY18 (July 2017- June 2018) 8% of youth and young adults, on average, received a complex service needs score of 8-12, compared to 6% of people of all ages. Young adults who were added to the Master List during the time period reviewed are scoring slightly lower than all people for needing Permanent Supportive Housing. This combined with expectedly low levels of chronic homelessness and shorter episodes of literal homelessness due to age, many youth are not prioritized for PSH.

Table 6: FY18 YYA vs All HMIS Clients Matched with Support Type

Support Type	YYA 18-24		All HMIS Clients	
	%	Sample size	%	Sample size
Short-Term	24.5 %	24	10.8 %	103
Medium-Term	24.5 %	24	22.3 %	213
Long-Term	51 %	50	66.4 %	635

On average, 25% of youth and young adults assessed were matched with medium-term assistance and 51% were matched with long-term assistance. Compared to 22% of all people matched with medium-term and 66% with long-term.

Table 7: FY18 YYA vs All HMIS Clients Complex Service Needs Scores

Score	YYA 18-24		All HMIS Clients	
	%	Sample size	%	Sample size
0-3	43.3 %	39	62.2 %	591
4-7	48.9 %	44	31.9 %	303
8-12	7.8 %	7	5.9 %	56

43% only received a complex service needs score of 0-3, often because they do not meet HUD criteria for homelessness and may be currently housed- even if precariously, and 49% 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, along with the complex service needs score, in the order of priority, and length of time inherently disadvantages

youth and young adults due to their age, YYA in the Coordinated Entry system are facing

challenges accessing existing Permanent Supportive Housing and Rapid Re-housing interventions.

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:

- 37% (42) YYA who had been on the Master List for 90-180 days
- 16% (18) who had been on for 181-270 days
- 9% (10) 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 be offered PSH.

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

- 30% (348) had been on for 90-180 days
- 12% (149) for 181-270 days
- 8% (91) 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 only slightly longer than all adults. While we are 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.

Housing Assessment and Youth Needs

While the data shows that youth are only slightly disadvantaged in comparison with all people through the current coordinated entry assessment, ongoing conversations about the effectiveness of the housing assessment tool for young people are warranted, particularly as new youth-specific housing interventions are created through the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

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. It is important to note that the Balance of State's Housing Assessment was not designed to measure vulnerability in the same way as the VI- or TAY-VI-SPDAT and there are

still questions nationally about the effectiveness of using the TAY-VI-SPDAT in connecting youth to the appropriate housing intervention, however, a comparison does illuminate some of the tension points youth housing advocates often highlight when talking about YYA in CE.

The 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, health concerns and accessing regular medical care, and medications. 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

A recommendation will be for the YHPPC’s CE Workgroup to partner with the Balance of State CE Committee to improve the CE assessment for YYA populations, with special focus paid to the complex service needs score section. 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 to increase access
- Ensuring the housing assessment for YYA considers their unique risk factors to determine complex service needs scores and reduces barriers to prioritization

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

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 shelter and housing resources. Services to this population require partnership with the Department for Children and Families and/ or parental permission, and the housing and youth services communities need to continue to work with DCF to develop best practices and guidance, especially for 16- and 17-year-olds who are asking for transitional living and housing supports.

In Vermont, a majority of youth under 18 accessing existing housing 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 definitions of 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.

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

More than half of all emergency shelter stays for minors reach the 21-day maximum.

under 18 may be sheltered outside of the foster care system to 21 nights. Half of all emergency shelter stays for minor in FY18 were for the full maximum: 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.

Emergency shelter stays for unaccompanied minors are lower than we may expect given the number of precariously housed youth. Feedback from VCRHYP RHY providers is that most minors are opting to work with RHY agencies to identify other places they can stay with their parent's permission, like a friend's house or another family member, 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. It is important to note that all existing emergency shelter options for minors in Vermont require parental permission. When a family member cannot be located, RHY agencies work with their funders and DCF to address the needs of each youth and connect them to necessary supports, including notifying the State that the minor does not have adequate supervision by their guardian. RHY providers support the youth in building their natural supports and stabilizing the housing situation while working to keep youth and families connected.

Besides shelter, there are few housing options for minors and housing 16- and 17-year-old youth is complex, Vermont has to have further conversation with key stakeholders to continue to define what is and isn't allowable. These youth can currently access Transitional Living Programs run by the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs' sites across the state. Unlike the 21-day limited Basic Center Program emergency shelter options, which are also operated by VCRHYP agencies and are monitored and licensed by DCF through their Residential Licensing & Special Investigation Unit, TLP housing is not currently licensed. While this is similar to other housing programs in the state- which are also not licensed- there are increased safety concerns for minor youth and the State is invested in assuring adequate supervision and separation of youth under 18 from older populations.

These conversations will need to be prioritized as the Demonstration Program moves into implementation. The YHPPC recommends that a workgroup is developed with members of youth and mainstream housing providers and DCF representatives to address DCF concerns and create clear guidance on how to serve this population.

In addition to addressing housing needs 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.

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.
- A workgroup should be developed with members of youth and mainstream housing providers and DCF representatives to address complexities of housing 16- and 17-year-olds beyond emergency shelter.

Sub-Populations: Pregnant and Parenting Youth

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.

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.

County	Ages 12-18	Ages 19-24
Addison	0.7	27.1
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

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.

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

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

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>

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 LGBTQ; 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.

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:
 - 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

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

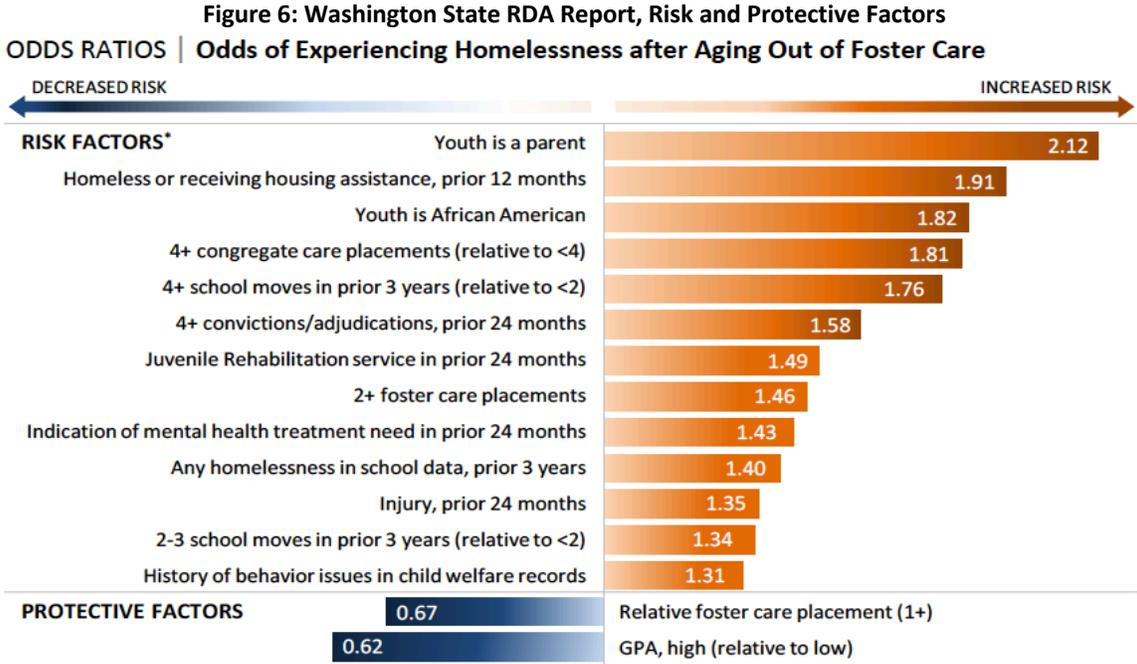
²⁴ David Mancuso et al, Youth at Risk of Homelessness: Identifying key Predictive Factors among Youth Aging Out of Foster Care in Washington State, RDA report 7.106 (2015)

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 6.²⁷

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%.

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

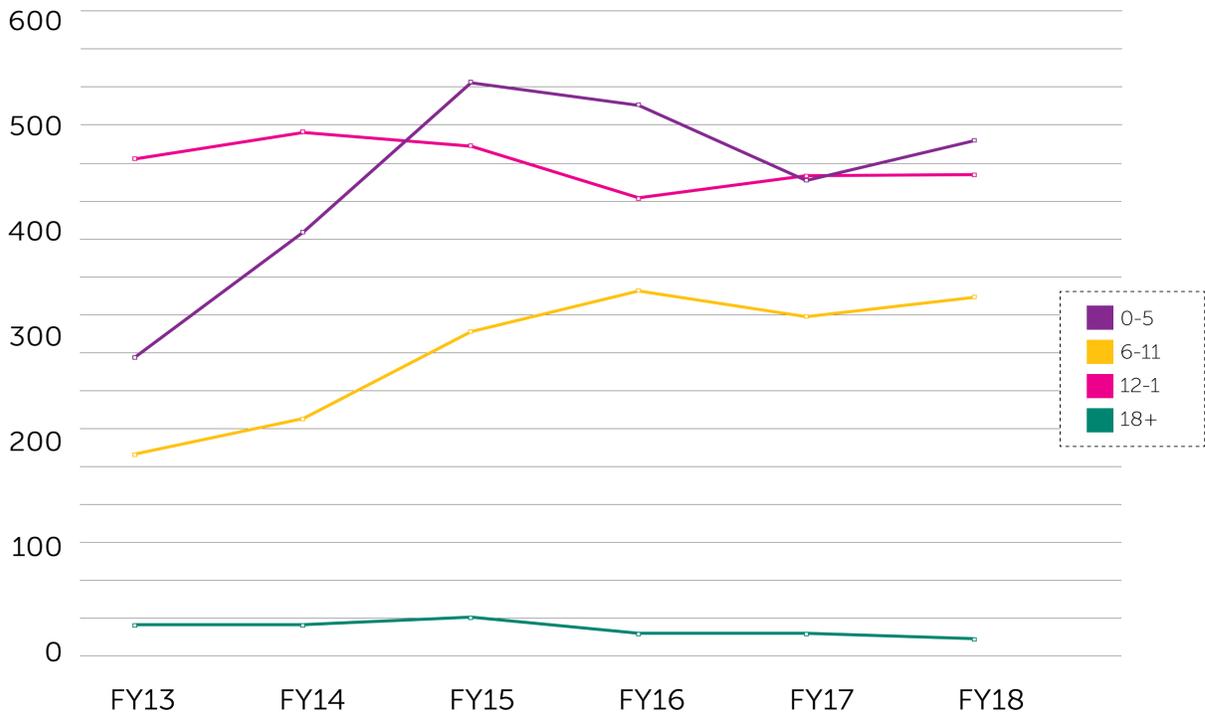
According to a VT point-in-time review done annually on September 30 each year, reflected in Figure 7, we can see that 12-17-year-olds in custody represent the second largest cohort in the last three years, just behind children under 5, and prior to 2015 it was the largest cohort in care. Over the last 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.



*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).

²⁵ ibid
²⁶ ibid
²⁷ ibid

**Figure 7:
VERMONT CHILDREN IN CUSTODY BY AGE RANGE
POINT IN TIME SEPTEMBER 30TH**



The Family Services caseload data in Table 9 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.

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.

Table 9: 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:

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

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 supports 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 Criminal Division to Family Division for the majority of charges for youth under age 18. Family Division proceedings are confidential thus reducing the collateral consequences to youth.
- Expanding Youthful Offender eligibility 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 record is sealed.

- Filing misdemeanor motor vehicle offenses in Family Division.
- State’s Attorneys can refer youth to a DCF approved community-based restorative justice program in lieu of filing charges in Family Division, thus avoiding the justice system all together.
- Youth who are found to be low or moderate risk on a validated risk assessment will have a presumption of diversion. The State’s Attorney can overcome the presumption by stating on the record why diversion would not meet the ends of justice. This applies to both delinquency and youthful offender cases.
- Youth who are 18-years-old will be under the Family Division jurisdiction in 2020, and 19-year-olds in 2022.

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%	Theft:	10%
Violation of Public Ordinance:	18%	Domestic Violence:	9%
Assault:	11%	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 (n=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% (n=204) reported some form of past involvement. That is an increase from FY17 data that showed 19% (n=85) currently involved and 28% (n=124) 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

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

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

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

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

³¹ ibid

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.

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.

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>

- 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 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:

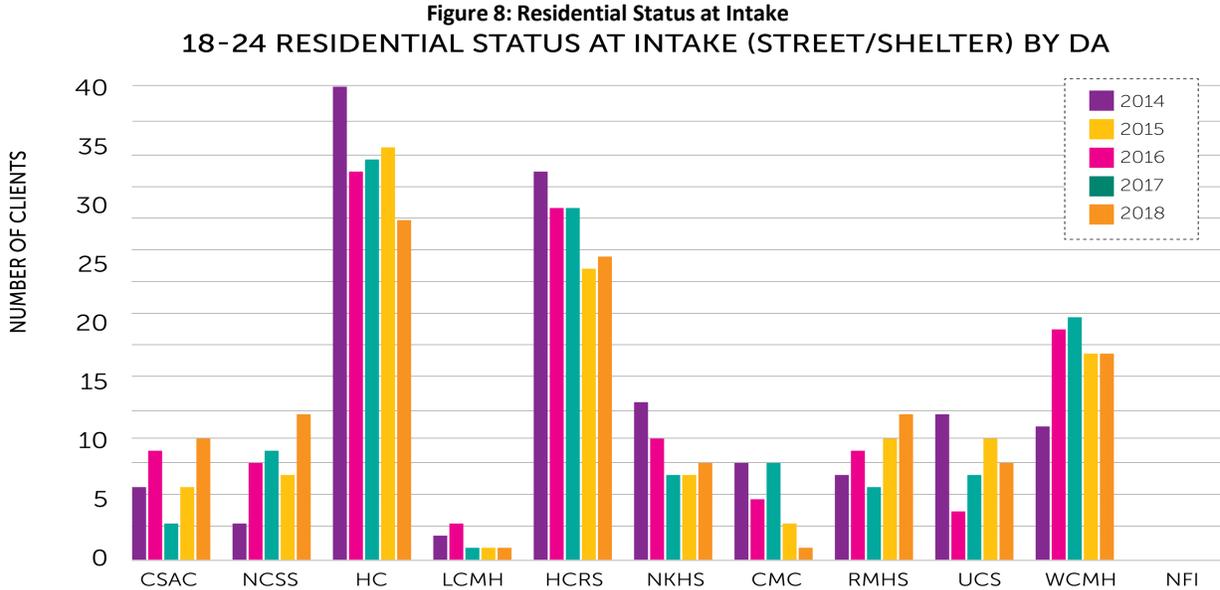
- Housing providers and employment support agencies should cross-train on service availability and eligibility requirements to support referrals and case coordination.
- More resources need to be developed for youth who do not meet the eligibility requirements for WIOA and Vocational Rehabilitation supports.
- 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

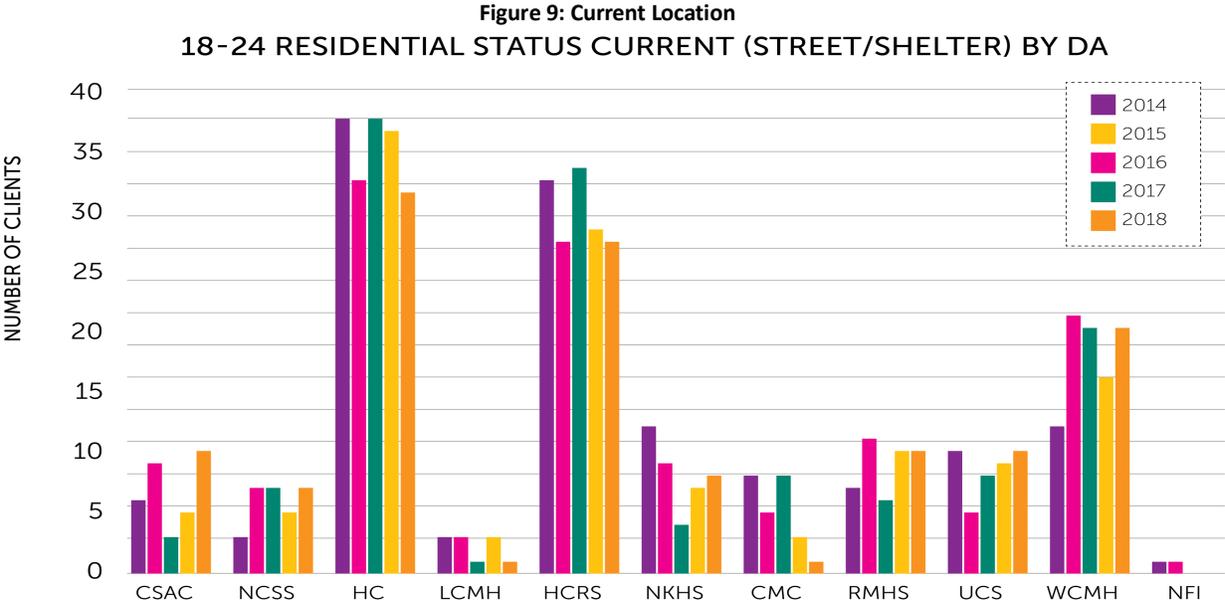
49% of youth and young adults in HMIS during FY18 reported having a disabling condition, which HUD defines as a diagnosable substance abuse disorder, a serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions. 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 8 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.



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 9 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.



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

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

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.

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

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 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.

³⁵ 2017 VT YRBS data

- 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.

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.

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

- 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.
- 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 plus planning for VT YHDP funding, presented in order of priority, along with anticipated funding levels for the 2-years.

Housing Intervention	Anticipated 2-Year Funding Availability
Rapid Rehousing: Tenant or Site-Based Vouchers with Master-lease Waiver	\$768,811
Support Services: Youth Housing Navigators	\$262,440
Support Services/Coordinated Entry: Landlord Engagement/ Landlord Liaisons	\$250,000
Transitional Housing/ Rapid Rehousing Joint Component	\$500,880
Rapid Rehousing: Short-term Diversion Support	\$130,000
HMIS Data Quality and Analysis (2-year grant)	\$30,000
Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project Planning (\$30,000 awarded year 1, can reapply)	\$60,000
Total Funding Available	\$2,002,131

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 18*-24 experiencing literal or imminent homelessness, fleeing violence, pregnant or parenting or who are precariously housed <i>(HUD Categories 1, 2, 4)</i> <i>*and emancipated 16 + 17 yo</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- Coordinated Entry (SSO- CE): Youth Housing Navigators

Program Description	Timeframe for Participants	Population Served	Type of Organization	Desired Outcomes
<p>SSO-CE Youth Housing Navigators:</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- Coordinated Entry (SSO- CE): Landlord Liaisons

Program Description	Timeframe for Participants	Population Served	Type of Organization	Desired Outcomes
<p>SSO-CE Landlord Engagement/ Landlord Liaison:</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 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> <p><i>(note, cap of 10% for category 3 youth)</i></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"> 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 (<i>HUD Categories 1, 2, 3, 4</i>) 	<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: VERMONT YOUTH HOUSING & SERVICES INVENTORY

Appendix 5: COORDINATED ENTRY LEVEL OF ASSISTANCE AND COMPLEX SERVICE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Appendix 6: YOUTH BEDS BY COUNTY

Appendix 7: YHPPC STAKEHOLDER WORKGROUP FINAL REPORT

Appendix 8: YHPPC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT WORKGROUP FINAL REPORT

Appendix 9: YOUTH THRIVE PROTECTIVE AND PROMOTIVE FACTORS

Appendix 10: HUD DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS

Appendix 11: DEFINITION OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

Appendix 12: SIGNATURES FROM OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES