What Works to End Youth Homelessness?

*Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness*

*13th Annual Training Institute*

May 14, 2015

Hartford, CT
Summary

• Homeless Youth Defined
• Why Do Youth Become Homeless?
• Characteristics of Homeless Youth
• What Happens to Homeless Youth When They Don’t have Housing and Services?
• Experiencing Homelessness: Youth Are Different Than Adults
• What Works to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness?
• Runaway and Homeless Youth Act
• State Policy Resources
Homeless Youth Defined

• U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
  - The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) (42 USC 5701 § 387) defines “homeless youth” as individuals...for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative, and who have no other safe alternative living arrangement.

• U.S. Department of Education
  - The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 USC 11302) defines children and youth as homeless if they lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
Why Youth Become Homeless

Youth slip through the cracks of these systems and remain homeless or become homeless
Characteristics of Homeless Youth

- **Abuse:** Research finds that 40 to 60 percent of all homeless youth have experienced physical abuse, and between 17 and 35 percent have experienced sexual abuse.

- **Child Welfare Involvement:** Up to one-third of youth aging out of foster care experience homelessness. National studies have shown that between 21 and 53 percent of homeless youth have a history of placement in foster care.
Characteristics of Homeless Youth

• **Racial Disparities**: Unaccompanied homeless youth come from every race and ethnicity. However, studies in three regions have noted overrepresentation of African Americans in urban areas and American Indians in rural areas.

• **Economy**: The recent recession has had a significant negative impact on youth employment which impacts levels of homelessness. Just over half of youth ages 18-24 are currently employed, the lowest it has been since the government began collecting data in 1948.

• **Disconnection from Schools**: Approximately half of homeless youth have not completed high school.
Characteristics of Homeless Youth

- **Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity**: There is an overrepresentation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth in the runaway population due in part to family rejection because of their sexual orientation or gender identification. 20 to 40 percent of homeless youth are LGBTQ.

- **Criminal Justice Involvement**: Much of this is due to arrests that stem from activities associated with daily survival such as panhandling, loitering, or sleeping outdoors. In addition, homeless youth on the streets are often victims of commercial sexual exploitation and labor trafficking.
Without Housing & Services, Homeless Youth:

- Experience high rates of criminal victimization, including sexual exploitation, labor trafficking, assault and harassment
- Are more likely to become a chronically homeless adult
  - The longer a person is homeless their mental health deteriorates and substance abuse increases to cope with homelessness
- Are more likely to become ensnared in the criminal justice system
Experiencing Homelessness: Youth Are Different Than Adults

- Are still developing physically, emotionally, psychologically, socially—adults in progress
- Enter into homeless with little or no work experience
- Are often forced into leaving their education prior to completion
- Often enter homelessness with no rental history and without life skills such as: cooking, money management, housekeeping, job searching, etc.
What Works to End Youth Homelessness? What We Know NOW

The National Network for Youth is a membership organization of service providers, state agencies, coalitions, advocates and individuals who work towards our vision of a world where vulnerable and homeless youth can escape the dangers of the streets and access safety, youth-appropriate services, hope, and healing.

As the nation's leading organization advocating at the federal level to educate the public and policymakers about the needs of homeless and disconnected youth, we build relationships with policymakers and government agencies in order to champion the diverse needs of homeless and disconnected youth.
Current Research on the Existing Service Structure for America’s Homeless Youth

A. Prevention and Outreach to Connect Youth to Services
B. Drop-In Centers to Engage Youth and Link to Community Resources
C. Shelter to Provide an Important First Step Off the Street
D. Family Engagement and Interventions When Safe and Appropriate
E. Youth-Appropriate Housing Programs to Build Independent Living Skills
F. Case Management to Improve Wellness and Decision-Making
G. Connection to Education to Increase Future Income Earning Capability
H. Workforce Development to Enable Youth to Compete in the Job Market
I. Culturally Competent Services
J. Services That Respond to Survivors of Human Trafficking
PROJECT OZ: BASIC CENTER HOST HOME PROGRAM AND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY-BASED YOUTH SERVICES

- Livingston County and McLean County, Illinois
- Rural and urban
- Demographics:
  - Ages 10–18: (49% ages 10–14, 51% ages 15–18)
  - 52% Female, 48% Male
  - 35% African-American, 47% Caucasian, 8% Latino, 10% Mixed ethnicity
- Services: include 24-hour crisis intervention, emergency placement through Host Homes, individual and family counseling using Reality Therapy, transportation, court advocacy, scattered Safe Place locations, and links to additional services. The goal is to reunite youth with their families or find safe, long-term alternatives, such as with relatives or close family friends.
- Procedures are to meet with youth, usually through a call from the police department. The police pick up runaway and homeless youth, then call us to begin services. Youth and counselor complete a Safety Assessment, and we transport youth to a Host Home if returning to their home is not a safe option. During the following days, the counselor maintains communication with the youth and the family, and does family counseling. The youth and family present the issues that led to their separation, and the counselor teaches skills or provides a new perspective so that all parties can work toward a positive solution.
- Results:
  - 100% youth safety at intake and through duration of services
  - Livingston County, 2014: 94% family reunification, 1% in family-generated placements, 3% in other private placements, and 2% became wards of the state or judicial systems.
  - McLean County, 2014: 84% family reunification, 8% in family-generated placements, 3% went to other private placements, and 5% became wards of the state or judicial systems.

What Works to End Youth Homelessness?

What We Know Know
NN4Y’s Proposed Service Delivery System

• Does not depict that every community needs to have every piece of this proposed system.

• Indicates what systems, programs and resources need to come together to:
  o Collaborate
  o Plan
  o Serve all homeless youth (12-24 years old)
NN4Y’s Proposed Service Delivery System

These supportive services and housing models should be guided by the principles of: Positive Youth Development; Trauma-Informed Care; Cultural Competence; Client Centered Care; and Strengths-Based Family Services (defined in Appendix C)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of Intervention</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Intervention</td>
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<tr>
<td>Longer-term Solutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aftercare</td>
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<th>Services</th>
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**Family Support**: parenting support, counseling that includes all persons considered part of the youth’s family; affordable/accessible childcare for parenting youth

**Case Management**: planning and goal setting, care coordination, advocacy, referrals to additional services

**Mental Health**: individual and group counseling, suicide prevention, wellness

**Health Care**: physical health care, substance abuse prevention and treatment

**School Based Services**: McKinney-Vento homeless liaison, case management, interventions (e.g., Gay/Straight Alliances), health care, sexual health education

**Child Welfare**: interventions to stabilize families, both those involved in CPS, and those who don’t rise to the necessary level of abuse or neglect to be “screened in”

**Victim Services**: referrals and services for youth who have been victims of crime; including human trafficking, domestic violence, interpersonal violence

**Juvenile Justice**: connection to services for youth involved in or exiting the justice system

**In Home Care**: counseling, activity groups, substance abuse prevention

**Workforce Development**: skills building, employment training, internships, career planning, job readiness

**Respite Care**: crisis intervention providing counseling and a ‘break’ for youth and their families

**Education**: re-engagement and support for students-primary, high school, GED, technical programs, and post-secondary

**Life Skills**: self-care, money management, goal-setting, problem-solving, and social, communication and parenting skills

**Community Outreach**: crisis intervention addressing personal safety, violence, and exploitation; counseling, health services, substance abuse services, referrals in a drop in center or street outreach model

**Post Family Reunification**: counseling, supportive services and referrals

**Centralized Communication System**: National Runaway Safeline: 1-800-RUNAWAY hotline available for call, online message, email or text for help finding services, housing, and reconnecting with family

**Post Housing Aftercare**: case management, counseling

**Public Education**: increased public awareness of issue and available resources through media

**Family Reunification**: family and individual counseling with the goal of reuniting and keeping youth with family

**Nurturing Permanent Connections**: family reunification, kinship care placements, legal guardianships, or supportive services to facilitate long term relationship building with other caring adults
### NN4Y’s Proposed Service Delivery System

#### Stages of Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevention</th>
<th>Early Intervention</th>
<th>Longer-term Solutions</th>
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#### Housing Models

**Family Crisis Housing [minors]**: temporary housing for youth while family undergoes intensive therapeutic interventions. Available before a young person is ejected from the home or runs away.
*Example: Basic Center Program, host home, temporary foster care placement*

**Crisis Intervention Programs [minors and TAY]**: temporary housing with basic needs provision and youth-appropriate services.
*Example: Basic Center Program for minors and emergency shelter programs for transition aged youth*

**Group Home [minors]**: congregate, adult-supervised transitional living environment.
*Example: Foster Care Group Home*

**Congregate Transitional Housing [minors and TAY]**: congregate setting with preparation for independent living.
*Example: Transitional Living Program, Maternity Group Homes, Shared Housing*

**Community Based Transitional Housing [TAY]**: independent living with 24-hour access to program staff. Services prepare youth for independent living.
*Example: Scattered Site Apartments*

**Host-Family Home [minors and TAY]**: homeless youth live with a family that provides safe and stable housing.

**Extended Rental Assistance [TAY]**: partial rental assistance and basic life needs while pursuing education and/or vocational training.

**Permanent Supportive Housing [TAY]**: for youth with disabilities that prevent them from independent living.

**Transition In Place [TAY]**: may include 24-hour access to staff and independent living skills training, with option of taking on apartment lease before or after program completion, with aftercare supports available.

**Permanent Affordable Housing [TAY]**: long-term, deed-restricted rental housing affordable to youth’s very low income.

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1. **Rapid Rehousing and Housing First** are popular housing models that focus on quickly moving individuals and families into permanent housing, with supportive services if necessary. For youth, these approaches are largely not appropriate because they have historically not addressed the role of family reunification (as a long-term housing option) and do not address the causes of youth homelessness or provide housing in developmentally appropriate models. For homeless minors, these approaches would be greatly challenged because minors are not the age of majority to consent to a lease in many states. For Transition Aged Youth (TAY) ages 18 to 24, youth-appropriate supportive services, case management, and life skills training must be provided along with reengagement to education and workforce development programs.

2. **Special consideration** must be made for pregnant and parenting minors and TAY, many of whom have no adequate emergency crisis shelter options due to age restrictions codified in youth shelter regulations. Vouchers, Congregate Transitional Housing, Community-Based Transitional Housing, Extended Rental Assistance, Permanent Supportive Housing, Transition in Place, and Permanent Affordable Housing can all be appropriate for pregnant/parenting youth, and should be encouraged to serve and outreach to this population.
NN4Y’s Proposed Service Delivery System

Core Outcomes to Measure Success of Services and Housing

Stable Housing: Increased placement in culturally relevant, safe, developmentally appropriate housing and decrease the length of time youth are homeless, including family reunification

Permanent Connections: Reunification with family will be a priority where safe and appropriate; Improved ability to develop and maintain healthy relationships

Education, Training, and Employment: Increased employability; increased connection to the workforce; Increased academic success

Health and Social-Emotional Well-Being: Improved health and wellbeing; increased ability to care for oneself; increased ability to plan for the future

Goals of Services and Housing

Safety: Meet youth’s basic needs and keep them from situations where they are victimized, exploited, or trafficked

Diversion: Keep the young person out of the justice system, and prevent adult homelessness

Stability: Reunify with family, if possible, and establish permanent connections to caring adults

Healing: Through trauma-informed care, counseling, and supportive relationships the young person will have the opportunity to heal from the trauma they experienced

Independence: Support a young person’s ability to lead a sustainable and healthy life

Healthy Relationships: Strength-based interpersonal skills building and conflict resolution skills building to support development and maintenance of positive relationships with peers, adults and mentors

Healthy Body and Mind: Access to primary and behavioral health care; and self-care strategies

Community Connections: Increase knowledge of available resources and create sense of belonging in the community

Mitigate the effects of poverty: Increase income through education, training and employment; Increased access to poverty-reducing resources

Prevent Homelessness: Provide youth with skills, knowledge and resources to remain stably housed, prevent loss of housing due to crisis
Steps Communities Should Take to Create a Plan to End Youth Homelessness and Track Success

1. Convene a Community-Wide Working Group
2. Conduct a Community Needs Assessment
3. Create a Measureable Plan:
   • Define Community Goals
   • Establish Outcomes at Multiple Levels (individual, sector, program, community and societal)
   • Create Time-limited Benchmarks
   • Recommendations and Strategies to Increase Federal, State, Local, Philanthropic, and Corporate Investments and Partnerships
4. Update Plan, Making Adjustments Based on Progress Made and Lessons Learned
Recommend Investments In:

1. Prevention and early intervention to reach youth at risk of homelessness and families in crisis

2. Housing and services to help homeless youth stabilize, grow and develop, and transition to adulthood

3. Reconnection to education and workforce development to increase future earning capability

4. Continued research, development of assessment tools, analysis of existing data, and improved data collection
Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA)

Effective Service Response to Homeless Youth

• Administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), RHYA funds three key pillars of intervention to help homeless, exploited and trafficked youth:
  - Outreach to Connect Youth to Services
  - Youth and Family Crisis Intervention Housing & Services
  - Longer-term Housing for Homeless Youth That is Youth-Appropriate and Service-Rich
Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA)  
*Effective Service Response to Homeless Youth*

- For 40 years these interventions have been the foundation for the development of a continuum of services for runaway, homeless, exploited and trafficked youth.
- There are approximately 400 RHYA-funded projects across the United States.
- Resources are scarce. With only $115 million in federal money for all of these programs, many communities do not benefit from these high quality and youth-appropriate services.
State Policy Resources

• Runaway and Homeless Youth and the Law: Model State Statutes:  

• Alone Without A Home: A State-By-State Review of Laws Affected Unaccompanied Youth (September 2012):  
Thank you!

Connect With NN4Y

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"Like" NN4Y on Facebook
www.facebook.com/nn4youth

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2015 CT Youth Count

What Works to End Youth Homelessness

CCEH Annual Training Institute

May 2015

Brian Roccapriore
Director of HMIS & Strategic Analysis
CT Coalition to End Homelessness

www.cceh.org
Background

- **Invisible No More**
- **Reaching Home Workgroup: Runaway and Homeless Youth**
- Current data on youth experiencing homelessness
Current data

Unaccompanied youth (Under 18)  

Source - CT PIT 2015

- 2013: 10
- 2014: 5
- 2015: 11
Background

• In conjunction with, but separate from CT PIT 2015
• Seven Focus areas
• School Estimation Project
• Expanded timeframe
• Different Methodology
Defining homelessness and housing instability

Youth who have no secure ‘rights of tenancy’ (for themselves or through a parent/guardian) including, but not limited to those living in shelters, transitional housing programs, couch surfing, doubled up, hotel or motels, in parks, on the streets in cars, abandoned buildings, or other places not fit for human habitation.
Focus Areas

- Fairfield County
- Hartford
- Meriden
- New Haven
- Torrington
- Waterbury
Youth Count Findings

1,342 surveyed youth – **585** identified as experiencing homelessness or housing instability

- **Stable Living Situation / Unknown, 56.41%**
- **Unstable Living Situation, 43.59%**
## Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong> <em>(n = 585)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 14</td>
<td>4.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>27.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-20</td>
<td>27.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-24</td>
<td>40.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Native Language</strong> <em>(n=476)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>82.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>14.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Characteristics

45% Female  53% Male  2% Other Terms
Characteristics

Identified race of youth

- Asian: 1.44%
- Black: 38.22%
- Multiple Races: 22.84%
- Native American: 2.16%
- Native Hawaiian: 0.96%
- White: 34.38%
## Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sleep Last Night (n=527)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dorm</td>
<td>1.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Home</td>
<td>4.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail, Prison, Detention Facility</td>
<td>0.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motel</td>
<td>2.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside in place not meant for sleeping</td>
<td>4.74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td><strong>29.03%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitional Living Program</td>
<td>17.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment Facility</td>
<td>2.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family member</td>
<td>18.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With friends</td>
<td>15.75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Characteristics

Time since youth have had a permanent place to live

- Less than 1 month: 7.79%
- 1 to 2 months: 2.87%
- 2 to 3 months: 11.48%
- 3 to 6 Months: 18.44%
- 6 to 12 months: 18.85%
- More than 1 year: 40.57%
Characteristics

DCF/Foster Care Involvement  33%

Criminal Justice Involvement  22%
School Estimation Project

• 5,439 total surveys conducted
• Conducted in seven cities
  • Bridgeport
  • Hartford
  • Meriden
  • New Britain
  • New Haven
  • Torrington
  • Waterbury
• Several simple questions asked
  • first and last initials
  • current grade level/school status
  • gender
  • race/ethnicity
  • current living situation
  • length of time in current living situation
## School Estimation Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Total Completed Surveys</th>
<th>Number of Teachers and Students Reporting at Least 1 UHY</th>
<th>Percentage of Teachers and Students Reporting at Least 1 UHY</th>
<th>Number of Unique UHY Reported</th>
<th>Rate of Reported Unique UHY per 100 Survey-Completers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hartford (All Schools)</td>
<td>1159</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridgeport</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meriden</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Britain</td>
<td>1157</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Haven</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torrington</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterbury</td>
<td>827</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>5439</strong></td>
<td><strong>960</strong></td>
<td><strong>18.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>930</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Estimation Sample

Living situation of Unstably Housed Youth

- Girlfriend/Boyfriend: 15.56%
- Friend: 26.04%
- Relative: 34.50%
- Shelter: 11.39%
- Multiple: 6.43%
- Street/Car/Outside: 5.75%
- Other: 0.34%
School Estimation Sample

Length of time homeless

- 0-1 Month: 15.79%
- 2-5 Months: 34.94%
- 6-12 Months: 21.78%
- 13 Months - 2 Years: 10.53%
- Over 2 Years: 16.96%
Next Steps...

- Full report out on Tuesday May, 19th!
- Opening Doors for Youth Action Plan
OPENING DOORS FOR YOUTH

An action plan to provide all Connecticut youth and young adults with safe, stable homes and opportunities.

Stacey Violante Cote, JD, MSW
Center for Children’s Advocacy

CCEH Annual Training Institute
May 2015
WHAT WE SEE AHEAD

A future when all young people in Connecticut have safe, stable places to live and opportunities to reach their full potential.
HOW WE GOT HERE

- Invisible No More Study in 2013

- Year long, multi-stakeholder initiative including state agency personnel, providers, advocates and funders

- 3 subgroups considered stable housing; services and supports; and data collection and integration
WHAT WE FOUND

Youth and young adult homelessness exists on a continuum ranging from intermittent housing instability to absolute homelessness.
WHAT WE FOUND

Youth and young adults who leave, are forced out, or have never been involved with the state-sponsored system face high barriers in accessing services they likely still need to stay safe and succeed in life.
WHAT WE FOUND

There is an ongoing and urgent need to collect better data on youth and young adults with housing instability, and to integrate data streams and best practices across systems.
WHAT GUIDED US

Our plan must consistently encourage, facilitate and value the involvement of youth and young adults in planning and implementing improvements in the state’s support system.
WHAT GUIDED US

Our plan must be built on the framework created by Opening Doors, the nation’s first comprehensive strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness developed by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH).
WHAT GUIDED US

Our plan must develop, embrace and encourage best practices that cut across and integrate systems and traditional silos.
HOW WE’LL WIN

Five strategies.
HOW WE’LL WIN

Two overarching strategies:

- Hire a statewide YYA housing services coordinator.

- Establish funding and transparency mechanism for all services targeting YYA with housing instability in the state.
Create better tools to identify, screen and refer youth in need.
Expand direct services and support along the housing continuum.
Provide or improve training and technical assistance for providers.
Improve collection and use of data.
Advocate for changes in policy.
THANK YOU

Opening Doors for Youth Plan was written, funded and convened by:

Center for Children’s Advocacy
Reaching Home Campaign’s Homeless Youth Workgroup
*Staffed by the Partnership for Strong Communities*
CT Coalition to End Homelessness
Corporation for Supportive Housing
The Melville Charitable Trust
The Tow Foundation
UCONN, Center for Applied Research in Human Development
Youth Catalytics
Find the full plan at:
WWW.PSCHOUSING.ORG/RUNAWAY-AND-HOMELESS-YOUTH-WORKGROUP

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