

Northeast Wyoming, Wyoming Homeless Collaborative/Continuum of Care

Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP)

Coordinated Community Plan

BACKGROUND

The northeast region of Wyoming includes Campbell (the largest county), Crook, and Weston counties. While Campbell county is one of the more heavily populated counties in the rural state with 9.9 people per square mile, Crook and Weston counties fall far below the average with a mere 2.5 (Crook) and 3.0 (Weston) people per square mile. Collectively, the region has been organizing its efforts in developing a coordinated community plan that addresses and prevents youth homelessness. The YHDP team was created with leaders, experts, and providers with the goal of developing a coordinated community approach to prevent and end youth homelessness in our rural state.

The YHDP team's objectives are aligned with the US Interagency Council on Homelessness objectives: (1) Stable housing; (2) Permanent connections; (3) Education/Employment; and (4) Social-Emotional well-being. Through the YHDP process, the team collaboratively identified the priority/focus areas:

1. Expanding community buy-in for Coordinated Entry System specific to youth and their unique circumstances.
2. Quickly move youth at-risk of and experiencing homelessness into permanent housing with appropriate services and supports.
3. Improved educational outcomes for youth at-risk of and experiencing homelessness in K-12 and post-secondary education.
4. Connect youth to a range of meaningful employment opportunities.

The YHDP team is committed to addressing the priority/focus areas. The action steps under the section on plan components provide a solid structure for step implementation and accountability.

STATEMENT OF NEED

National data:

The Voices of Youth Count National Survey, in their research on youth homelessness, found that youth homelessness is just as much of a challenge in rural communities as it is in urban areas. Rural areas face unique challenges given that youth homelessness is spread across a larger space with greater hiddenness and a more limited services infrastructure¹. Due to rural youth homelessness challenges, the YHDP team decided to investigate different local and statewide need assessments and interview youth to develop a coordinated community plan that would meet the unique needs of youth in northeast Wyoming.

Statewide data

All 23 counties in Wyoming participated in the Point-In-Time count in the last three years. Any entity that has contact with a local homeless population was contacted and encouraged to take part in the need assessment. PIT counts revealed:

Wyoming PIT count	2017	2018	2019	Percent change from 2017 to 2019
Number of unaccompanied youth	62	82	81	31% increase
Number of parenting and pregnant youth	27	14	8	238% decrease

The key findings from the PIT count include: (1) number of unaccompanied youth has been growing in the last 3 years; (2) Wyoming has a sufficient number of crisis beds for youth ages 8 to under 18, however, the state lacks permanent supportive housing for youth ages 18 to 24. The state has transitional housing for youth ages 17 to 21 in the southeast and northeast regions, however, lacks this type of housing in other regions. Eighty-one unaccompanied youth participated in the need assessment. It is a 31% increase in youth participation compared to 2017. (3) the PIT count also revealed a decline in the number of parenting and pregnant youth.

¹ Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago Research Group, 2017

Parenting and pregnant youth

The number of parenting and pregnant youth has been declining in the last three years. The region has been implementing an evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention program (WyPrep) for the last three years, and it is showing solid outcomes in preventing pregnancies among high-risk youth. That is a positive trend. Currently, less than 10% of youth who are engaged in youth homelessness intervention services in the northeast region are pregnant or parenting. Among those who attended WyPrep classes in the last 3 years, 0% have become parents. The strength-based harm reduction approach of WyPrep has been very well received by the youth.

Northeast Wyoming Regional Data from public schools:

Name of the school district	Total # of homeless students enrolled Year 2017	Total # of homeless students enrolled Year 2018	Percent change from 2017 to 2018
Campbell County School District #1	271	369	36% increase
Crook County School District #1	5	5	0%
Weston County School Districts #1 & #7	24	44	83% increase

Name of the school district	Total # of unaccompanied youth Year 2017	Total # of unaccompanied youth Year 2018	Percent change from 2017 to 2018
Campbell County School District #1	52	88	69%
Crook County School District #1	S	S	-
Weston County School Districts #1 & #7	S	S	-

- If student count is between 0 and 2 letter “S” is placed.

Youth Emergency Services, Inc. data on unaccompanied youth (Campbell, Crook and Weston counties combined). The numbers below for 2018 and 2019 are actual numbers that are tracked at HMIS and through the Y.E.S. House internal electronic records software, BestNotes. The numbers for 2020 and 2021 are anticipated numbers based on historical data, and what the YHDP project is hoping to achieve in the northeast region. We anticipate that in 2020 the Y.E.S. House will still see an increase in youth at-risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness. However, when the YHDP projects begin to be implemented after July 1, the number of homeless youth will go down.

	Actual numbers for 2018	Projected numbers for 2019	Projected numbers for 2020	Projected numbers for 2021
Unaccompanied youth at-risk of homelessness	124	130	140	110
Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness	56	60	67	50
Pregnant or parenting youth at-risk of homelessness	8	8	7	6
Pregnant or parenting youth experiencing homelessness	2	2	1	0

The tables above are showing that there is a significant increase in the number of homeless youth across all three counties.

Equity

Furthermore, the YHDP team looked at regional data on race, gender, LGBTQ+ status, and system involved youth. The Northeast Wyoming region population (2018 Census) is made of 88% white, 1% black, 8% Hispanic, 1% Asian, and 2% Native-American; and there are 52% males and 48% females (ages 0 to 24). When the needs assessment was conducted and the HMIS and PIT data were reviewed, there were no disparities identified in terms of race and gender. However, the needs assessment revealed that many homeless youth (close to 60%) self-identified themselves as LGBTQ+ status. Additionally, 85% of them had juvenile justice involvement at one point in their lives. Due to high percentage of homeless youth that identify themselves as LGBTQ+ status and have had juvenile justice involvement, the YHDP team chose to focus of building partnerships and services that will meet the needs of this special population. LGBTQ+ status youth identified the following needs: safety/safe spaces, need for peer support, access and knowledge of existing resources within the community, and need to build trust and connection with frontline staff.

There are several factors that contribute to youth homelessness in Northeast Wyoming. The input from CoC members, Youth Action Board, providers of homeless services in the northeast region, stakeholders, and the Point-In-Time count were utilized to identify these factors.

Social and Emotional Well-being

(a) Youth Suicide

A great area of concern for Wyoming youth is suicide - Wyoming is ranked #1 in the number of suicides per 100,000 population in 2015 (Annie E. Casey Kids Count report)². In 2016, there were 142 suicides (24 per 100,000 persons) compared with the national suicide rate of 14 per 100,000. The Wyoming suicide rate has significantly increased from 17 per 100,000 in 2004 to 24 per 100,000 in 2016 (Wyoming Department of Health)³. Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2015) reports 1 in 5 youth contemplate suicide, 18% have made a plan, and 11% have attempted suicide; 1 in 3 youth have “felt so sad or hopeless almost daily for two weeks...they stopped doing usual activities”. Tragically, Northeast Wyoming was among the top regions in the state for suicide completions in 2015 (WY Department of Health)⁴.

(b) Youth Substance Use

Alcohol usage at a national level is 23.3% for 8th, 10th, and 12th graders according to National Institute on Drug Abuse. According to the 2015 Wyoming Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 32% of middle school youth and 61% of high school youth admitted to having used alcohol in their lives. Alcohol use among students in Northeast Wyoming was 64% (PNA 2018). Northeast Wyoming youth exceed the national average by 178%. Many youth are arrested for status offenses for consuming alcohol and are often treated like adults by the justice system.

(c) Other Risk factors

Another great concern is the percentage of youth who have experienced abuse. In Wyoming, 7.0 per 1,000 youth have experienced abuse (US Department of Health and Human Services)⁵. The 2018 survey of homeless youth served through the Y.E.S. House revealed that 87% of homeless youth had suffered from abuse (physical and sexual).

² KidsCount *Teen Deaths by Accident, Homicide, and Suicide* (2015)

³ Wyoming Department of Health, *Wyoming Vital Statistics for years 2004-2017*

⁴ U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, *Wyoming Adolescent Mental Health Facts* (2015)

⁵ US Department of Health and Human Services, *Child Maltreatment* (2017)

The comprehensive data analysis and youth-led focus groups revealed that northeast Wyoming has a substantial population of homeless/runaway youth, that youth are feeling sad and hopeless, and many are raised in homes where drug use and abuse is acceptable. Isolation and limited access to necessary resources are other factors that contribute the region's significant rate of youth homelessness.

The YHDP team has a solid understanding of the great need to implement additional mental health and treatment services in our region. The team is committed to educate and train partners, employers, housing provider, etc. about Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma-Informed Care to ensure that they understand the unique circumstances of YHDP youth. The YHDP team also recognizes that developing and establishing an infrastructure that addresses a mental health and substance use crisis in our rural state is beyond the scope of the YHDP projects. Wyoming CoC is meeting with Governor Gordon this spring to discuss the lack of mental health and substance abuse treatment services in our state.

Educational Needs K-12:

Wyoming (the northeast region is very close to the state average) falls below the national graduation rate of 85% reported by the National Center for Education Statistics, with 81.7% of Wyoming youth graduating from high school in four years. Additionally, when looking at students in poverty (free and reduced lunch eligible) the data for Wyoming shows that they graduate at a rate of 70.2%. Students experiencing homelessness graduate at a rate lower than other students in poverty at 61.7%. Only two groups of students graduate at lower rates - English learners (61%) and Native American students (58.8%). Therefore, improving graduation rate for the YHDP eligible youth became one of the focus areas during the planning process.

Throughout the YHDP planning process several needs of youth who are experiencing homelessness were identified. Most of the youth dropped out of K-12 education between 9th and 11th grade. The following indicators were identified that could improve youth's chances of completing high school education: (1) increase access to Career Technical Education opportunities and (2) improve supports for youth in high school by meeting with the school districts partners and developing drop-out prevention strategies that work. Youth stated that they didn't have the "why" (why learning core subjects is important) when they dropped out of school. Their parents

never completed high school; therefore, they were not motivated to complete it either; it was not a part of their culture or an expectation at home. Access to Career Technical Education would give youth with unique circumstances the “why”. It is a hands-on kinesthetic approach to education that connect youth to a trade that they might be inspired to pursue. Therefore, learning core subjects would become more meaningful to them, and chances to drop out of school would decrease. A case study from Montana on access to CTE opportunities showed that the drop-out rate for homeless youth was reduced by 48% when they have taken 2 or more CTE classes.⁶

Educational Needs Post-Secondary:

Post-Secondary education was an important topic for the Wyoming YHDP team. The team found out that the graduation rate for Sheridan College (Gillette College is a satellite of Sheridan College) is 35%. Furthermore, analysis by the Pew Research Center show that 20% percent of college students are from low-income backgrounds.⁷ Over half of low-income students enroll in college after graduation, but only 14% earn a bachelor's degree within eight years⁸. Based on these alarming statistics (local and national), the YHDP team decided to focus on improving educational outcomes for youth with unique circumstances.

Throughout the YHDP planning process it became apparent that most of the YHDP eligible youth dropped out of college during the first year of college. Reasons included (1) They did not have access to tutoring for challenging material when taking distance education courses (in rural Wyoming distance education is very popular due to the remoteness of communities); (2) if they had help from professors, they could not understand how the problem was explained to them (i.e. professors were speaking the “academic/high ed language/phrases” that youth did not understand). Often youth sought help from their peers who could speak their language and who understood how youth’s brain with severe trauma acquires information. However, when the barriers seemed insurmountable and peers could not help any longer, youth dropped out of college; they felt they had no one to go to for help. Therefore, the YHDP team felt that exploring the ideas of having a peer mentoring programs to provide support, a peer study hall, and setting up opportunities for

⁶ Montana Office of Public Instruction

⁷ Pew Research Center, *Low-Income and Minority Students Are Growing Share of Enrollments, and 2 Other Takeaways From New Study*; May 22, 2019

⁸ Southern New Hampshire University, *Addressing the College Completion Gap Among Low-Income Students*; June 7, 2017

students to support one another, would lead to the reduction of drop-out rates and increase college graduation rates.

Employment Needs:

Developing a plan for providing meaningful employment opportunities to youth was another focus of the YHDP planning sessions. Data from HMIS and BestNotes (software used by a regional youth homeless provider) show that close to 90% of youth who have been engaged in youth homelessness intervention programming had between 3 to 5 jobs a year, and when they lost a job, they were unemployed for 4 to 6 months before they were able to find another job. Youth identified that lack of problem-solving skills, lack of resiliency, and lack of soft skills were their major barriers to retaining employment.

Youth also stated numerous times that they fail to keep jobs because they are meaningless, employers don't understand the unique circumstances of YHDP youth, the effects of trauma, and youth don't have access to learn managerial/leadership skills or be able to connect to trades that they are interested in. Therefore, the YHDP planning team focused on identifying an employment program that would address these needs and provide opportunities to experience success on the job. (1) YHDP will develop ideas and business model for social enterprise. This will empower youth to build a business from the start up, learn management and leadership skills, and while employed, gain soft skills to be successful in pursuing other employment options in the future. Additionally, through the partnership with workforce services, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, and private employers; (2) create structure and pathways for meaningful apprenticeship, job mentorship and work experience opportunities; (3) orientate employers to unique circumstances of YHDP youth; and (4) develop leadership academies and apprenticeship job fairs.

Housing Needs:

In 2019, the Wyoming Homeless Collaborative, Wyoming Department of Family Services (DFS), homeless service providers, and local government entities collaborated with Dr. Marbut on conducting a Homelessness Needs Assessment and Action Steps for the State of Wyoming (Appendix A). One of the sections of this need assessment focuses on unaccompanied youth. The need assessment states that there is a critical statewide need for 80 to 95 emergency housing units

for unaccompanied youth (ages 15-18, and ages 18-22 when youth go on to college). Furthermore, because of unique challenges of these youth, they do the best when they are in single-gender community housing situations that have formal, on-site adult supervision and case management. Wyoming unaccompanied youth (generally domestic violence triggered) fall under one of the major subgroups of homelessness in Wyoming.⁹

In addition to the state-wide shortage of housing units for youth, the northeast corner of Wyoming is experiencing an even greater shortage of affordable rental/housing units. Coal, gas, and oil industries contribute to the high cost for rent and housing in the northeast part of the state. Specifically, there is only one transitional living house for youth ages 18-21 that can accommodate up to 10 youth, and between 8-10 host homes. The community does not have permanent supportive housing for youth ages 18 to 24 who have special needs and/or disabilities. Due to this unique situation, the YHDP team identified that youth need (1) to have a quicker access to a low-barrier individualized Rapid Re-housing program; (2) the YHDP team needs to work on landlord engagement and building relationships with housing agencies across the region; (3) fund and establish Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program for youth; and (4) explore opportunities to expand capacities of transitional living projects and host families (Appendix B shows housing pathways and gaps for northeast WY for youth under 18 and youth 18 to 24).

*Note: the northeast region operates a Group Home (10 beds) for ages 10 to 17, a Crisis Shelter (10 beds) for ages 8 to 17 and has an adequate supply of foster homes. Therefore, the YHDP planning team could not find any significant data that would show the need for additional housing options or need for housing expansion for youth ages 18 and younger.

The YHDP team is committed to work towards reduction of at-risk factors such as lack of housing stability, low commitment to school, and lack of meaningful employment opportunities that directly impact our rural youth and put them at higher risk for homelessness.

⁹ Marbut Consulting, Homelessness Needs Assessment and Action Steps for State of Wyoming, 2019

Need for Youth Coordinated Entry System

The Wyoming Coordinated Entry team has been working diligently on improving the CE process. The greatest gap that was identified during the YHDP planning is a lack of a youth-focused CE system. The current WY CE process is set up in such a way that homeless youth do not rank high on the CE priority list. The Coordinated Entry team is committed to work on determining the most appropriate youth access points to CE, developing an assessment tool that would work for rural Wyoming youth, incorporating the use of the TAY-Vi-SPDAT to assess youth needs at CE, and creating youth-specific CE prioritization criteria for youth sub-populations with high vulnerabilities.

LIST OF PARTNERS AND A DESCRIPTION OF THEIR INVOLVEMENT

The outlined partners below of the YHDP initiative have been involved in the planning process from the start and are committed to implementing the goals and actions steps identified in the northeast Wyoming coordinated community plan. Several educational stakeholder groups were convened to introduce YHDP, to facilitate discussions about goals, barriers, what roles education partners would play in the CCP, USICH youth framework and what outcomes we should strive for. From these educational/strategic groups it is apparent that the YDHP team is a solid combination of leadership, experts, and providers whose vision is to end youth homelessness in our region. Each partner is responsible for specific action steps and projects to ensure that YHDP is a great success. The Youth Action Board was a key lead in identifying goals, action steps, providing input, and voting on the coordinated plan. YAB met weekly and sometimes 2 to 3 times a week to develop a coordinated community plan that would work for them and the homeless youth they represent. They were at the discussion table with the educational and employment partners and their voice was heard.

Partners	Partner's name	Involvement
NE Wyoming Youth Action Board	Co-leads Ben Doll and Kami Riddle	Participates in weekly YAB meetings, drafting of YAB governance documents, participates in YHDP TA sessions, input on Coordinated

		Community Plan priorities and guiding principles, serve on CoC Board
Department of Family Services (child welfare agency)	Bonnie Volk and Karla McClaren	Collaborative applicant in WY. Leads evaluation and review committee for the RFP *YAB members will lead training of the RFP rating and ranking team. YAB and DFS partner on CQI and monitoring
Wyoming CoC + Coordinated Entry Committee	Tatyana Walker, Chair	Participates in weekly YHDP calls with YAB members, participates in YHDP TA sessions, assists with writing CCP, coordinates and meets with partners of YHDP, CoC will authorize YHDP renewals, CoC board members will partner in developing youth CES
Youth Emergency Services, Inc. (Runaway and Homeless Youth Program (RHY) provider), ESG provider	Casey Starr	Participates in weekly YHDP calls with YAB members, participates in YHDP TA sessions, assists with writing CCP, coordinates and meets with partners of YHDP
Tech Prep Advisory Board (Career Technical Education board for 7-12 grades and post-secondary education)	Becky Petersen, chair	Partner with YAB on Career Technical Education expansion to high risk population, improve access to CTE, YAB members will serve on CTE board
K-12 Education/McKinney-Vento	Kip Farnum and Court Lutgen	Participate in TA calls Partner/stakeholder of K-12 goals
Gillette College (post-secondary education)	Susan Serge	Partner in removing barriers to access post-secondary education and removing barriers while in college for high-risk youth. Potential for a peer navigator/mentor to help youth to navigate financial aid, housing, tutoring help. Partner is identifying at-risk youth at college admission
National Center for Homeless Education	Kenya Haynes	Participates in weekly YHDP calls with YAB members, participates in YHDP TA sessions; provides advice/input
Wyoming Department of Workforce Services	Rick Manshein	Participates in weekly YHDP calls with YAB members, participates in YHDP TA sessions

(local/state government, northeast branch)		Partner/owner of employment goals
Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (Vocational Rehabilitation, northeast branch)	Tammy Smith	Participates in weekly YHDP calls with YAB members, participates in YHDP TA sessions Partner/stakeholder of employment goals
Council of Community Services (local homeless shelter for adults and families, ESG provider)	Tracy Obert	Provider of a local Food bank. Potential referral partner under CES. Potential for support in a PSH environment
Cheyenne Public Housing Authority	Greg Hancock	Housing vouchers for youth
United Methodist Church	AJ Bush	Partner in social enterprise
Gillette Main Street	Jessica Seders	Partner in exploring social enterprise options; and integrating community connection
PFLAG	Rich Kistler	Partner in outreach and referrals

Below is the representation of partnerships and how YHDP team sees it



PLAN COMPONENT

SHARED VISION:

Mission: Giving Youth the Power, the Voice, and the Ability to Make a Change

Vision: To provide youth a voice in programs offered, provide a forum for youth to identify concerns and to make changes. Provide youth with leadership opportunities and connections in our community. The ultimate goal is to end youth homelessness in northeast Wyoming. The youth are empowered to lead the YHDP projects and to implement necessary changes. Their voice is present at all discussions, calls and meetings in which YHDP is discussed. With youth leadership the YHDP team is committed to implement the outlined projects (pages 23-24), and, as a result, there will be more housing units (Rapid Rehousing and Permanent Supportive Housing), improved Coordinated Entry process, improved support systems at K-12 and at post-secondary levels, and new opportunities for meaningful employment, apprenticeships and work experiences. These changes in the infrastructure, enhancement of services, and creation of new opportunities will create a platform of success i.e. at-risk YHDP youth would have resources that prevent them from becoming homeless.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION STEPS

Goal #1: Effectively link all youth experiencing homelessness to housing and service solutions that are tailored to their needs through the use of the Coordinated Entry System.

Objective 1.1: Ensure CES meets the needs of youth.

Action Steps:

A. Incorporate the use of the TAY-Vi-SPDAT to assess youth needs at CES and assess tool at least annually.

Timeline: 6 month – work with the HMIS WY Manager on the process of incorporating TAY-Vi-SPDAT

Year 1 – Incorporate TAY-Vi-SPDAT

Year 2 – assess the TAY-Vi-SPDAT tool on its effectiveness and utilization

Action Step Coordinator: Bobbie Nelsen, WY HMIS Manager

B. Create youth-specific by-name list and establish weekly case conferencing meetings with YHDP partners.

Timeline: 6 month – work with the CES Coordinator on establishing weekly case conferencing meetings with YHDP partners that focus on the youth specific by-name list.

Year 1 – implement weekly youth-specific CES meetings

Year 2 – assess the youth specific CES meetings’ effectiveness and utilization

Action Step Coordinator: Bobbie Nelsen, WY HMIS Manager and CES Coordinator

D. Create youth-specific CES prioritization criteria for youth sub-populations with high vulnerabilities (i.e. history of evictions, lack of access to employment, lack of social network wealth, and incarceration).

Timeline: 6 month – develop youth-specific prioritization criteria for youth sub-populations with high vulnerabilities.

Year 1 – implement youth-specific prioritization criteria

Year 2 – evaluate and improve youth-specific prioritization criteria

Action Step Coordinator: YHDP Project Manager, Sharie Stoner

YAB Designees: Kami Riddle and Haley Warren

Other Stakeholders: Bobbie Nelsen, CES Coordinator

E. Set benchmarks to determine if CES process continues to meet youth’s needs.

Timeline: 6 month – identify benchmarks for determining if CES process is meeting youth’s needs

Year 1 – assess what is working and what is not

Year 2 – evaluate and adjust benchmarks if needed

Action Step Coordinator: YHDP Project Coordinator, Casey Starr

YAB Designees: Kami Riddle and Ben Doll

Other Stakeholders: Department of Family Services - Bonnie Volk, Karla McClaren

Objective 1.2: Enhance Coordinated Entry System capacity

Action Steps:

A. Assess need to fund housing navigation services with YHDP grant funding and implement if necessary.

Timeline: 6 month – create a team to work on assessing the need for housing navigation services.

Year 1 – if the need is determined, then develop housing navigation services

Year 2 – evaluate and improve housing navigation services

Action Step Coordinator: YHDP Project Manager, Sharie Stoner

YAB Designees: Kami Riddle and Ben Doll

Other Stakeholders: Department of Family Services - Bonnie Volk, Karla McClaren

B. Assess need to expand outreach services or otherwise market CES for youth populations. This will include persons least likely to apply in the absence of special outreach.

Timeline: 6 month – create a team to work on assessing the need for expanding outreach services/market CES for youth populations.

Year 1 – if the need is determined, then develop an outreach/marketing CES plan that targets youth populations

Year 2 – evaluate and improve outreach/marketing CES plan

Action Step Owner: YHDP Project Manager, Sherie Stoner; and YAB team leads, Kendra Fiddles and Ben Doll.

Goal #2: Quickly move youth into permanent housing with appropriate services and supports.

Objective 2.1: Fund and expand a low-barrier Rapid Re-housing program.

Action Steps:

A. Collaborate with YAB to develop an individualized Rapid Re-housing approach that works for rural Wyoming youth high vulnerabilities.

Timeline: 6 month – research and develop a framework for an individualized Rapid Re-housing approach in the northeast WY region.

Year 1 – implement the identified Rapid Re-housing approach

Year 2 – evaluate that the implemented Rapid Re-housing approach is meeting individualized needs of Wyoming youth.

Action Step Coordinator: YHDP Project Manager, Sharie Stoner

YAB Designees: Zack Love and Jasmine Lewis

Other Stakeholders: Cheyenne Public Housing Authority - Greg Hancock

B. Focus on landlord engagement and building relationships with housing agencies across 3 counties.

Timeline: 6 month – identify landlord partnerships across Crook, Weston and Campbell counties

Year 1 – engage landlords in offering housing options across three counties

Year 2 – evaluate partnerships, expand if needed

Action Step Coordinator: YHDP Project Manager, Sharie Stoner

YAB Designees: Zack Love and Jasmine Lewis

C. Consider a dynamic Supportive Services Only (SSO) case management program that follows the person.

Timeline: 6 month – research and develop a framework for a dynamic SSO case management program that follows the person.

Year 1 – implement the identified SSO case management program

Year 2 – evaluate implemented SSO case management program, make changes if needed

Action Step Coordinator: YHDP Project Manager, Sharie Stoner

YAB Designees: Zack Love and Jasmine Lewis

D. Identify housing models that meet needs of rural Wyoming youth high vulnerabilities.

Timeline: 6 month – research and conduct cost analysis on different housing options

Year 1 – identify and implement housing options that would work in Crook, Weston and Campbell counties

Year 2 – evaluate implemented housing options, make improvements

Action Step Coordinator: YHDP Project Manager, Sharie Stoner

YAB Designees: Zack Love and Jasmine Lewis

Other Stakeholders: Cheyenne Public Housing Authority - Greg Hancock

Objective 2.2: Fund and establish Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program for youth.

Action Steps:

A. Collaborate with YAB to develop elements for ideal PSH (1-2 apartments).

Timeline: 6 month – research and conduct cost analysis on PSH programs.

Year 1 – develop elements of ideal PSH program that would work in Crook, Weston and Campbell counties.

Action Step Coordinator: YHDP Project Manager, Sharie Stoner

YAB Designees: Zack Love and Jasmine Lewis

Other Stakeholders: Cheyenne Public Housing Authority - Greg Hancock

B. Clustered PSH apartments with onsite staff / RA wraparound support. Trained staff/RA (Trauma Informed Care, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), crisis response) with access to on-call therapist. Services include medication reminders, transportation, facilitation with doctor appointments, code locks rather than keys.

Timeline: Year 2 – implement PSH, make improvements.

Action Step Coordinators: YHDP Project Manager, Sharie Stoner; YHDP Coordinator, Casey Starr

YAB Designees: Zack Love and Jasmine Lewis

Objective 2.3: Exploring opportunities to expand capacities of transitional living projects & bonus families.

Action Steps:

A. Develop capacity plans for increasing community host families.

Timeline: 6 month – surveying people's interest in becoming a host home.

Year 1 – develop a plan for a host home expansion, if there is an interest.

Action Step Coordinator: YHDP Project Manager, Sharie Stoner

YAB Designees: Zack Love and Jasmine Lewis

B. Develop capacity plans for increasing transitional living projects.

Timeline: 6 month – surveying the need for increasing the capacity of transitional living projects.

Year 1 – develop a plan for a transitional living projects expansion, if there is a need.

Action Step Coordinator: YHDP Project Manager, Sharie Stoner

YAB Designees: Zack Love and Jasmine Lewis

Goal #3: Improved educational outcomes for youth experiencing homelessness in K-12 and post-secondary education.

Objective 3.1: Increase supports for youth in High School.

Action Steps:

- A. Have youth partners speak to K-12 schools about the drop-out issue and why.
Timeline: 6 month – create a team of youth partners who will present to K-12 schools.

Year 1 – set up a regular meeting structure and feedback loop.

Year 2 – implement strategies to reduce the K-12 drop-out rate for youth experiencing homelessness.

Action Step Coordinator: YHDP Project Director, Tatyana Walker

YAB Designee: Ben Doll

Other Stakeholders: Director of Student Support Services – Kip Farnum & McKinney-Vento liaison – Court Lutgen

Objective 3.2: Increase access to Career Technical Education in K-12 schools for youth experiencing homelessness.

Action Steps:

- A. Build education committee that is comprised of youth, educators and business representatives to increase access to career technical opportunities in K-12 schools
Timeline: 6 month – create an education committee that will communicate with the Career Technical Education Board(s) (CTE) and school districts.

Year 1 – present to the CTE board(s) and school districts administration.

Year 2 – identify 1 or 2 solutions/strategies to increase access to CTE opportunities.

facilitate implementation of strategies to increase access to CET opportunities.

Action Step Coordinator: YHDP Project Director, Tatyana Walker

YAB Designee: Jasmine Lewis

Other Stakeholders: CTE Board

- A. Engaging CTE liaisons from school districts attend YAB meetings in person or through tele communication.

Timeline: 6 month – approach CTE liaisons to engage in YAB meetings.

Year 1 – start a dialog on possible solutions/strategies to increase access to CTE.

Year 2 – identify 1 or 2 solutions/strategies to increase access to CTE opportunities.

facilitate implementation of strategies to increase access to CET opportunities.

Action Step Coordinator: YHDP Project Director, Tatyana Walker

YAB Designee: Jasmine Lewis

C. Financial support / coach (staffing) - resources for YHDP youth to participate.

Timeline: 6 month – have a dialog with YAB about what resources are needed for YHDP youth to participate in the CET opportunities and complete courses.

Year 1 – start a discussion with the CTE partners on identifying resources i.e. financial support, coach (staffing), etc.

Year 2 – identify and implement at least one support strategy/resource.

Action Step Coordinator: YHDP Project Director, Tatyana Walker

YAB Designee: Jasmine Lewis

Other Stakeholders: Director of Student Support Services – Kip Farnum & CTE Board

Objective 3.3: Increase supports for youth in college.

Action Steps:

B. Have youth partners speak to the regional college and develop strategies for increased graduation.

Timeline: 6 month – create a team of youth partners who will communicate with college.

Year 1 – set up a regular meeting structure and feedback loop.

develop youth peer mentoring program to provide support.

explore idea of a peer study hall, students support one another, if the course is virtual.

Year 2 – facilitate implementation of peer mentoring and peer study groups.

Action Step Coordinator: YHDP Project Director, Tatyana Walker

YAB Designees: Kami Riddle and Dakota Jackson

Other Stakeholders: Gillette College, Susan Serge

Goal #4: To connect youth to a range of meaningful employment opportunities.

Objective 4.1: Social Enterprise

Action Steps:

A. Explore idea of social enterprise.

Timeline: 6 month – develop a team to produce shortlist of ideas and business models.

Year 1 – complete need assessment on ideas.

Year 2 – create a business plan for social enterprise.

Action Step Coordinator: YHDP Project Coordinator, Casey Starr

YAB designees: Kami Riddle and Haley Warren

B. Explore fundraising opportunities for social enterprise.

Timeline: 6 month – gather fundraising ideas for social enterprise

Year 1 – complete fundraising timeline, identification of funding sources, and assign tasks to specific YHDP members.

Year 2 – emerge business and fundraising plans for social enterprise into one document.

Start fundraising.

Action Step Coordinator: YHDP Project Coordinator, Casey Starr

YAB designees: Kami Riddle and Haley Warren

C. Convene local business partners to provide leadership and support.

Timeline: 6 month – identify and recruit business partners.

Year 1 – engage business partners in need assessment and creating a fundraising plan.

Year 2 – engage business partners in creation of business/fundraising plan for social enterprise.

Action Step Coordinator: YHDP Project Coordinator, Casey Starr

YAB designees: Kami Riddle and Haley Warren

Objective 4.2: Expand opportunities for apprenticeship, job mentorship, and work experience.

A. Identify community partnerships.

Action Steps:

Timeline: 6 month – identify and recruit community partners.

Year 1 – engage community partners in creating structure and pathways for apprenticeship, job mentorship and work experience opportunities.

Action Step Coordinator: Project Coordinator, Casey Starr

YAB designees: Jasmine Lewis and Haley Warren

Other stakeholders: YHDP Workforce Center partner, Tammy Smith & Rick Manshein

B. Recruit employers.

Timeline: 6 month – identify and recruit employers
Year 1 – engage employers in creating structure and pathways for apprenticeship, job mentorship and work experience opportunities.

Action Step Coordinator: Project Coordinator, Casey Starr

YAB designees: Jasmine Lewis and Haley Warren

Other stakeholders: YHDP Workforce Center partner, Tammy Smith & Rick Manshein

C. Orientate employers to unique circumstances of YHDP youth.

Timeline: 6 month – develop an orientation powerpoint for employers to understand the unique circumstances of YHDP youth.

Year 1 – conduct orientations.

Action Step Coordinator: Project Coordinator, Casey Starr

YAB designees: Jasmine Lewis and Haley Warren

Other stakeholders: YHDP Workforce Center partner, Tammy Smith & Rick Manshein

D. Set up opportunities for apprenticeship, Job Mentorship and work experience.

Timeline: Year 2 – implement structure and pathways to apprenticeship, Job mentorship and work experience.

evaluate what is working and what is not

Action Step Coordinator: Project Coordinator, Casey Starr

YAB designees: Jasmine Lewis and Haley Warren

Other stakeholders: YHDP Workforce Center partner, Tammy Smith & Rick Manshein

Objective 4.3: Expand Vocational / Technical Opportunities

Action Steps:

A. Partner with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to explore youth leadership academies & apprenticeship job fairs

Timeline: 6 month – gather ideas for leadership academies and apprenticeship job fairs.

Year 1 – engage DVR in creating opportunities for leadership academies and apprenticeship job fairs.

Year 2 – implement youth leadership academies and apprenticeship job fairs.

Evaluate what is working and what is not, make changes

Action Step Coordinator: Project Coordinator, Casey Starr

YAB designees: Jasmine Lewis and Haley Warren

Other stakeholders: YHDP Workforce Center partner, Tammy Smith

B. Cultivate and develop relationship with workforce services

Timeline: 6 month – approach the workforce services staff and educate them about YHDP and needs of YHDP youth.

Year 1 – engage workforce services the YAB meetings.

Have workforce services at the table during discussions on leadership academies and apprenticeship job fairs.

Year 2- engage workforce services in implementing youth leadership academies and apprenticeship job fairs.

Action Step Coordinator: Project Coordinator, Casey Starr

YAB designees: Jasmine Lewis and Haley Warren

Other stakeholders: YHDP Workforce Center partner, Tammy Smith

Goal #5: Increase capacity for managing and implementing YHDP projects

Objective 5.1: Increase the YHDP capacity by hiring staff

Action Steps:

A. Hire potentially a housing manager, a peer mentor and YAB Coordinator

Timeline: 6 month – outline staff positions and develop job descriptions

Year 1 – hire staff utilizing “hiring right model”

Year 2 – evaluate YHDP capacity

Action Step Coordinator: Project Coordinator, Casey Starr

YAB designees: Ben Doll and Kami Riddle

Objective 5.2: Increase the YHDP capacity through training staff and partners

Action Steps:

A. Conduct focus groups to determine training needs of staff and partners

Timeline: 6 month – conduct assessment of training needs

Year 1 – train staff and partners

Year 2 – evaluate training curriculum, make improvements

Action Step Coordinator: Project Coordinator, Casey Starr

YAB designees: Ben Doll and Kami Riddle

LIST OF NEW PROJECTS:

Project 1: Set-up youth Coordinated Entry System that is youth friendly and effective. \$25,000

Components of Project 1:

1. Enhance Coordinated Entry System capacity.
2. Ensure Coordinated Entry System meets the needs of YHDP youth.

Project 2: Expand permanent housing options with appropriate services and supports. \$337,000

Components of Project 2:

1. Fund and expand a low-barrier Rapid Re-housing program for rural Wyoming youth with high vulnerabilities.
2. Fund and establish Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program for rural Wyoming with high vulnerabilities
3. Explore opportunities to expand capacities of transitional living projects and host families.

Project 3(a): Sep-up partnerships and implement programs to improve educational outcomes for youth in K-12 and Post-secondary education. \$200,000

Components of Project 3(a):

1. Increase supports for youth in High School.
2. Increase supports for youth in college.
3. Increase access to Career Technical Education in K-12 schools for youth experiencing homelessness.

Project 3(b): Establish partnerships and set up apprenticeship, job mentorship and work experience programs; and youth leadership academies and apprenticeship job fairs. \$241,338.

Components of Project 3(b):

1. Develop business and fundraising plans for successful Social Enterprise.
2. Set up meaningful apprenticeship, job mentorship and work experience programs.
3. Sep up Vocational / Technical Opportunities: includes youth leadership academies and apprenticeship job fairs.

Project 5: Increase capacity for managing and implementing YHDP projects. \$170,000

Components of Project 5:

1. Hiring YHDP staff
2. Training YHDP staff and partners

Total cost of YHDP projects: \$973,338

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Wyoming CoC is the stewardship of the YHDP initiative. It governs, guides, and directs the YHDP initiative. The Chair of WY CoC, Tatyana Walker, is the Project Director for YHDP.

Youth Action Board works with the CoC in guiding and helping implement YHDP initiative. WY CoC is in the process of electing youth to serve on the Wyoming Homeless Collaboration/WY CoC board.

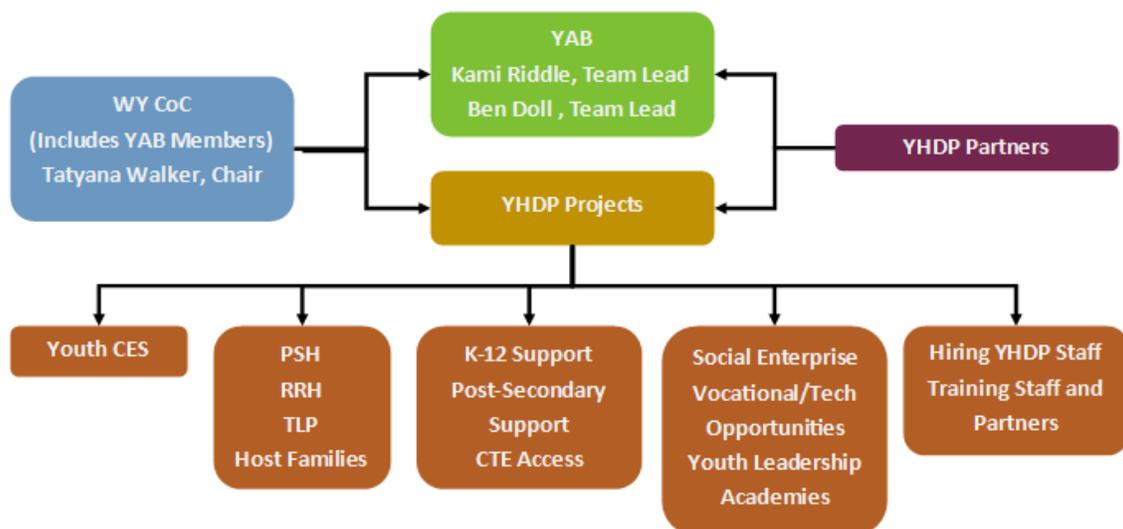
YAB has developed a group agreement that encompasses the values they stand by and how to work together as a team. Some of these values are: show respect for others past, stay focused, be sensitive, have accountability. They developed goals for the board: youth will facilitate meetings, expand access to serve on YAB to minority youth, advocate for safe school environment, and develop a youth-based resource guide for the northeast region, to name a few. YAB identified its training needs (1) to learn skills of public speaking and debate/advocacy and (2) understanding HUD and its acronyms.

Furthermore, YAB adopted a Council Model of governance - members felt very strongly that every member of YAB should have an equal decision-making power. There will be two co-leads at any given time: one lead would represent youth ages 18 and younger and one would represent youth

ages 18 to 24. Currently, Kami Riddle serves as a Team Lead for ages 18 and up, and Ben Doll serves as a Team Lead for ages 18 and under. Youth Lead will be responsible for agenda, facilitating meetings, and act as a representative of YAB. Each co-lead will serve in their position for 9 months: during the last 3 months the lead will train a new elected youth to step into the co-lead role. Leads can be re-elected and serve continuously with no term limit. The maximum number of YAB members is 10, minimum 4. YAB will meet weekly, and there will be a responsible youth to record minutes. Fifty or more percent of members must be present in order to vote. Communication channels: Facebook messenger plus email reminders. YAB has discussed including YAB members from remote locations (such as youth from reservations, ranching communities).

The process for YHDP RFPs and selection of projects will fall under the Wyoming CoC’s currently establish process. The CoC will be responsible for releasing funding opportunity, identifying grant/proposal reviewers (includes public child welfare, youth, education, housing and social serve partners), using specific YHDP relevant ranking criteria, and selecting projects to be funded. CoC will also be responsible for YHDP monitoring.

YHDP Organizational Chart



REQUIRED PLAN PRINCIPLES

USICH youth framework:

The NE Wyoming CCP plan is aligned with the US Interagency Council on Homelessness objectives, specifically:

- (1) Stable Housing includes a safe and reliable place to call home.

The CCP plan has contrite objectives and actions to fund and expand a low-barrier Rapid Re-Housing program; to fund and establish Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program for youth; and to explore opportunities to expand capacities of transitional living projects and host families.

- (2) Permanent Connections include ongoing attachments communities, schools, and other positive social networks.

The plan is focusing on developing a peer support framework that will include a youth peer mentoring program, peer study hall, and peer navigators in K-12 and post-secondary education. These strategies/resources are designed to provide additional effective support and connect youth to ongoing attachments to schools, communities, and other positive social networks.

- (3) Education/employment includes reducing drop-out rates among the YHDP eligible youth in K-12 and post-secondary education. To provide innovative employment opportunities that are meaningful to youth and include support and understanding of trauma and its effects.

The CCP plan focuses on increasing supports for youth in high school; increasing supports for youth in college; and increasing access to Career Technical Education in K-12 schools for youth experiencing homelessness. Specific to employment, the CCP plan focuses on developing business and fundraising plans for successful Social Enterprise; setting up meaningful apprenticeship, job mentorship, and work experience programs; and setting up vocational/ technical opportunities (includes youth leadership academies and apprenticeship job fairs).

(4) Social-emotional well-being includes the development of key competencies, attitudes, and behaviors that equip a young person to succeed across multiple domains of daily life, including school, work, relationship, and community.

The social-emotional well-being will be strengthened by offering youth leadership opportunities on YAB, through training, through building their own social enterprise, by providing support and resources at high school and post-secondary education, and on the job. Developing an orientation PowerPoint for employers to understand the unique circumstances of YHDP youth will add another layer of helping youth to feel supported at a job.

Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

Continuous quality improvement will occur throughout each project implementation stage. The CQI team made of YAB members, Department of Family Services representatives, CoC members, and HMIS specialist will conduct focus groups and disseminate surveys to gather feedback from youth, stakeholders, and partners. This feedback will be utilized to develop a plan for improvement and updates for CCP. The CQI team will also analyze the HMIS data pertaining to the YHDP funded projects (e.g. number of youth served, length of stay in the project, how many youth return to homelessness, how youth hear about YHDP, etc.) and utilize it to make improvements and to update CCP. Individuals will be assigned to each step of the improvement plan, and they will be responsible for their implementation. The YHDP CQI team will meet quarterly to assess their progress.

Each September, the COI team will review the CCP and make recommendations for any needed changes. In October, the revised CCP plan will be shared with stakeholders for review and collection of additional feedback/suggestions. By December, the CQI team will make final revisions to CCP. All revisions are approved by the COI team, and the final CCP is published.

Annual monitoring of YHPD projects will be conducted by CoC including YAB and the Department of Family Services representatives.

Special Populations:

LGBTQ+status

The NE CCP plan is designed to meet the needs of LGBTQ+ status youth. Many homeless youth (close to 60% or 69 youth) self-identified themselves as LGBTQ+ status in 2018 (data from Youth Assessment). Additionally, 85% of them had juvenile justice involvement at one point in their lives. Therefore, CCP has taken into consideration these dynamics, and as a first step in the CCP process we engaged LGBTQ+ status and youth who had juvenile justice involvement in the Youth Action Board. Their voice and needs are part of CCP and are incorporated into the strategies of creating peer support groups, safe housing options, specific training for employers and YHDP partners, and marketing community resources.

Minors

The regional crisis shelter served 45 homeless/runaway youth under the age of 18 in 2018. The majority (77%) ran away from home due to abuse, the McKinney-Vento count was 418 of unaccompanied youth in the school year 2018-2019. Minors identified the need for safety (from potential abusers) by having food and a place to sleep. Their voice and needs are incorporated into CCP: minors are a part of YAB, and they were instrumental in assessing housing options for minors and in developing strategies for spaces in which they feel safe and can build trust.

Pregnant and Parenting

The number of parenting and pregnant youth has been declining in the last three years. Specifically, the number of parenting and pregnant youth went down by 238% in the last three years (PIT count). This significant decrease is contributed to the implementation of the evidence-based program called WyPrep into the services that the homeless youth utilize. Parenting youth serve on YAB and identified the need for immediate access to safe housing, health care that is trauma-informed, and feeling of safety. Their voice and needs are part of CCP and are incorporated into the strategies of creating safe Rapid Re-Housing options and offering Trauma Informed Care training to employers and YHDP partners.

Justice Involved

One hundred percent (100%) of YAB members have had juvenile justice involvement. Sixty-four percent (64%) of youth that sought services at the Youth Emergency Services, Inc. Transitional Living Program (a regional hub for youth services) have had juvenile justice involvement. These youth stated that the first time they committed a crime was when they were minors. Their needs related to high school failures and eventually dropping out of school, need for vocational education and connecting to peers that understand and support them. Based on identified needs, CCP incorporated K-12 strategies, Career Technical Education strategies and peer/mentor supports.

Foster Care Involved

At any given time, there are between 90 to 120 youth in foster care in the northeast region (Department of Family Services 2018 statistics). Fifty-four (54) foster care youth were at-risk of homelessness or experienced homelessness in 2018 (Youth Emergency Services, Inc. 2018 data). These youth identified a need for stable housing, employment, peer support, and mental health services. To meet these needs, CCP included strategies for employment, PSH, Rapid Re-Housing, host homes, and potential expansion of transitional housing. Wrap-around services and mentor/peer support are part of CCP as well.

Victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation

Eight percent (8%) of youth identified that they were a part of sexual exploitation in order to have a roof over their head. This percentage was identified by YAB members based on their own personal experiences, and what their peers have stated. Eight (8%) percent was calculated based on a sample of youth in the focus group. These youth felt that safe housing, food, employment, and mental health care were their priority needs. CCP incorporated housing options, case management with Trauma Informed Care, and employment strategies to meet these needs.

Equality

When a focus group was conducted, data from Census, HMIS and PIT were analyzed. PIT data, specifically, showed that of the unsheltered homeless in WY, 34% were Native Americans and 9% were unsheltered Native Americans youth. In this CCP, the YHDP team wants to acknowledge that in Wyoming there is a large portion of Native Americans that are homeless. However, when

the YHDP team analyzed data for the northeast region of Wyoming, there were no disparities identified in terms of race and gender. All three sources (Census, HMIS and PIT) showed similar results with no discrepancies. This focus group was a snapshot.

*Note: Youth Emergency Services, Inc. conducts outreach and provides treatment services for Native American youth from Wind River, Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone reservations (3 reservations in WY), however, all youth return to their communities; they don't stay in the northeast.

The YHDP team will continue to analyze data to ensure that there is equality and no racial or other disparities. The YHDP team will continue to partner with local initiatives such as the JDAI team (Juvenile Detention Alternative to Incarceration), PFLAG organization and Community Juvenile Services Board to conduct outreach and ensure equality.

Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development is the foundation of the YHDP initiative in northeast Wyoming. Positive Youth Development is an approach to working with youth that emphasizes building on youths' strengths and providing supports and opportunities that will help them achieve goals and transition to adulthood in a productive, healthy manner. YAB members have a leading role in developing CCP i.e. identifying needs and gaps, outlining goals, coming up with solutions and projects that would address those gaps and assigning tasks to its members and partners. Youth worked together in creating the structure of their board and in developing guidelines for its operation and decision making. They are the owners of the YHDP projects and have been successful in presenting their ideas, gaps and solutions to local educational entities to start the process of change and innovation!

Trauma Informed Care

Trauma Informed Care (TIC) and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are the foundation of all YHDP initiatives. The key partners have been trained in Trauma Informed Care and ACEs. When YHDP sessions/meetings take place the project staff is a part of YAB discussions and make sure that youth are protected and are not re-traumatized. Partners and staff are sensitive to youth's experiences and knowledgeable on how to handle situations that are vulnerable in nature. Youth

Emergency Services, Inc. has been providing training to K-12 educators in the northeast Wyoming region on ACEs and Trauma Informed Care. The agency has the TIC policy in place and will share it with YAB and partners to ensure that everyone is informed. YHDP will help us to expand TIC and ACEs training opportunities to the college and business employers.

Family Engagement

Families play an essential role in the well-being of their children. Many youth who have experienced homelessness or who are at-risk of homelessness either have been in state custody (foster care) or grew up in unstable homes and self-identify with 6 or more ACEs factors. A wrap-around approach to re-engaging family members and developing a natural support system has been found to be effective in working with high-risk families. A wrap-around approach empowers youth and families to identify their natural support systems (it could be a family friend that they can go to for advice/support, a minister at their church, a neighbor, etc.) and utilize this support to build strengths, deal with crisis, seek advice, etc. Staff help families to build this circle of support. In simple terms, wraparound is a concept of “building a village of support”. Many YHDP youth and their families don’t have that when they enroll in services. The YHDP team will embrace a wrap-around approach in working with youth and their family members.

Immediate access to housing with no preconditions

The Housing First model will be utilized across all YHDP housing models. Youth will be accepted into the service as they are; housing readiness or abstinence criteria will not be required in order to obtain or keep permanent housing. Case managers will assist with housing searches and placement, landlord recruitment, rental assistance, and comprehensive case management. The YHDP team strongly believes in removing any barriers that prevent youth access to services, and therefore will accept youth into the YHDP programs as they are and build relationships with them.

Youth Voice and Choice

The Coordinated Community Plan has prioritized youth’s voice and choice in the work of ending youth homelessness in Wyoming - they are the experts. The Youth Action Board was key in providing input, developing strategies and voting on the coordinated plan. YAB members were engaged on a weekly basis in providing input and developing a plan that would work for them and

the homeless youth they represented. Youth chose what projects their CCP will support. Youth were a part of all dialogs with educational and employment partners. To eliminate identified barriers such as lack of public transit system and inflexible work schedules, the YHDP team provided transportation to youth and changed the days and times of the meetings. The goal was to have as many youth as possible at the discussion table. Without a doubt, youth's voice and their choices are valued and are integrated throughout the coordinated community plan and into the system of changes. The next step is embracing youth's voice and choice in how the CCP projects will be implemented. The YHDT team is excited in moving towards the actual implementation stage of the initiative!

Individualize and Client-driven support

From the start, youth has been the driving force of developing a community coordinated plan that takes into consideration individualized needs of youth from different walks of life and offers a broad range of strategies. The YHDP team is committed to developing a system that avoids a one-solution fits all approach. For example, youth who attend public high schools felt it was important to include in the CCP a project that would give them access to CTE classes in the K-12 education system, even if they are failing core academic subjects. Youth who attend private alternative schools and have "no access to CTE at all" felt that the CCP should include access to CTE for them as well (this could be done in the partnership with the local college that has abilities to issue college and high school credits). Therefore, the CCP plan provides a wonderful strengths-based platform that can be adopted to the individualized needs of youth and encompasses strategies that would work for any youth.

Social and Community Integration

Youth are the active agent of CCP. They are part of discussions, focus groups, community meetings/presentations, and activities. During the YHDP planning period, youth were engaged in presenting to the Career Technical Education board. They were at the discussion table with Gillette College on identifying barriers to post-secondary education and developing strategies for eliminating/reducing barriers. Youth led a community focus group with K-12 educators: what is working and what is not in preventing youth from dropping out of high school. This is only a start, there will be more opportunities for engagement during the CCP implementation and beyond.

YHDP youth are elected to serve on the local CTE board and on the state CoC board to ensure their voice is heard and has weight when local and state-wide decisions are made. They are invited by the local Workforce Center to work on developing “youth leadership academies”, apprenticeship job fairs and work experiences. The goal is to expand youth engagement by including them in a broad range of community opportunities that have a direct impact on them and their peers. YHDP staff will continue provide transportation to youth to reduce barriers to community engagement activities.

Coordinated Entry

One of the CCP goals is to effectively link all youth experiencing homelessness to housing and service solutions that are tailored to their needs through the use of the Coordinated Entry System. The YHDP team will be working on determining the most appropriate access points for youth to CES and assessment tools. The YHDP team is also looking into funding housing navigation services and creating a subcommittee to work on assessing the need for expanding outreach services/marketing CES for youth populations. The team felt it is important to incorporate the use of the TAY-Vi-SPDAT to assess youth needs at CES and assess this tool at least annually. A weekly Coordinated Entry will be set up to go over the priority list specific to youth.

Signature Page

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Bonnie Volk, District 6 Manager
Department of Family Services
(Child Welfare Agency for Campbell, Crook and Weston counties)

Kami Riddle and Ben Doll, Youth Action Board Co-leads

Tammy Smith, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
Wyoming Department of Workforce Services
(Local government agency)