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Opening Doors for Youth:

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

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We owe a debt of gratitude to each of the individuals and agencies (see Appendix A) who gave so generously of their time, expertise, experience, and energies. Connecticut is enriched by the spirit of collaboration that characterized this work. We hope this report will be an early step in an overall system transformation that will both reduce homelessness among young people and create new opportunities for them to thrive and succeed.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Vision

Creating a future when all young people in Connecticut have safe, stable places to live and opportunities to reach their full potential.

Process

The Opening Doors for Youth plan was created from a year long, multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at creating a comprehensive, integrated network of services for young people ages 14-24 who are homeless or unstably housed in Connecticut. Between March and October 2014, three subgroups met regularly to assess the current service landscape in the state and formulate recommendations for improvement. Participants in this process included state agency personnel, providers, advocates and funders.

Findings

- Youth and young adult homelessness exists on a continuum ranging from intermittent housing instability to absolute homelessness.
- Youth and young adults (YYA) 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.
- 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.

Guiding Principles

- Our plan must consistently encourage, facilitate and value the involvement of YYA in planning and implementing improvements in the state's support system;
- 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).
- Our plan must develop, embrace and encourage best practices that cut across and integrate systems and traditional silos.

Overarching Strategies for Collaboration and Coordination

- Hire a statewide YYA housing services coordinator.
- Establish a funding and transparency mechanism for all services targeting YYA with housing instability in the state.

Five Core Strategies

STRATEGY A: CREATE BETTER TOOLS TO IDENTIFY, SCREEN AND REFER YOUTH IN NEED.

Because so many vulnerable YYA need help but remain unidentified, new efforts to screen and assess young people are a critical part of homelessness prevention and intervention. These screenings will then be used to better match YYA with tailored services and housing.

STRATEGY B: EXPAND DIRECT SERVICES AND SUPPORT ALONG THE HOUSING CONTINUUM.

Expanding the number of direct services and supports is critical. YYA homelessness exists on a continuum ranging from intermittent housing instability to absolute homelessness. Housing options and services must meet the individualized needs of these youth.

STRATEGY C: PROVIDE OR IMPROVE TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR PROVIDERS.

Creating an integrated, comprehensive system of services for homeless and unstably housed young people requires a set of common approaches and ongoing training and information-sharing among staff across several domains. That leadership work is most efficiently carried out by a statewide YYA coordinator.

STRATEGY D: IMPROVE DATA COLLECTION AND USE OF DATA.

Integrating the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System (RHYMIS) will create a powerful tool to assess the impact of services on unstably housed youth and young adults.

STRATEGY E: ADVOCATE FOR POLICY CHANGES.

The workgroups identified several areas where changes in policies could produce better outcomes for YYA who are unstably housed. These include addressing the connection between child welfare and homelessness as well as access to essential services and the exclusion of adolescent boys from family shelters.

VISION

Creating a future when all young people in Connecticut have
safe, stable places to live and opportunities to reach their full potential.

INTRODUCTION

Young people find themselves without homes for many reasons, including family conflicts, difficulty competing for livable wage jobs, mental health and substance use problems, early pregnancy and parenting, coping with the effects of sexual and/or gender minority status, fleeing domestic or sexual violence, and leaving state child welfare or juvenile justice systems without adequate skills or support.

National Characteristics and Prevalence of Homeless Youth and Young Adults

Young people who are alone and without homes – unaccompanied youth and young adults - account for approximately 1% of the urban homeless population,[1] with **an estimated 1.6-1.7 million youth under the age of 18, and an estimated 500,000 young adults ages 18-24 experiencing homelessness annually**.[2] Unaccompanied youth and young adults (YYA) include those who run away or are expelled from their homes and who are staying temporarily with friends or alone on the streets. YYA homelessness tends to be episodic rather than chronic, with 86% of YYA returning home within one week.[3,4]

Unaccompanied Youth & Young Adults: children and youth through age 17 not residing with legal guardians; young adults ages 18 through 24 experiencing homelessness apart from their families

Unaccompanied homeless YYA are at increased risk for sexual abuse, being lured into prostitution, physical abuse, criminal justice involvement, illness, suicide, school dropout, mental health problems and substance use.[5] National data show that

[1] National Coalition for the Homeless. (2008). *Homeless youth fact sheet.* Retrieved from http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/youth.html.
[2] Toro, P., Dworsky, A., & Fowler, P. (2007). Homeless youth in the United States: Recent research findings and intervention approaches. *National Symposium on Homelessness Research, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.* Retrieved from http://www.huduser.org/publications/pdf/p6.pdf.
[3] National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2012). *An Emerging Framework for Ending Unaccompanied Youth Homelessness.* Retrieved from http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/an-emerging-framework-for-ending-unaccompanied-youth-homelessness.
[4] National Alliance to End Homelessness (2012). An emerging framework for ending unaccompanied youth homelessness. http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/an-emerging-framework-for-ending-unaccompanied-youth-homelessness.
[5] Toro, P., Dworsky, A., & Fowler, P. (2007). Homeless youth in the United States: Recent research findings and intervention approaches. *National Symposium on Homelessness Research, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.* Retrieved from http://www.huduser.org/publications/pdf/p6.pdf.

homelessness disproportionately affects YYA of color[6] and those identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning (LGBTQ).[7] YYA experiencing housing instability have a history of contact with multiple systems. Nearly one-quarter of young people arriving at youth shelters were in foster care the previous year.[8] More than half of shelter youth, and two-thirds of YYA living on the streets, report having spent time in foster care, inpatient mental health settings, juvenile detention or jail.[9]

Addressing Youth and Young Adult Homelessness in Connecticut

Since 2007, partners in Connecticut have engaged in innovative approaches, which include developing a statewide workgroup on YYA homelessness and improving data collection methods.

Opening Doors-CT Homeless Youth Workgroup

Recognizing the vulnerability of homeless YYA, the American Bar Association Commission on Homelessness and Poverty asked the Center for Children's Advocacy (CCA) in 2007 to create a Connecticut Team for Runaway and Homeless Youth. The purpose of the group was to identify and advocate for systemic changes necessary to improve outcomes for runaway and homeless youth. CCA merged the Connecticut Team for Runaway and Homeless Youth into the Opening Doors-CT structure, creating the *Opening Doors-CT* Homeless Youth Workgroup in 2012. The Homeless Youth Workgroup is chaired by CCA and staffed by the Partnership for Strong Communities (Partnership).

The Homeless Youth Workgroup recognized that a critical first step in addressing YYA homelessness was understanding the unique patterns and needs of this vulnerable subpopulation. However, consistent with the national picture, there were no reliable data on YYA experiencing homelessness in Connecticut due to the:

- Lack of a consistent definition of youth homelessness;
- Failure of families to report youth not living with them;
- Unreliability of counting methodologies; and

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[6] Gordon, D.M. & Hunter, B.A. (2013). Invisible No More: Creating Opportunities for Youth who are Homeless. *The Consultation Center at Yale University School of Medicine.* Retrieved from http://pschousing.org/files/InvisibleNoMoreExecutiveSummary.pdf.

[7] National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2009). *Incidence and Vulnerability of LGBTQ Homeless Youth*. Retrieved from http://www.endhomelessness.org/library/entry/incidence-and-vulnerability-of-lgbtq-homeless-youth.

[8] National Association of Social Workers. (1992). *Helping Vulnerable Youths: Runaway and Homeless Adolescents in the United States.* Washington, DC: NASW Press.

[9] J. Green, R. K. (1995). *Youth with Runaway, Throwaway, and Homeless Experiences: Prevalence, Drug Use, and Other At-Risk Behaviors*. Washington DC.

- Large number of unaccompanied homeless youth who are not connected to services or shelters.

Invisible No More Study

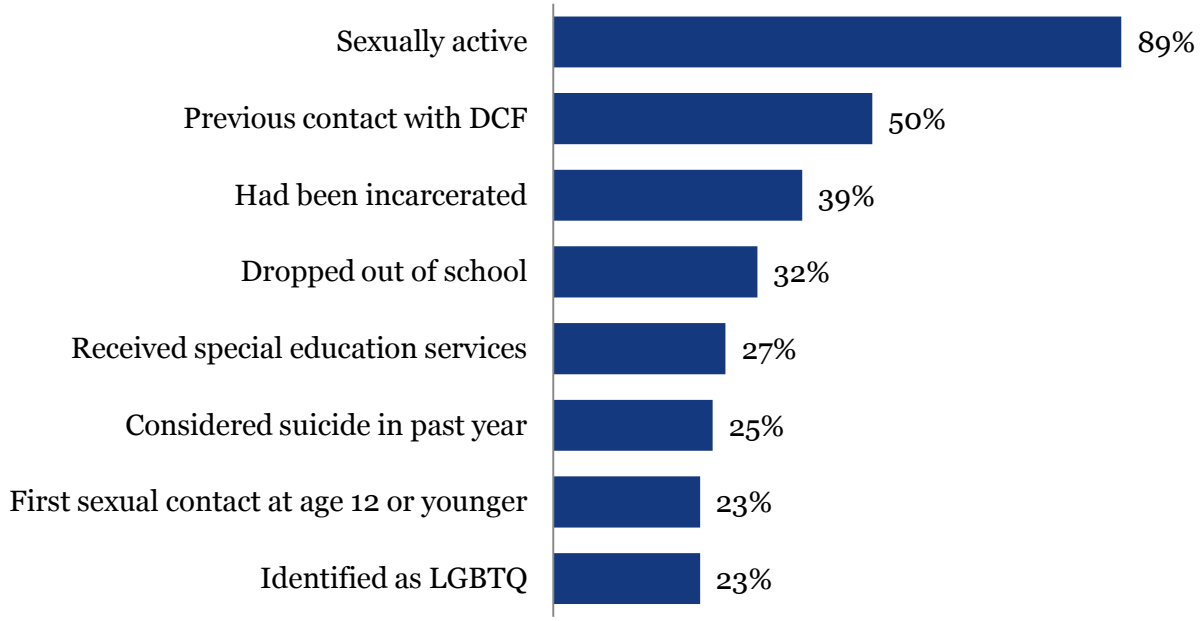
The Homeless Youth Workgroup sought and received funding from the Tow Foundation, Melville Charitable Trust, Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness, Partnership for Strong Communities, and American Savings Foundation to conduct a study of unaccompanied homeless youth in Connecticut. *Invisible No More* (2013) examined the experiences of unaccompanied homeless youth in the state and made recommendations about how to create a more responsive service system for YYA.

The study surveyed 98 young people ages 14-24 in Bridgeport, Lower Fairfield County, Hartford, New Haven, and New London, all of whom had experienced housing instability. Young people participated in structured and open-ended interviews about their experiences during the preceding six months. The study collected demographic data as well as information about youths' functioning and involvement in several systems and domains, including education, housing, financial, family, peer, criminal justice, mental health, physical health, substance use, trauma, and personal functioning.

Demographic information and life experiences reported by YYA interviewed in *Invisible No More* (2013) mirrored national data, suggesting that YYA who are African-American males or identify as Hispanic/Latino or LGBTQ are overrepresented among those experiencing housing instability. Figure 1 illustrates some of the most common life experiences of the 98 youth who were interviewed. These include high rates of sexual activity, previous contact with the Department of Children and Families (DCF), and incarceration. In addition, nearly one-quarter of female participants reported having been pregnant and over two-thirds of these kept their children. Only about one-third of the YYA in this study had seen a specialist, social worker or therapist over the past three months.[10] Although the study's non-systematic sampling methods mean that these findings may not be representative, experienced providers and youth participants report that they represent both the demographics of YYA with housing instability in Connecticut and the issues facing these YYA.

[10] Gordon, D.M. & Hunter, B.A. (2013). Invisible No More: Creating Opportunities for Youth who are Homeless. *The Consultation Center at Yale University School of Medicine.* Retrieved from http://pschousing.org/files/InvisibleNoMoreExecutiveSummary.pdf.

Figure 1: Life Experiences of YYA Interviewed



Invisible No More highlighted the urgent need for a coordinated response to YYA with housing instability in Connecticut. Currently there are fewer than 25 beds statewide dedicated to youth under 18; fewer than 15 beds statewide targeted specifically for young adults 18-24; and fewer than seven private agencies that provide crisis intervention, respite services or street outreach designed for these vulnerable YYA (see Appendix C for a resource map).

YYA experiencing housing instability are particularly likely to have contact with several service delivery systems within the state – education, juvenile justice, child welfare and law enforcement – yet no entity hasongoing responsibility for them. Focus groups and key informant interviews with service providers, state agency representatives and advocates led to a preliminary set of recommendations, including the need for a formal planning process to address the unique needs of YYA with housing instability.

There are fewer than 25 beds statewide dedicated to youth under 18; fewer than 15 beds statewide specifically for young adults 18-24; and fewer than 7 private agencies that provide crisis interventions, respite services or street outreach designed for YYA

In December 2013, a preview session of the study outcomes was held with core partners and key stakeholders. At the preview, they engaged with CCA and the Partnership to review outcomes of the study and give feedback on initial priority recommendations and advocacy strategies. This preview session laid the groundwork for advocacy over 2014-2015 to implement the study recommendations, develop and

implement this plan that builds capacity of services for YYA with housing instability, and better integrate those services.

Counting Homeless YYA in Connecticut

The traditional method used to understand the prevalence of homelessness in the nation is the annual HUD-mandated Point in Time Count (PIT). The PIT occurs on one night every January and counts the number of sheltered and unsheltered persons. The 2013 PIT found that an estimated 4,506 individuals were homeless across the state of Connecticut, including 341 YYA ages 18-14. Of these, 172 were in emergency shelter or transitional housing, 116 had children themselves, and 12 were unaccompanied children under age 18.[11]

Understanding the prevalence of YYA homelessness is challenging given that YYA often are not connected to services, shelters or school. Most are 'couch surfing' and staying with others for short periods of time. At present there is also no unified or standardized way to count YYA across state and private agencies, which makes aggregating statewide data difficult. This is concerning given the high rates of trauma and systems involvement described previously.

341

Number of YYA ages 18-24 counted during the 2013 PIT.

Building on the findings from *Invisible No More,* the Homeless Youth Workgroup, in conjunction with the CT Coalition to End Homelessness, organized and implemented Connecticut's first statewide Youth Count January 19-February 18, 2015. This count employed new strategies for identifying and surveying unaccompanied YYA,[12] in recognition that traditional counts often fail to enumerate hidden homeless populations. The Youth Count intentionally overlapped with the 2015 PIT Count to capitalize on the volunteer efforts already in place at that time.

[11] CT Coalition to End Homelessness (2013). 2013 Homeless Point in Time Count: CT PIT 2013. Retrieved from http://www.cceh.org/publications/detail/ct-pit-2013-report.

12 Cunningham, M., Harwood, R. & Hall, S. (2010) Residential Instability and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Children and Education Program. Urban Institute. Retrieved from http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/412115-mckinney-vento-program.pdf.

CT Statewide Youth Count
January 19 – February 18, 2015

Community-wide survey & School-based estimation project

Results available Spring/Summer 2015

PLANNING METHODS: OPENING DOORS FOR YOUTH

The ongoing efforts of the *Opening Doors-CT* Homeless Youth Workgroup and the findings of the *Invisible No More* study generated new momentum in the state. To capitalize on that momentum, multiple stakeholders convened to develop this action plan to end homelessness among YYA in Connecticut.

Consistent with the desire to collect better data and develop an integrated system, the Opening Doors for Youth project included multiple subgroups, each charged with a purpose and subset of questions to address. The process involved substantial coordination across three subgroups: 1) Data Integration; 2) Stable Housing; and 3) Services and Supports (see Appendix B for subgroup descriptions). These groups guided and synthesized a multi-level planning process to design a comprehensive, action-oriented plan (see Work Plan) for an integrated system responsive to the needs of unaccompanied homeless youth. The subsequent year long planning process resulted in the work plan, which is based on the findings and guiding principles below.

FINDINGS

Consistent with these goals, the Homeless Youth Workgroup generated three conceptual findings that guided their planning and framed considerations for implementation:

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

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Three overarching principles emerged throughout the planning process:

1) 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:

The voices of YYA are critical to the development of a viable approach to identify, plan for, and implement strategies to prevent housing instability for YYA. Planning and implementation of the plan must include YYA involvement, both as advisors and, whenever possible, as employees of state agencies and community-based providers. Sustained, integral involvement of YYA in this work is fundamental to its success.

2) 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 USICH (see Appendix F for USICH model):

Cities, counties and states across the nation have adopted USICH's model for reducing homelessness among YYA. Working within this framework will allow municipalities to compare approaches and results more easily, creating a set of tested practices proven to be effective with vulnerable YYA.

3) Our plan must develop, embrace and encourage best practices that cut across and integrate systems and traditional silos:

Preventing housing instability and homelessness among YYA requires addressing root causes (i.e., family housing instability and poverty, untreated mental health and substance use problems) that are treated by different systems within Connecticut. Opening Doors for Youth will learn and build from other silo-busting state initiatives that have been developed in recent years. They include a five-year, $5 million partnership to improve housing stability for child welfare-involved families; the development of a common statewide process for accessing homeless assistance services known as Connecticut's Coordinated Access Network (CAN); and the state's specialized Youth Adult Services division of the Dept. of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), developed to help young adults transition successfully from DCF to the adult mental health system and achieve skills necessary for adulthood.

OPENING DOORS FOR YOUTH WORK PLAN

Based on the findings and guiding principles listed above, the following strategies and action steps are critical to the success of this work plan, and more broadly, the efforts of the Opening Doors for Youth project to create a comprehensive, integrated system of support for YYA with housing instability in Connecticut. The overarching strategies are fundamental to establish the infrastructure within which the work plan can be effectively implemented. In addition, Strategies A through E embody the USICH framework for preventing and ending youth homelessness (see Appendix F).

OVERARCHING STRATEGIES FOR COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

Of the seven strategies identified by the subgroups, two are integral to the effort and will allow a level of necessary coordination and collaboration between the various entities listed in the remaining five strategies. Achieving these two overarching strategies will ensure the success of this work plan, and the efforts to create a comprehensive, integrated system of support for YYA with housing instability in Connecticut.

- *Hire a Statewide YYA Housing Services Coordinator.*

  The ability to plan and implement a statewide integrated system of care for YYA with housing instability hinges on a dedicated coordinator/manager who can drive project activities and engage stakeholders in continuing plan development. A full-time staff person could coordinate services, develop funding strategies, establish minimum service standards, develop a training calendar, facilitate information-sharing among service providers, act as liaison with state agencies, etc. Ideally, this individual would participate in the Opening Doors-CT Homeless Youth Workgroup to ensure that activities align with that project's overarching goals, and would be housed in a setting considered 'neutral' to both state and private providers. This position could initially be supported publically or privately.

- *Establish Funding and Transparency Mechanism for All Services Targeting YYA with Housing Instability in the State.* The fragmentation of current services to YYA who are homeless and unstably housed in Connecticut is due both to scarcity of resources and the competitive nature of federal and state funding. Undertaking a full-system response to YYA homelessness requires a high level of transparency about which providers are receiving funding, and how that funding supports the overall goals of the comprehensive plan. Washington State provides one example of how a well-coordinated, transparent system might look; in that state, a homeless coalition makes grants to organizations in each county that align with the state's overarching plan to end homelessness.[13] To offer another example, Minnesota has committed significant resources[14] to developing a comprehensive response to YYA homelessness for young people both in and out of the state system.[15] Successful implementation of the recommendations that follow should include efforts to develop a comprehensive funding plan.

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[13] Building Changes. (n.d.) *Funded projects.* Retrieved from http://www.buildingchanges.org/grants-capacity-building/funded-projects.

[14] Minnesota Department of Human Services. Homelessness and Housing Programs. Retrieved from http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=id_002552.

[15] Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2013). *Heading home: Minnesota's plan to prevent and end homelessness.* Retrieved from http://www.headinghomeminnesota.org/sites/default/files/MICH%20full%20plan_0.pdf.

CORE STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS

STRATEGY A: CREATE BETTER TOOLS TO IDENTIFY, SCREEN AND REFER YOUTH IN NEED.

Housing and related support services for unaccompanied YYA with housing instability are extremely limited, and the few federally funded services targeted to runaway and homeless youth are unevenly distributed and subject to a highly competitive grant process. This means that formal mechanisms, such as street outreach, that could screen large numbers of young people are entirely absent in some parts of the state. Because so many vulnerable YYA need help but remain unidentified, new efforts to screen and assess young people are a critical part of homelessness prevention and intervention.

STRATEGY B: EXPAND DIRECT SERVICES AND SUPPORT ALONG THE HOUSING CONTINUUM.

State and private nonprofits serving YYA must assess individuals' strengths and needs in order to provide appropriate services; individual planning is a cornerstone of positive youth development and standard across both state and private programs. The challenge of aligning individual youth needs with appropriate services is due primarily to a shortage of housing and related programs for YYA, as well as a shortage of options that correspond to individual needs. Furthermore, the youth services system as currently configured primarily reaches young people either connected to a state agency or to one of the state's few runaway and homeless youth programs, with the funding tilted heavily toward services for state-involved young people. Thus the vast majority of young people in Connecticut have no access to any comprehensive transitional services at all.

STRATEGY C: PROVIDE OR IMPROVE TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR PROVIDERS.

In the 40 years since the federal government began funding specialized services for unaccompanied homeless young people, an enormous body of knowledge has been developed demonstrating what works to help abandoned and marginalized

youth make healthy transitions to adulthood. Recent research on adolescent brain development, trauma and resilience continues to inform the way services should be presented and structured. Yet despite an ever-expanding number of evidence-based practices (EBPs) and trainings for caseworkers, street outreach workers and other professionals interfacing with at-risk youth, use of EBPs is still inconsistent and uncoordinated across systems. Creating an integrated, comprehensive system of services for homeless and unstably housed young people requires a set of common approaches and ongoing training and information-sharing among staff across several domains. That leadership work is most efficiently carried out by a statewide YYA coordinator.

STRATEGY D: IMPROVE COLLECTION AND USE OF DATA.

The federal government plans to integrate the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System (RHYMIS) reporting structures in 2015. All outcomes will be addressed in detail in those combined datasets, creating a powerful tool to assess the impact of services on unstably housed youth and young adults. In Connecticut, planning is already taking place around combining the data and offering access to all homeless services via CaseWorthy, the database currently used by the state's Continuum of Care networks. Bringing this work to fruition, and coordinating CaseWorthy with systems used by state agencies, offer the best opportunity to understand who receives which services, and what their proximate outcomes are.

STRATEGY E: ADVOCATE FOR CHANGES IN POLICY.

The subgroups identified several areas where changes in policies could produce better outcomes for YYA who are unstably housed. These include addressing the connection between child welfare and homelessness as well as access to essential services and the exclusion of adolescent boys from family shelters.

WORK PLAN: STRATEGIES AND ACTION STEPS

STRATEGY A: CREATE BETTER TOOLS TO IDENTIFY, SCREEN AND REFER YOUTH IN NEED.

Action Steps	Population	Benchmarks	Entities Involved	Timeline
1. Develop a simple universal screening tool for housing instability to be implemented by organizations working with moderate- to high-risk youth: GED programs, youth development programs, food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless health programs, school-based health centers, ERs, job centers and programs, youth service bureaus, and DSS. Screening will provide better data on the scope of housing instability and create mechanism for referring young people in need to local services provider or CAN. Impacts: Stable Housing, Well-Being				
1.1. Develop universal screening tool for housing instability, informed by national best practices. 1.2. Identify local agency partners, building on already-existing service infrastructure (such as youth service bureaus). 1.3. Train local partners around use of the screening tool and how to refer YYA to appropriate resources.	Moderate- to high-need youth ages 14-24.	Creation and adoption of a statewide screening tool for youth housing instability. Numbers of youth-serving agencies using the tool to refer youth to providers or CAN.	Local service agencies across the state including schools and YSBs, DSS, CCEH, State YYA Coordinator, funder.	
2. Develop more street outreach/drop-in programs with crisis intervention capacity. Drop-in programs are cost-effective, low-barrier ways to screen and assess large numbers of young people and route them to needed services. Impacts: Stable Housing, Well- Being				
2.1. In coordination with State Homeless Youth Program, develop phase-in plan identifying three new sites for street outreach/drop-in.	Moderate- to high-need youth ages 14-24.	Numbers of young people in diverse areas of the state who know about and can	Local services in three pilot sites and potential new partners including schools and YSBs;	

Action Steps	Population	Benchmarks	Entities Involved	Timeline
2.2. Identify local agency partner, building on already-existing service infrastructure (such as youth service bureaus). 2.3. Align with local needs. 2.4. Secure pilot funding.		access local sources of assistance.	State YYA Coordinator; State Homeless Youth Program, funder.	
3. Create a statewide youth information and referral (I & R) mechanism that can be promoted as the single phone/text/chat resource for youth experiencing housing issues. Impacts: Stable Housing, Well-Being (see also Table 1, Activity 5 and Table 2, Activity 4 for additional peer involvement opportunities.				
3.1. Research best practices in youth-oriented I & R, considering phone, text and online chat features. 3.2. Investigate feasibility, pros and cons, and capacity of 211 and CAN to launch statewide I & R 3.3. Establish goals and protocols, including plans for warm transfer of youth. 3.4. Secure funding. 3.5. Run campaigns targeting subpopulations of YYA (ethnic, racial and sexual minority youth, sexually trafficked youth, etc.). 3.6. Hire and train youth specialists to screen ALL callers under age 24 for housing-related issues and provide counseling and referral. 3.7. Design complementary youth-specific web portal.	All YYA in state ages 14-24.	Numbers of young people who recognize and are willing to access a statewide youth I & R resource, and who say they were materially assisted by the contact.	State 211 system, State YYA Coordinator, CCEH, DOH, DCF, National Runaway Switchboard, CANs, school and other service providers working with YYA in any capacity, municipalities, media, youth advisors.	
4. If pilots of the TAY Triage Tool predict chronic homelessness for vulnerable YYA, build a fast-track process for young people at highest risk into permanent supportive housing. Impacts: Stable Housing, Education/Jobs, Well-Being, Permanent Connections				
4.1. Assess current pilot outcomes. 4.2. Assess feasibility of implementing tool in certain ancillary services for higher-risk YYA such as GED or jobs programs.	High-need YYA at risk of chronic homelessness.	Number of TAY-identified youth who successfully enter and maintain supportive housing.	CSH, DCF, DMHAS, DOH, DOC and Judicial Branch.	

Action Steps	Population	Benchmarks	Entities Involved	Timeline
4.3. Investigate feasibility of fast-track supportive housing. 4.4. Secure funding and slots. 4.5. Explore possible applications of TAY Triage Tool with individuals leaving Young Adult Services and DCF and entering the adult mental health system.				
5. Build universal school-based approaches to identifying and assisting/referring YYA with housing instability. Impacts: Stable Housing, Well-Being, Permanent Connections				
5.1. Consider youth-led school awareness raising campaigns, initially in schools participating in the Youth Count Peer Estimation Project. 5.2. Pilot and evaluate peer-driven approaches such as 'Natural Helper' programs and peer mentoring. 5.3. Pilot school responses, such as 'First Aid' kits and enhanced referral systems that include peer helpers or school follow-up (see Resources).	Moderate- and high-need youth in school.	Increase in the number of YYA identified and routed to local services; increase in awareness of number of YYA with instability in schools.	Schools, RHY providers, existing student and youth groups, higher ed.	Spring 2015
6. Build CAN leadership in planning protocols re: screening and referral of YYA, and in developing specialized services for YYA, within their regions. Impacts: Stable Housing, Well-Being				
6.1. Assess needs per region, based on number of youth-specific homeless service providers, numbers of YYA requesting assistance, and data developed by the Jan. 2015 Youth Count. 6.2. Assess feasibility of adjusting existing services to YYA needs, perhaps on a pilot basis in one or two sites.	Moderate- and high-need YYA.		State YYA Coordinator, CANs, CCEH, DOH, local homeless and ancillary service providers.	

STRATEGY B: EXPAND DIRECT SERVICES AND SUPPORT ALONG THE HOUSING CONTINUUM.

Action Steps	Population	Benchmarks	Entities Involved	Timeline
1. Create more YYA-specific respite beds, crisis response services and shelter beds. Impacts: Stable Housing, Well-Being				
1.1. Identify areas of highest need and presence of existing service infrastructure. 1.2. Expand current homeless youth programs. 1.3. Seek local, state, federal and/or foundation funding for staff, training and facility costs. 1.4. Work closely with transitional and permanent housing providers to develop protocols for moving YYA rapidly out of emergency shelter and into more stable housing. 1.5. Investigate the feasibility of extending the federal 21-day shelter limits when transitional and permanent options are unavailable.	Moderate- and high-need YYA ages 16-24.	More young people in acute need of services report having a place to go for basic shelter. Fewer YYA being sheltered in adult shelter settings.	State agencies (including DOC and Judicial Branch), RHY providers, pilot site service providers, YSBs, local faith institutions, higher ed, or other organizations that can provide facilities and/or volunteers.	Fall 2015
2. Develop more low-barrier resource centers for non-system youth and for youth who have left state care and don't wish to go back. Low-barrier resource centers include drop-in centers, 'warming centers,' Safe Place sites, and other sites where YYA can get immediate help with basic needs with no commitment to ongoing engagement. Impacts: Well-Being				
2.1 Identify at least one site that can act as a first-stop resource center in every community, using Safe Place sites, youth service bureaus, schools, faith institutions and community centers. 2.2. Investigate feasibility of expanding Safe Place	Moderate- and high-need YYA.	Number of new low-barrier drop-in sites. Number of YYA accessing crisis support and receiving	Local service providers across many domains; CANs; youth homeless service providers; faith communities; State	Summer 2015-Summer 2016

Action Steps	Population	Benchmarks	Entities Involved	Timeline
network based on current Safe Place sites data and lessons learned. 2.3. Seek local, state and federal funding to support training and overhead.		referrals to other supportive services.	YYA Coordinator, YSBs.	
3. Build capacity of state agencies and private nonprofit organizations working with YYA to follow up with young people after they leave services. Impacts: Housing, Well-Being				
3.1. Assess the feasibility of getting unlimited cell services donated to YYA discharged from DCF or homeless services. 3.2. Study the feasibility of training stable, older youth to act as peer aftercare workers for YYA leaving services. 3.3. Design process for engaging young people being discharged from services electronically, via email, texting, mobile apps, social media, online portals, with potential incentives for participating. 3.4. Explore the use of incentives. 3.5. Add dedicated staff time in DCF regional offices to follow up with discharged YYA, and regularly report rate of response to follow-up attempts.	Moderate- to high-need youth 18-24.	Number of YYA who maintain meaningful contact with service providers, and who can be located by service providers for at least 2 years after leaving services.	RHY service providers; DCF, DMHAS, DOH, DOC and Judicial Branch; State YYA Coordinator.	
4. Create low-barrier housing support services for YYA ages 16-24 who do not require ongoing supervision and services, but who need initial assistance in securing and maintaining housing and basic needs. Impacts: Stable Housing, Well-Being				
4.1. Select pilot localities based on partnership capacity; housing availability; estimated numbers of youth in need; and easy access to public transportation, schools and businesses. 4.2. Investigate non-traditional funding and partners; many models have been developed around the	Low- to moderate-need youth, such as youth who need stable housing to finish high school or older youth who	Expanded range of options available to YYA. Number of low- to moderate-need YYA who receive housing	CoCs, RHY providers, DCF, DOH, school districts, higher ed, affordable housing providers and private landlords.	

Action Steps	Population	Benchmarks	Entities Involved	Timeline
country that can prove useful (see Resources). 4.3. Create as many options as possible for youth with low to moderate needs – host homes, SROs, subsidized apartments, roommates, school-supported housing, bridge services to establish YYA in their own private housing, etc. – by focusing on sustained flexible funding necessary for individualized response to youth needs. 4.4. Assess youth-level impacts. With input from pilot cohort of youth, examine the need for model refinement and scale up.	only need occasional support.	support.		
5. Create transitional and supportive housing for high-need YYA identified through TAY Triage Tool or other appropriate screening tools (See Strategy A; Action Steps 4). Impacts: Stable Housing, Well-Being				
5.1. Identify target subpopulations. 5.2. Support PSH demonstration project for young people ages 18-26 who are homeless, or aging out of state care and at risk of homelessness. 5.3. Explore pilot models and locations for transitional and supportive housing. 5.4. Develop procedures and protocols. 5.5. Secure funding. 5.6. Build bridge to permanent housing/private landlords who will agree to waive eligibility barriers for successful program 'graduates.'	High-need YYA, such as those with arson, sex offense and violent criminal charges.	Connect YYA at risk of chronic homelessness to transitional and supportive housing.	DOH, DCF, DMHAS, RHY Providers, DOC and Judicial Branch, and private landlords.	

STRATEGY C: PROVIDE OR IMPROVE TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR PROVIDERS

Action Steps	Population	Benchmarks	Entities Involved	Timeline
1. Coordinate and make available low-cost standardized trainings in evidence-based practices across adult and youth programs providing street outreach/drop-in; emergency shelter; crisis intervention; and transitional housing to YYA with housing instability, regardless of funding source. Impacts: Stable Housing, Education/Jobs, Well-Being, Permanent Connections				
1.1. Assemble foundational training list (human development, trauma-informed practice and resiliency) and align trainings with USICH framework. 1.2. Investigate cost and subsidies for trainees and effective delivery platforms (workshops, webinars, etc.). 1.3. Coordinate cross-sector trainings for subpopulations. 1.4. Consider including ancillary support programs that have regular contact with YYA with housing instability (GED programs, jobs programs, etc.).	Adult and youth-specific homelessness service providers, plus ancillary service providers.		State YYA Coordinator, CCEH, service providers, CSH.	
2. Provide ongoing technical assistance for all programs. Technical assistance (TA) includes one-on-one consultation, peer conferences and training and facilitation of communication between providers to share information and align program approaches. Impacts: Stable Housing, Education/Jobs, Well-Being, Permanent Connections				
2.1. Identify current providers of TA in state. 2.2. Identify TA source if not State YYA Coordinator.	Adult and youth-specific homelessness service providers.		State YYA Coordinator, CCEH, service providers.	

Action Steps	Population	Benchmarks	Entities Involved	Timeline
2.3. Establish a system of peer-monitoring or coaching that utilizes seasoned youth care workers for mentoring and benchmarking homeless programs.				
3. As a prevention measure, establish community-level mechanisms to gather feedback and suggestions from <u>all</u> YYA on education, services, and opportunities for growth and development. Feedback should be looped back into local political processes, schools, and local youth service providers. Impacts: Stable Housing, Education/Jobs, Well-Being, Permanent Connections				
3.1. Explore feedback models. 3.2. Select pilot sites. 3.3. Recruit youth partners who could form the nexus of this effort, including already-existing Youth Advisory Boards, local youth councils and teams.	All YYA.	Meaningfully increase youth voice in pilot communities.	YYA, YYA providers, CSDE, ICR, youth service bureaus, faith community youth groups, political entities in communities.	2015.
4. All adult homelessness services accepting individuals 18-24 should have YYA specialists and proactively create a safe environment for YYA, if necessary through segregation from mainstream population. *Impacts: Stable Housing, Well-Being*				
4.1. Investigate current staffing, protocols, and youth-friendliness of adult services throughout state. 4.2. Define skill set of youth specialists. 4.3. Select pilot sites with capacity to adjust programming, procedures and physical space. 4.4. Provide training and TA re: staffing schedules and other policy and procedure changes. 4.5. Evaluate improvements in YYA safety in adult settings.	High-need YYA 18-24.		CCEH, CoCs, DOH, adult homelessness providers, youth service providers, State YYA Coordinator.	
5. Build the capacity of both adult and youth providers to work effectively with special YYA subpopulations, including unstably housed LGBTQ, pregnant/parenting, refugee, and sexually trafficked YYA, where necessary by creating exclusive services. Impacts: Stable Housing, Well-Being				

Action Steps	Population	Benchmarks	Entities Involved	Timeline
5.1. Prioritize disproportionately impacted subpopulations identified via the January 2015 CT Youth Count. 5.2. Develop strategic partnerships with specialized service providers and advocacy groups. 5.3. Institute cross-sector training. 5.4. Establish referral protocols with local or regional partners. 5.5. Create process for identifying local specialized services when YYA are being served by adult providers and need input, possibly using YYA Coordinator.	Moderate- to high-need YYA ages 14-24.	Numbers of special-population YYA in diverse areas of the state who can access appropriate specialized services.	State YYA Coordinator; DOC and Judicial Branch; CCEH; CSH; True Colors; DCF; DMHAS; local services in three pilot sites; and potential new partners, including schools, YSBs and Institute of Living.	Spring 2015

STRATEGY D: IMPROVE COLLECTION AND USE OF DATA

Action Steps	Population	Benchmarks	Entities Involved	Timeline
1. Establish newly integrated HMIS/RHYMIS database (CaseWorthy) as universal access point for all programs in the state providing comprehensive support services to YYA with housing instability. Impacts: Stable Housing, Education/Jobs, Well-Being				
1.1. Identify party with capacity to take ongoing responsibility for coordinating statewide data collection relating to YYA. 1.2. Identify extant data and new YYA-related data elements to be collected. 1.3. Investigate cost and funding options to provide expanded access to the new data system plus ongoing technical training and support.	YYA 16-24 receiving housing-related services from any organization.		CoCs, CCEH, CT DOH, private nonprofit adult and YYA homeless providers, DCF, DOC and Judicial Branch, DMHAS, CSDE.	Summer 2015
2. Recruit and train homelessness service agencies in newly integrated HMIS/RHYMIS database (CaseWorthy). Impacts: Stable Housing, Education/Jobs, Well-Being				
2.1. Develop customized trainings on the most relevant data elements for particular types of service providers, e.g., housing, crisis intervention, local health clinics, adult shelters, etc. 2.2. Provide ongoing data quality monitoring to address maintenance and trouble shooting. 2.3 Help users develop effective policies on data entry and target training to primary data entry staff.	All adult and youth homelessness service providers.	Phase-in plan in three-month increments with each increment showing 20% growth in number of participating providers.	CCEH, State YYA Coordinator, DOH.	

Action Steps	Population	Benchmarks	Entities Involved	Timeline
3. Train providers in how to use the data collected by providers in the community to adjust services. Impacts: Stable Housing, Education/Jobs, Well-Being				
3.1. Develop live and online training on reporting options for local, regional, statewide and national data. 3.2. Provide ongoing support and training on using youth-oriented data to understand current needs, impacts of services, and differences between YYA populations in the youth and adult homeless systems. 3.3. Facilitate user groups to exchange information on reporting and using youth-centered data.	All adult and youth homelessness service providers.	Number of providers newly incorporating data into materials that raise awareness or seek funding support.	CCEH, State YYA Coordinator.	
4. Align DCF database redesign with newly integrated HMIS/RHYMIS database (CaseWorthy) so that state and non-state systems can eventually share and aggregate data across systems. Impacts: Stable Housing, Education/Jobs, Well-Being, Permanent Connections				
4.1. Seek opportunities to engage in development process with DCF (if redesign is still in progress). 4.2. Request information about what data elements DCF is adding/enhancing/deleting. 4.3. Share information about data elements included in newly integrated HMIS/RHYMIS database (CaseWorthy). 4.4. Identify opportunities and challenges related to sharing and aggregating data across systems.	Unaccompanied YYA receiving services from any state agency.	Number of shared data elements being tracked across systems. Degree to which new robust data can be used to leverage increased funding to target populations.	DCF, CCEH, CoCs, CSDE, DOH, DOC and Judicial Branch.	
5. Implement and refine statewide CT Youth Count process. Impacts: Stable Housing, Education/Jobs, Well-Being				
5.1. Conduct CT Youth Count in Jan. 2015.	YYA 14-24 with	Reliable data that	CCEH, State YYA	

Action Steps	Population	Benchmarks	Entities Involved	Timeline
5.2. Analyze and share data broadly. 5.3. Assess challenges with the process and ways to improve in subsequent years. 5.4. Use data to inform ongoing planning on both community and state levels. 5.5. Engage Coordinated Access Network in order to expand the Youth Count process statewide in subsequent years.	housing instability.	corresponds to estimates by service providers is yielded. Number of ways data is used to inform planning.	Coordinator, CoCs, Count partners, state agencies, other stakeholders.	
6. Establish a standard for agencies receiving state funds for YYA to participate in all Reaching Home/Opening Doors-CT activities, including CAN access to services and use of HMIS/RHYMIS for reporting, in order to ensure that state dollars strengthen the state-approved system to end homelessness. Impacts: Stable Housing, Education/Jobs, Well-Being, Permanent Connections				
6.1. Explore feasibility of distributing state funds for homeless YYA through a single initiative that publicly reports awards, weighs applications based on use of the designated HMIS/RHYMIS data system, and alignment with Project priorities for ending homelessness among YYA (see Resources).	YYA ages 14-24 experiencing housing instability.	Number of new providers submitting data to HMIS/RHYMIS System. Annual report-out on state contracts to programs serving YYA with housing instability.	CCEH, PSC, State YYA Coordinator, CoCs, state agencies (including DOH, DOC and Judicial Branch), other stakeholders.	
7. Develop protocols around sharing information with intermediary agencies and researchers so that more robust data collection results in additional analysis and policy recommendations. Impacts: Stable Housing, Education/Jobs, Well-Being, Permanent Connections				
7.1. Convene intermediary organizations and researchers to review new data resources and establish research agenda.	All YYA ages 14-24.	Development of consensus-driven research agenda.	State YYA Coordinator, CCEH, RHY providers, higher education, researchers.	

Action Steps	Population	Benchmarks	Entities Involved	Timeline
8. Establish means to conduct Youth Count every one or two years.				
8.1. Intensive Youth Count processes require planning and funding; policy mechanisms must be put in place to ensure support for them.	Moderate- and high-need YYA.	Establish yearly counts beyond Jan. 2015.	State YYA Coordinator, CCEH.	Spring 2015

STRATEGY E: ADVOCATE FOR CHANGES IN POLICY

Action Steps	Population	Benchmarks	Entities Involved	Timeline
1. Reduce homelessness among youth who left DCF for any reason. Impacts: Stable Housing, Well-Being				
1.1. Conduct internal research on numbers and characteristics of youth who: run from placements; leave the system at 18 or elect to stay; leave then return; and who are discharged due to non-compliance first and second times. 1.2. Explore link between above subgroups of YYA and outcomes gathered via the National Transitional Youth Database. 1.3. Explore current and potential new strategies for explaining the benefits of staying in care beyond 18 (including video and social media strategies). 1.4. Reduce time outside the system by allowing youth discharged for noncompliance to re-enter education and job training programs as many times as needed to succeed. 1.5. Pilot DCF 'Journey Back Home' plan to proactively expand support for youth who left care voluntarily (between ages 18-21) to return home, in order to maintain healthy connections to kin, and successfully live at home. 1.6. Track and evaluate outcomes for YYA transitioning from DCF into DMHAS, with particular focus on	Moderate- and high-need youth ages 18-21.	Number of youth who leave DCF either prepared for adult living, or who leave into a healthy family system that can support their transition.	DCF, DMHAS, DOH, DOC and Judicial Branch, youth media consultant.	

Action Steps	Population	Benchmarks	Entities Involved	Timeline
YYA who want housing but not services.				
2. Offer preferential access to state agency apprenticeships or jobs to qualified former state-involved youth. Impacts: Education/Jobs, Well-Being				
2.1. Work with state agencies to explore feasibility, gain buy-in and refine hiring protocols. 2.2. Advertise the apprenticeship and preferential hiring program to young people in state care and in transitional living programs. Host job fair and/or send hiring reps to youth advisory board councils. 2.3. Track and refine the process. Scale up by spreading to additional districts/departments or stakeholder businesses in related industries (e.g., Dept. of Labor, physical and behavioral health care, affordable housing development, etc.).	All formerly state-involved YYA ages 18 and over.	Number of formerly state-involved YYA who gain work experience or jobs in the state system via this portal.	State agencies.	
3. Assess feasibility of loosening eligibility criteria in existing transitional services for state-involved YYA to include YYA in need who are not otherwise state-involved. Impacts: Education/Jobs, Well-Being, Permanent Connections				
3.1. Community-based, state-funded mentoring and life-skills programs (to name just two) are available to select youth in state care but not to others. Select 1-2 pilot sites that could add 'non-system' youth without impacting cost. 3.2. Develop referral mechanism for additional youth. 3.3. Evaluate.	Moderate- and high-need YYA who are not in state care.	Number of YYA who are not in state care who participate in newly accessible services.	DCF, DMHAS, RHY providers.	
4. Consider adolescent boys in homeless families a high-risk subpopulation due to current practices that exclude them from shelter, essentially forcing them into unaccompanied status. Impacts: Stable Housing, Well-Being				
4.1. Review family shelter practices re: housing	Boys up to age 17		CCEH, family shelter	

Action Steps	Population	Benchmarks	Entities Involved	Timeline
adolescent boys. 4.2. Secure data from HMIS on number of boys up to 18 turned away from family shelters. 4.3. Explore feasibility of allowing adolescent boys to be housed with their families when experiencing homelessness.	in families that are homeless.		providers, DOH, RHY providers.	
5. Assess procedures for waiving age, residence, parental consent and other documentation requirements for YYA with housing instability in programs where they are deemed to be barriers to full YYA involvement. Impacts: Education/Jobs, Well-Being				
5.1. Identify eligibility requirements at youth employment programs, school-based health centers, GED programs and other supports that discourage or exclude YYA with housing instability from participating. 5.2. Investigate waiver processes for YYA with housing instability and initiate relevant policy activities (at local, state or federal levels, depending on program). 5.3. Encourage practice of 'screening in' rather than out of programs – for example, allowing YYA to be served right away and providing supports while necessary documentation is gathered.	Unaccompanied homeless youth and young adults.	Number of YYA 'screened in' who would have otherwise been turned away for ineligibility.	State YYA Coordinator, YSBs, high schools, DOL.	Spring 2015

APPENDIX A: WORKGROUP MEMBERSHIP

Below is the full list of individuals who contributed to this planning work through Homeless Youth Workgroup and subgroups:

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APPENDIX B: HOMELESS YOUTH WORKGROUPS

The next three sections describe the characteristics of each subgroup engaged in the initial planning phase of the Opening Doors for Youth project. The work plan synthesizes recommendations from their collective efforts.

Data Integration Workgroup

Leadership and Composition

The Data Integration Workgroup was chaired by Brian Roccapriore, MA, Director of HMIS and Strategic Analysis for the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness. This workgroup's activities were facilitated by Doug Tanner, M.Ed, LSW, who is Organizational Development Specialist at Youth Catalytics. The workgroup's membership represented several state agencies and institutions of higher learning, including the Connecticut Department of Education, Connecticut Department of Housing, Central Connecticut State University, the Consultation Center at Yale University, and the Institute for Community Research. Several YYA advocacy and service providers participated in the group as well. (See Appendix A for a complete list of group members and affiliations).

Focus

The Data Integration Workgroup partnered with the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH) to design a methodology that ensures regular data collection on the number, demographics and other characteristics of homeless YYA during statewide and local Point in Time Counts. Based on Urban Institute's Youth Count! Pilot Study,[16] lessons learned from *Invisible No More*, and promising practices developed in localities around the country, the workgroup designed an innovative youth count methodology for counting homeless and unstably housed YYA.

The Data Integration Workgroup also aimed to identify ways to better integrate data across agencies and systems serving homeless youth. The purpose of improving data integration is both 1) to identify YYA at risk of housing instability to ensure that agencies and providers have sufficient data on individual youth to provide quality responsive services, and 2) to assess the ability of the Project's intervention model to respond to

[16] Pergamit, M., Cunningham, M., Burt, M., Lee, P., Howell, B., & Bertumen, C. (2013). Youth Count! Process Study. *Urban Institute.* Retrieved from http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412872-youth-count-process-study.pdf.

the needs of system-involved and non-system YYA experiencing housing instability. The long-term goal is to find efficient ways to share data across systems and develop a shared set of outcome measures.

Stable Housing Workgroup

Leadership and Composition

The Stable Housing Workgroup was chaired by April Morrison, Program Manager at the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH). The workgroup's membership represented several state agencies and private providers, including the Connecticut Department of Children and Families, Connecticut Judicial Branch, Connecticut Department of Housing, and the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. In addition to these state agencies, the membership of the Stable Housing Workgroup included representation from several YYA service providers and housing advocates.

Focus

The Stable Housing Workgroup focused on completing an inventory of the current housing options available to YYA across Connecticut. Members examined housing options that ranged from temporary shelter and drop-in services, to transitional and permanent supportive housing. The work of designing this model and moving forward with implementation was funded by a separate Melville Charitable Trust grant. In addition, the Corporation for Supportive Housing is currently facilitating a learning collaborative on YYA supportive housing, which convenes current YYA supportive housing providers. (For more information on the outcomes of the Stable Housing Workgroup, see http://www.csh.org/csh-solutions/serving-vulnerable-populations/youth/.)

Services and Supports Workgroup

Leadership and Composition

The Services and Supports Workgroup was chaired by Anne Farrell, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Human Development and Family Studies, and Director of the Center for Applied Research in Human Development at the University of Connecticut. This workgroup's activities were facilitated by Cindy Carraway-Wilson, MA, CYC-P, who is Director of Training at Youth Catalytics. The workgroup included representatives of several state agencies, including the Connecticut Judicial Branch, Connecticut Department of Children and Families, Connecticut Department of Corrections,

Connecticut Department of Housing, Connecticut Department of Labor, Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and the Connecticut Department of Public Health. Also participating were 13 young adult consultants, and staff from several community-based YYA service providers, including those running federally funded Runaway and Homeless Youth Program sites.

The youth and young adults who acted as consultants were recruited by adult members of the workgroup. All had experienced homelessness and/or housing instability. YYA consultants participated in one youth-only orientation meeting to learn about the project, its objectives and its findings to date. Sixteen young people attended this meeting, and most accepted an invitation to participate in subsequent meetings as full members of the workgroup. The group used the core values described in *Achieving Authentic Youth Engagement: Core Values & Guiding Principles,* developed by Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, to guide member interactions and to develop the services and supports recommendations (see Appendix D).

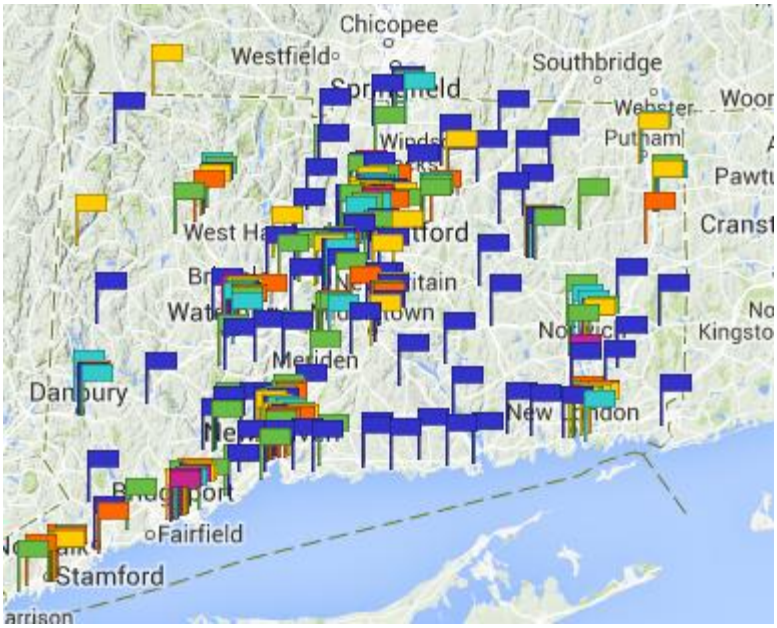
Focus

The Services and Supports Workgroup central aim was to formulate recommendations for creating a more responsive, integrated system that provides a broader range of options for YYA experiencing housing instability. It set out to identify the various structural components of an effective web of services for YYA, generating 12 separate but related categories of services and supports necessary for helping vulnerable YYA succeed. The result was the statewide assets map described later in this document (see Appendix C).

APPENDIX C: YOUTH SERVICES ASSET MAP

In order to understand the array of transitional support services currently available to young people ages 14-24, the Services and Supports Workgroup created an online map of educational, health and social services throughout the state targeted to youth. The purpose was to understand the range of existing services; their target populations and eligibility criteria; and their geographical locations.

Altogether, 342 services or resources were mapped, each entry denoting a distinct program or resource aimed at supporting teenagers and young adults in one of the areas of need above. The search was based on lists of services supplied by members of the working group and by web searches, with email queries to programs as needed.



Map of Youth Services in Connecticut. (See link to the live map at the end of this section.)

Asset Map Findings

- ***Services are clustered*** in the state's most heavily populated areas, with most concentrated along the I-91 corridor from Stamford up through Hartford. More rural areas of the state have few services for YYA.
- ***Narrow eligibility criteria for support services exclude large numbers of young people.*** In most cases, eligibility hinges on involvement with the state's public agencies (DCF, DMHAS or DOC). For instance, there are at least eight state-funded programs[17] delivered at dozens of sites around the state providing housing and related support services to young adults connected to, or leaving, state systems. Only four providers in the state offer similar 'housing-plus' services to young people *not* in state care.

[17] CHAP, Community-based Life Skills, Mentoring, Ex-Offender Re-entry, Substance Abuse Halfway or Transitional Living, Young Adult Services, Court Support Services.

- ***Only three categories of services were widely available to non-state-involved youth:*** health services, jobs programs and adult learning programs. Mentoring and life skills education are available largely only to state-connected young people.
- ***Rigid eligibility requirements, even in services designed for mainstream young people, may discourage YYA from engaging.*** For instance, in one municipality, enrolling in the local youth development/jobs program requires out-of-school YYA to be ages 16-21, live in the county, meet income limits, and have a photo ID, social security card, birth certificate and other documentation. While restrictions of this sort may reflect the policies or regulations of the funder, they also represent an attempt by localities to limit the number of youth they are responsible for serving.
- ***Youth Service Bureaus (YSBs) are likely underdeveloped as a resource to YYA with housing instability.*** YSBs exist in every locality and are legislatively mandated to provide services to local children and youth, and to identify gaps in local services.[18] The programs they offer vary from place to place, but our mapping project revealed that very few provide transitional support services to high-risk young people. Given the mandate and reach of these unique service providers, it is likely that they could do more.

The map – a publically accessible 'wiki' product that can be edited and augmented by users – is at: http://bit.ly/1yk8ogL.

[18] Youth Service Bureau Grant Program. (2013). *Connecticut State Department of Education*. Retrieved from http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/rfp/rfp120_ysb_grant_2013_2015.pdf.

APPENDIX D: RESOURCES

Funding

- HUD Matrix of Cross-Program Funding by State
  https://www.hudexchange.info/manage-a-program/cpd-cross-program-funding-matrix-and-dashboard-reports

- Performance Partnership Pilot (P3). Due March 4, 2015.
  https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/11/24/2014-27775/applications-for-new-awards-performance-partnership-pilots

- National Council on Crime and Delinquency Pay for Success RFP. Due Jan. 30, 2015
  http://nccdglobal.org/sites/default/files/content/nccd-pfs-ta-rfp.pdf

- Strengthening Youth Policy Issue Brief, Forum for Youth Investment, 2005
  http://forumfyi.org/content/strengthening-youth-po

- Reporting State Funding with Transparency
  http://www.buildingchanges.org/grants-capacity-building/funded-projects

- MN Prioritized State Funding for YYA with Housing Instability
  http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/main/idcplg?IdcService=GET_DYNAMIC_CONVERSION&RevisionSelectionMethod=LatestReleased&dDocName=id_002552

Screenings and Assessments

- TAY Triage Tool
  http://www.csh.org/resources/the-tay-triage-tool-a-tool-to-identify-homeless-transition-age-youth-most-in-need-of-permanent-supportive-housing/

- Vulnerability Index & Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT), 100K Homes.
  http://bit.ly/1r3Ehbt

Model Approaches

- Achieving Authentic Youth Engagement: Core Values & Guiding Principles, Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative
  http://www.jimcaseyyouthengagement.org/sites/default/files/Core%20Values%20and%20Guiding%20Principles%20-%20National%20Summit%20on%20Authentic%20Youth%20Engagement.pdf

- NJ DCF Video
  http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/adolescent/index.html or
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bnX6olTnPck&feature=youtu.be

- Housing + School = Success, NAEHCY, 2012 Update
  http://www.naehcy.org/sites/default/files/images/dl/hshs/youth_housing_2012.doc

- CO Office of Homeless Youth Services, 2012 Annual Report
  http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/DOLA-Main/CBON/1251596040620

- Promoting Protective Factors for In-Risk Families and Youth: A Brief for Researchers, Administration on Children, Youth and Families
  http://www.dsgonline.com/acyf/PF_Research_Brief.pdf

Training

- Youth Thrive™, Center for the Study of Social Policy
  http://www.cssp.org/reform/child-welfare/youth-thrive

Systems Integration

- USICH Framework to End Youth Homelessness, 2013.
  http://usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/USICH_Youth_Framework__FINAL_02_13_131.pdf

APPENDIX E: GLOSSARY

Coordinated Access Networks (CANs) – Under the federal HEARTH Act, all Continuums of Care (CoC) are required to establish region-specific, single-portal provider networks for individuals experiencing homelessness. All HUD ESG-funded and CoC funded services are included, along with all emergency shelters, rapid re-housing providers and transitional living programs funded by the State of Connecticut. For information on Connecticut's CANs, see: http://www.cceh.org/publications/detail/ct-coordinated-access-background-information-and-coordinated-access-network.

Crisis Intervention – Services for young people through age 17 and their families that include hotline response, counseling, case management, advocacy, and related efforts meant to interrupt cycles of conflict and, where possible, keep young people at home.

Drop-in Services – Low-barrier centers that provide an array of services and resources to young people in need, usually including food, hygiene kits, warm clothes, computer access and the opportunity to meet with a case manager. Drop-in centers may employ street outreach workers to engage with young people in the community who could benefit from the center's services. Drop-in is considered an all-purpose portal for young people, and is often a first step for youth who need emergency shelter or transitional living services.

Emergency Shelter – Short-term housing for homeless youth, adults or families. Emergency shelter options are designed or intended to meet the needs of specific populations such as unaccompanied youth (under the age of 18), adults or families. Access to emergency shelter is generally time limited, for example RHY Basic Center emergency shelters are limited to 21 days per stay, but the time limits for living at emergency shelters vary considerably from place to place and program to program.

Evidence-based Practices (EBPs) – Refers to practices and approaches that have been tested using valid scientific methods and proven to improve outcomes for youth and young adults. Positive Youth Development, trauma-informed care and harm reduction are all considered EBPs for working with young people experiencing housing instability.

Opening Doors – Name of the first Federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness. Opening Doors was amended in 2012 to include strategies specifically targeting education of children and youth, and services and supports for unaccompanied homeless youth. **Opening Doors – CT** is aligned with the federal

framework and overseen by the Reaching Home Campaign. See more at: http://usich.gov/opening_doors and http://pschousing.org/openingdoors-ct.

Permanent Supportive Housing – A housing model that combines affordable housing with services that help people who face the most complex challenges live as independently as possible. Unlike other forms of supportive housing, lengths of stay are open-ended. Residents cannot "age out." See more at: http://www.csh.org/.

Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Programs – The federal government funds four types of programs for runaway and homeless young people: 'basic center' programs, which offer 21-day emergency shelter and intervention services for youth up to age 17; street outreach programs, which at any given site may include both a community outreach team and a drop-in center; maternity group homes for pregnant and parenting women ages 16-22 who are experiencing homelessness; and transitional living programs for homeless young people 18 to 23. Grants are made by the ACF's Family and Youth Service Bureau (FYSB), and are highly competitive. Currently FYSB supports six programs in Connecticut: three emergency shelter programs, one street outreach program, and two transitional living programs.

Supportive Housing – Broadly defined, supportive housing is affordable housing linked with social services tailored to the needs of residents. Supportive services can be delivered either on- or off-site. Nonprofit housing developers and social service providers have long recognized the importance of comprehensively addressing clients' needs. For high-risk populations, housing and supportive services are interdependent; each is less effective in the absence of the other. See more at: http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/88/suphousing.html.

Transitional Housing Programs – Supported housing programs for YYA or adults that generally last two years or less. Participants typically are required to receive certain services (such as life skills education) and to be either in school or working. The goal of the program is to help previously homeless individuals transition into their own housing (which may be subsidized or not, depending on individual needs).

U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) – Independent agency within the federal executive branch that coordinates federal-level response to homelessness and creates partnerships at every level of government and with the private sector to reduce and end homelessness in the United States.

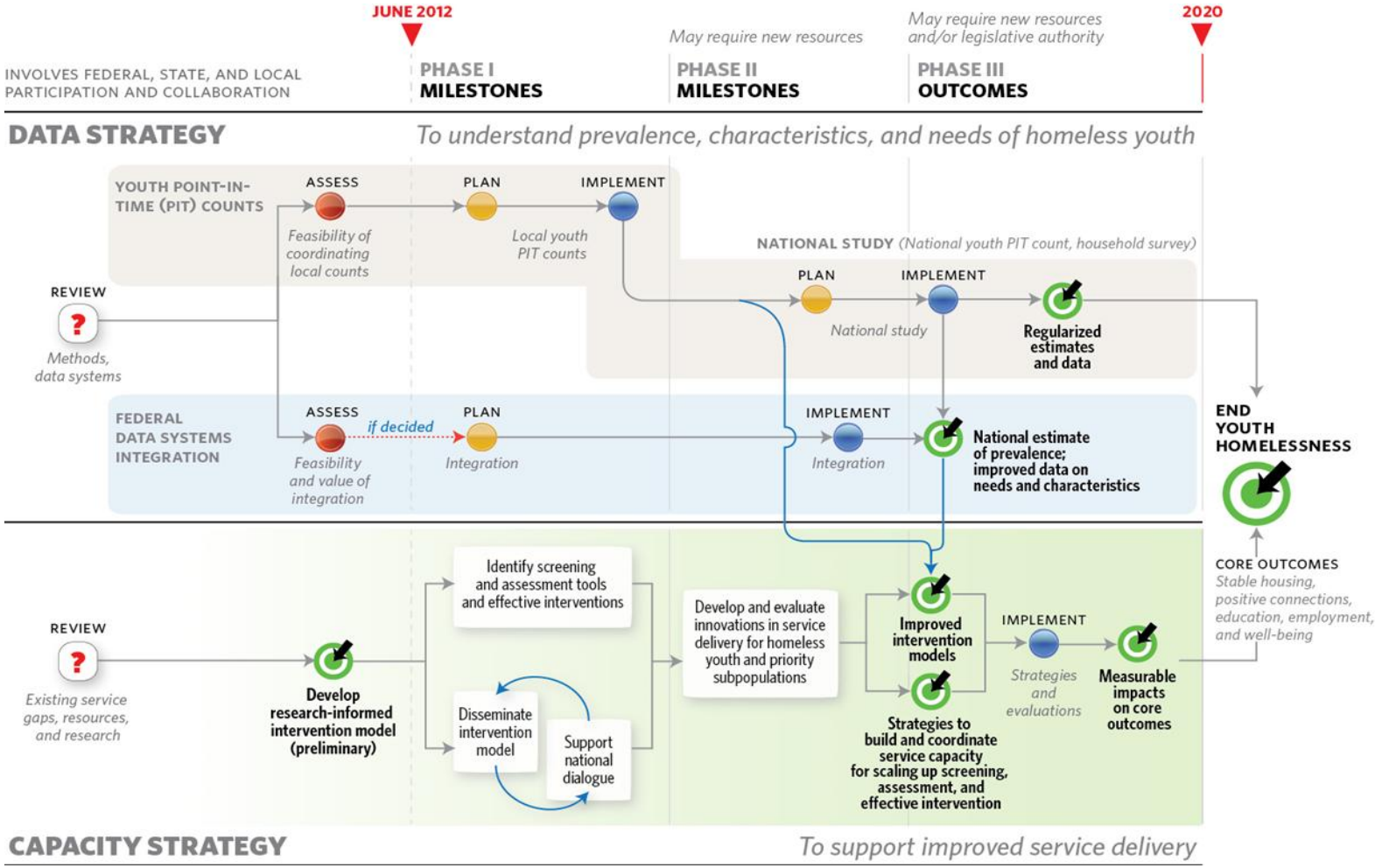
Youth Service Bureaus (YSBs) – YSBs are state-funded local prevention and youth development offices that exist in every municipality throughout Connecticut, and that by

statute are expected to provide at least some basic services to youth up to age 18 and their families. Common YSB services include: individual and group counseling; parent training and family therapy; recreational and youth enrichment programs; prevention programs focusing on youth pregnancy, suicide, violence, alcohol and drug use; and programs that develop positive youth involvement. Many, though by no means all, operate juvenile review boards, which seek to divert young people from the justice system. YSBs are also mandated to identify local needs and gaps in services. See: http://www.ctyouthservices.org.

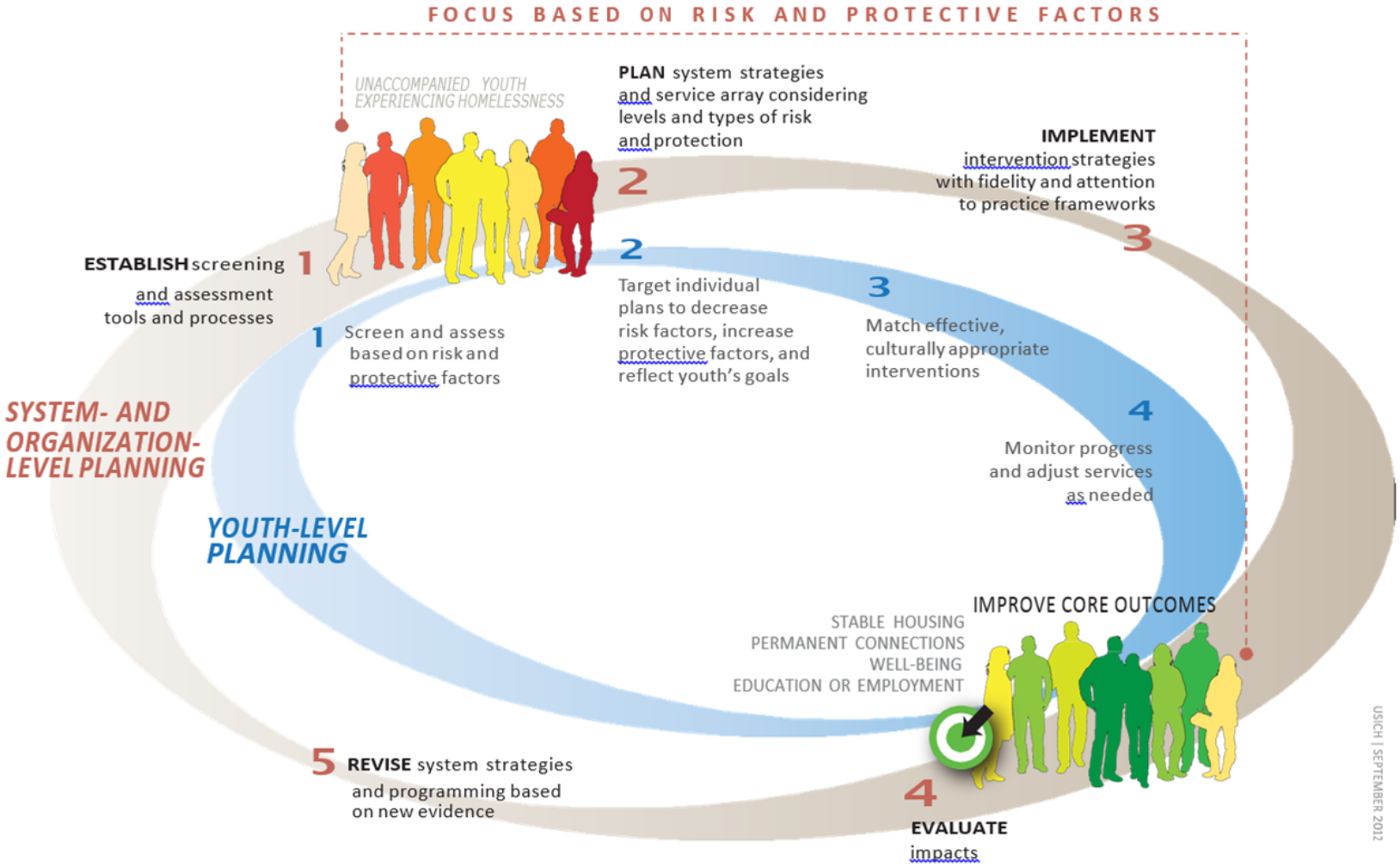
YYA – Youth and young adults ages 14-24 years.

YYA with Housing Instability – YYA who have no right of tenancy, are not living with a parent or guardian, and who lack a fixed, permanent place to stay. Homeless YYA may be staying in emergency shelter, transitional housing, with friends or relatives, in a hotel/motel, or in cars, abandoned buildings or literally on the streets (i.e., in places not meant for habitation). YYA are also considered unstably housed if they will be leaving their current residence without a stable place to stay within two weeks.

APPENDIX F: USICH YOUTH FRAMEWORK



United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2013). *Framework to end youth homelessness: A resource text for dialogue and action.* Framework Logic Model for Ending Youth Homelessness, p.4. Retrieved from http://usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/USICH_Youth_Framework__FINAL_02_13_131.pdf.



United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2013). *Framework to end youth homelessness: A resource text for dialogue and action.* Unaccompanied Youth Intervention Model, p.9. Retrieved from http://usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/USICH_Youth_Framework__FINAL_02_13_131.pdf.