

# Rx:Housing

## **Plan to Prevent and End Young Adult<sup>1</sup> Homelessness in Louisville, Kentucky**

October 1, 2016

Over the past several years, Metro Louisville has successfully lowered the number of chronic street homeless persons and homeless veterans within our community through concerted effort and funding for housing targeted to these populations. However, the number of homeless families and other individuals has remained high and the fastest-rising group of the homeless locally and nationwide are young adults aged 18-24. From 2008 to 2009, 2009 to 2010 and for a third time from 2010 to 2011 the number of young adults reported in the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) that lived on the streets or in an adult shelter in Louisville some time during the year doubled and finally reached a peak of 562 in 2013. The number of homeless young adults in Louisville has leveled off but remains stable with 418 from 18-24 in 2015 plus an additional 450 youth below 18 served at YMCA Safe Place for a total of 868 unduplicated unaccompanied homeless youth.

The rise in the number of young adults struggling within our community is due in part to state budget changes that took place in 2009 when the Commonwealth of Kentucky dismantled and weakened many of the safety net systems that served young adults aging out of foster care. These changes included the elimination of mentoring programs and the removal of housing, education, and case management programs administered by non-profits to help young adults transition. Without guidance to stay in state care through the age of 21, 264 18-year-olds leave foster care each year in Jefferson County, missing out on their opportunity to stay in state care and get a college education for free. Metro Louisville

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<sup>1</sup> During a 2012 survey of Louisville's unaccompanied homeless youth, respondents stated that they prefer to be called young adults.

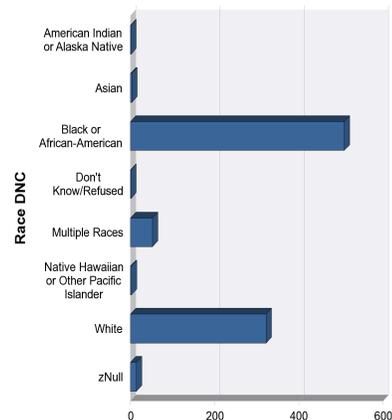
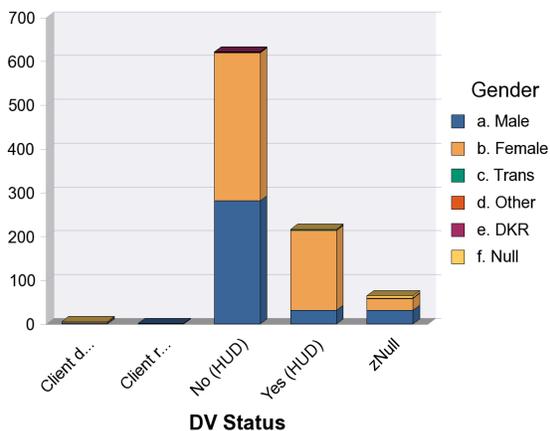
reports a total of 21,000 disconnected youth<sup>2</sup> and over 6,000 homeless children in the school system,<sup>3</sup> which means that the number of young adults at risk of homelessness is even larger. Homeless prevention programs will be key to the success of this plan.

The economic downturn meant many entry level jobs were filled by adults and the rising cost of education meant many young adults were unable to afford college. According to the Kentucky Department of Education, only 75% of Kentucky's young adults graduate from high school when high school is a minimum requirement for 92% of the Commonwealth's jobs and homeless youth are 87% less likely to graduate than the general population. An African American male student in Jefferson County is more likely to go to prison than to graduate from high school. Additionally, the U.S. Census reports that 61,000 Louisville youth have only one parent, 6,000 live with grandparents and 1,568 young adults in Jefferson County have a parent who is incarcerated, while 4,432 have a mental health diagnosis. 61% of the young adults served in the Louisville homeless system and recorded in the HMIS are female, 63% are African American or multi-racial, 24% have been victims of domestic violence, 50% are pregnant or parenting and 30% have a disability. The HMIS does not gather data on sexual orientation, but local youth programs including YMCA Safe Place and Home of the Innocents report that 13% to 33% of their clients self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ). Human trafficking reports from the Department for Community-Based Services continue to rise in the Commonwealth, reaching 96 in 2015, but the Department for Juvenile Justice started screening in 2015 and identified 236 victims in the same year. A preliminary 2016 Youth Experiences Survey of 139 local homeless youth conducted by the University of Louisville Human Trafficking Research Initiative indicates a 40% prevalence rate for sex trafficking among homeless and runaway youth and young adults (aged 12-25) in the Kentuckiana region. This means that any and all services for homeless young adults must address the need for housing and services for children of those young adults, and service providers must be trained in both implicit bias and trauma-informed care.

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<sup>2</sup> Metro Louisville 2016 report on disconnected youth.

<sup>3</sup> Jefferson County Public School System 2015 annual count using the U.S. Department of Education homeless definition.



These statistics do not bode well for a generation struggling to succeed in a new economy with pronounced wealth disparities. It is imperative that we focus now on this population of young adults before we lose a valuable resource. According to Clive Belfield and colleagues,<sup>4</sup> not addressing the needs of homeless youth actually leads to higher future costs. The largest costs to taxpayers are those of crime to victims and lost earnings by members of the cohort.<sup>5</sup> The estimated annual cost for 418 homeless young adults identified in Louisville is \$14,892,156 (which does not include the future costs of their children to our community if we do not invest in these young parents' futures) The likelihood of lifetime of government assistance for young adults increases exponentially if their needs are not addressed by the age of 24.

Local Survey of Young Adults: With the support of WellCare, The Coalition for the Homeless conducted a survey of 95 local young adults in 2012 in order to gain an understanding of the needs of this population. These groups also helped to create the Coalition Supporting Young Adults<sup>6</sup> (CSYA), which has continued to function as a separate organization working to increase and coordinate services for young adults in Louisville. Employment and education were the greatest needs identified by 80% of those surveyed, while nearly that same percentage said they had no one in their lives to help them reach their goals. What young adults asked for more than anything else was "someone to listen to me who cares." CSYA and Spalding University School of Social Work are planning a new needs assessment for at risk youth and young adults through a 2017 survey and one-on-one interviews.

<sup>4</sup> "The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth," 2012. Commissioned by the White House Council for Community Solutions to determine the national economic burden of disconnect youth, which the authors call "opportunity youth."

<sup>5</sup> These are average annual costs that recur each year that these youth remain disconnected.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.connectlouisvilleyouth.org>

**Mission and/or Vision:** The mission of the Louisville Homeless Youth Committee of the Louisville Continuum of Care (CoC) is to end homelessness among young adults (unaccompanied youth under age 24) through housing and life-changing services that result in self-sufficiency. Our vision is to create an opportunity for all young adults in Louisville to obtain secure housing and flourish through their own contributions to the future of the city.

**Overarching Principles:** The Louisville Homeless Youth Committee understands that years of racist policies and segregation, poverty and trauma experienced by youth in our community, and systems that act on behalf of youth without considering their own priorities have created long-term community biases and disparities that will take years to overcome. We must begin now, so all of the work of this plan is inspired by the following:

- 1) Combating Implicit Bias and Institutionalized Racism – Louisville has only just begun to understand that years of segregation and policies created to diminish the opportunities of minorities have created barriers to success for many people and communities in our city. At the same time, our biases are so deeply ingrained that we are often not even aware of their continued impact on our minority populations. We must be honest about this in all communications, provide regular training to remain mindful of our biases, and ensure that we consider the voices of minorities in each step of the planning and implementation of this plan.
- 2) Positive Youth Development – A body of research now shows that young people possessing a diverse set of protective factors can experience more positive outcomes. Research also shows that interventions are even more effective when they engage youth as equal partners. This plan seeks to not only provide housing and education or employment for a by-name list of young adults in our community, but also seeks to work hand-in-hand with our Youth Advisory Board and homeless young adults themselves to focus on their interests, skills and ability to make a difference in their own lives and neighborhoods. We have reached out to some perhaps unexpected but important partners, including AMPed<sup>7</sup>, a free music program that provides a safe environment for youth to explore their creativity through music, and Kentucky Shakespeare,<sup>8</sup> an arts organization that promotes confidence, opens up a new world of interests, and nurtures a desire for lifelong learning.
- 3) Trauma Informed Care – While 24% of the homeless young adults identified in our community report experiencing domestic violence, we know that the number of young adults who have experienced multiple life traumas is much higher. When

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ampedlouisville.org>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.kyshakespeare.com>

working with these youth, we must be aware of how these traumas affect young adults' priorities and responses to services (and service barriers). We will provide ongoing trauma informed care training for planners and service providers involved in this effort, and ensure that all existing and future programs are include trauma informed care.

- 4) Client Choice – Many homeless young adults miss opportunities for community services available to them because our systems (including foster care and many homeless services) rarely give the client choices or the ability to realize their own life goals and preferences. This plan must work innovatively to avoid the standard approach of designing programs to accommodate the agency staff rather than best serving the client. Every aspect of this plan will be vetted by the Youth Advisory Board and all programs will be designed to provide multiple options and voices for the young adults we serve.

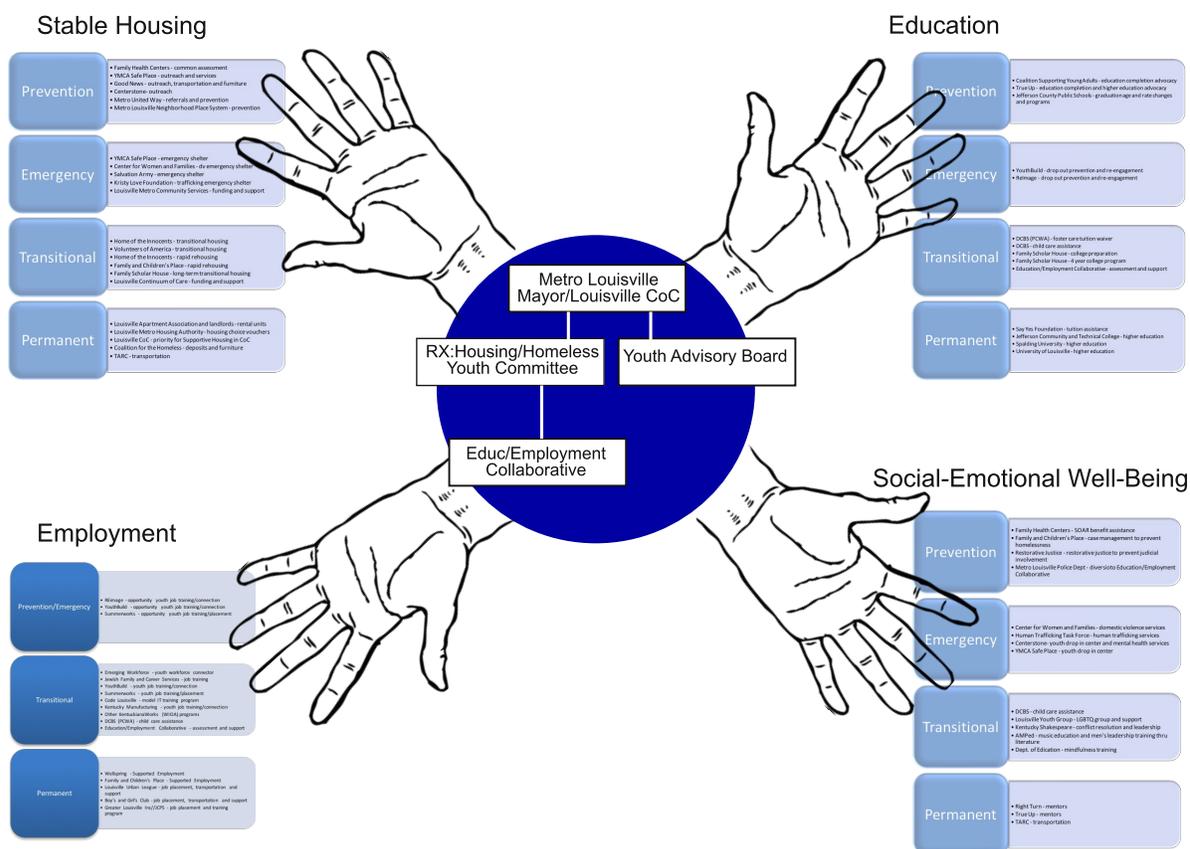
Addressing Young Adult Homelessness (Not Just About Housing): In preparation for a concerted effort to prevent and end youth homelessness in Louisville by 2020, a community partnership<sup>9</sup> created the Homeless Youth Committee to coordinate this plan and implement changes in our community's services, policies and coordination in order to prevent and end young adult homelessness. The committee began by reviewing the local survey of homeless young adults, local statistics from HMIS and local homeless youth services, and brought together partners from key mainstream services to understand where these services fail to address the needs of homeless young adults.

Louisville's Rx: Housing Committee of the Louisville CoC has been very successful in addressing veteran and chronic homelessness and the Louisville CoC has agreed to expand to incorporate the Homeless Youth Committee in order to implement this plan to prevent and end youth homelessness in January of 2017. Nonetheless, we understand that most young adults need much more than just housing to address their needs. We have also discovered that our city has multiple service silos that do not take into account the scheduling, transportation needs, and other concerns of related systems. The most important work to ensure our success will be creating "permanent connections" in these siloed systems that should be working together to serve homeless young adults. Currently the silos do not meet young adults' needs due to complicated rules, youths' lack of transportation, and a lack of interest in working with those who need assistance with concerns like washing clothes and finding a secure place to stay in order to go to school or work. Coordination will be the key to our success, and homeless young adults have missed out on a plethora of local services while the community has been missing out on what these young adults have to offer. We

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<sup>9</sup> This partnership includes the Louisville CoC, the Coalition for the Homeless, CSYA, and other local groups advocating for and serving young adults (including young adult representatives who have previously experienced homelessness).

have created the “systems model” below to show how we will implement a successful end to young adult homelessness:



Future success rests on our ability to come to and stay at the table. We have written commitments from the key stakeholders in each of the four key systems: 1) “stable housing,” 2) “education,” 3) “employment,” and 4) “social/emotional well-being.” We will measure our success by the permanency of the connections between systems without the ongoing efforts of the “connectors.”

Additionally, the success of this plan requires planners and implementers to focus on providing life changing services rather than simply meeting basic needs. This will result in young adults reaching self-sufficiency, saving millions of dollars in future benefit and community-based service costs, and helping to fill 110,000 available jobs across the Commonwealth. This work must include implementation and measurement of programs that focus on success in education and employment as well as housing.

We have gone public with this plan through multiple community meetings and committees, but we plan to host a kick-off event and public awareness campaign in January 2017 with

the goal of building community partners and helping the community understand the importance and future cost savings of this investment in or young adults. In concert with Runaway Prevention Month, throughout November the Homeless Youth Committee will be spreading the message about youth homelessness and how to get involved on billboards, in local publications, and at a University of Louisville/University of Kentucky football game.

Agencies represented in creating the Rx: Housing/Young Adults plan include: The Office of the Mayor, CSYA, the CoC Youth Advisory Board, The Coalition for the Homeless, the CoC Education/Employment Collaborative, Metro United Way 2-1-1, Centerstone, YMCA Safe Place (RHYP), Home of the Innocents (HOTI), KentuckianaWorks (WIOA), REimage, YouthBuild, Family Health Centers, Louisville Youth Group, True Up, Center for Women and Families, Family Scholar House, Louisville Metro Community Services, Kentucky Shakespeare, AMPed, Louisville Metro Housing Authority, Metro Louisville Police Department, Louisville Apartment Association, Jefferson Community and Technical College, Louisville Free Public Library, Family and Children's Place, Uspiritus, Emerging Workforce, Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), University of Louisville, Greater Louisville Inc., Department of Community Based Services<sup>10</sup>, Department for Juvenile Justice, Wellspring, Good News Volunteers, Restorative Justice of Louisville, Kristy Love Foundation<sup>11</sup> Jewish Family and Career Services, Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul, Volunteers of America Midstates, Louisville Urban League, Legal Aid, of Louisville, Boys and Girls Clubs of Kentuckiana, Transit Authority of River City (TARC), and Louisville Human Trafficking Task Force.

Number of Homeless Young Adults in Louisville: The Louisville HMIS showed a dramatic rise in unaccompanied homeless youth from a low of 125 in 2007 to a peak of 562 in 2013. The number decreased to 499 in 2014 and 418 in 2015. Including the 450 unaccompanied homeless youth under 18 served by our RHYP agency, the number of unaccompanied youth in Louisville for 2015 was 868. Kentucky has the highest Department of Education-defined homeless numbers in the country with 6,128 Jefferson County Public School students identified as homeless in 2016.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, Metro Louisville has identified 21,000 "disconnected youth" who are not engaged in education or employment. This means that the number of young adults at risk of homelessness is much higher than those who do reach the streets or shelter, and we know that "disconnected youth" are equally in need of services in order to avoid a loss of future opportunity for these youth and long-term costs

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<sup>10</sup> Public child welfare, state childcare provider, and employment provider.

<sup>11</sup> Assisting victims of trafficking.

<sup>12</sup> This number includes those who are "doubled up" with family and friends.

to our community. HMIS data shows that 50% of the unaccompanied homeless youth in Louisville are pregnant or parenting and 12.5% are minors.

HMIS data will be used by the Rx: Housing/Homeless Youth Committee in 2017 to create a by-name list of unaccompanied homeless youth. New names can be added to the list by shelters, the Common Assessment Team, and/or the YMCA youth homeless outreach team. All those identified will be assessed using a common assessment specifically created to evaluate the vulnerability of young adults. This assessment will result in referrals to appropriate stable housing, education, employment, and services for social/emotional well-being. Clients will be asked to sign waivers allowing information to be shared to ensure quick referrals for services and all agencies will sign confidentiality agreements to insure the security of client data.

**Prevention and Outreach of Homeless Young Adults:** YMCA Safe Place has a fulltime outreach worker who partners with other staff and outreach teams to identify and assist unsheltered homeless young adults. YMCA and Centerpoint drop-in centers provide access to services and assessments for housing. These teams have agreed to coordinate their services in order to make appropriate referrals. All partners agree that homelessness prevention is the best approach to addressing youth homelessness whenever possible:

- 1) YMCA Safe Place outreach enters clients identified on the streets into HMIS and works to insure that any homeless youth identified are referred to the Common Assessment Team. Youth under 18 identified through outreach are housed at YMCA Safe Place, which works to encourage family reunification when possible.
- 2) YMCA Safe Place and Centerstone drop-in centers provide access to services including showers, computers, laundry, exercise, transportation, and job training, and make referrals to other services. These agencies provide cross-referrals and transportation versus duplicating services and have regular opportunities for the Common Assessment Team to conduct assessments for anyone not already identified as homeless. The Louisville Free Public Library offers free educational and training resources at 18 locations throughout Jefferson County, along with a wealth of free digital resources.
- 3) YMCA Safe Place provides mediation services for young adults under 18 and their families, which prevents 80% of these young adults from entering state care. They also provide programming for young adults who have an incarcerated parent to help maintain a family relationship and reunification and to avoid future justice involvement. With the 2016 Annie E. Casey Kid's Count reporting that Kentucky has

- the highest rate of youth with an incarcerated parent, this will be an important program to evaluate and expand.
- 4) The Coalition for the Homeless works with over a dozen volunteer outreach groups (Good News Volunteers) who serve the homeless. They will educate these partners about the community's plan to prevent and end young adult homelessness and ask them to make referrals of anyone they identify (ages 24 and under) to outreach and the Common Assessment Team.
  - 5) All local police have been trained in Crisis Intervention and it is a regular part of their on-going training. As part of this effort, we are asking local police to also be trained to refer young adults for assessment and shelter/housing versus entry into the justice system.
  - 6) The Coalition for the Homeless will use HMIS data to create a by name list of homeless young adults. They will also work with homeless youth, the Youth Advisory Board and outreach teams to identify new outreach locations and support targeted outreach to homeless young adults during the Point in Time count.
  - 7) All participating agencies will follow the HMIS data-sharing protocols. In addition, YMCA Safe Place, Family Health Centers, and the Louisville CoC will obtain signed waivers from all clients to allow for direct referrals in order to share information as needed when working through the by-name list.
  - 8) The Louisville CoC will take referrals from the by name list first for all transitional, rapid rehousing, extended transitional, permanent housing, and permanent supportive housing. Short-term and long-term outcomes will be measured for each housing solution during the planning phase to determine the best future investment in federal and local housing dollars.
  - 9) YouthBuild is now delivering the Mayor's SummerWorks program in collaboration with KentuckianaWorks. SummerWorks cultivates Louisville's young talent by improving the capacity for youth to prepare for and connect to summer jobs and other work-based learning opportunities at public, private, and non-profit organizations. Youth and young adults ages 16-21 receive career readiness services and training, are matched with local employment opportunities that align with their career goals, and in some cases are provided wage subsidies and job coaches. This early workforce development program plays a key role in preventing homelessness by ensuring that youth and young adults possess the necessary skills and attributes to be sought after and retained by employers, thus providing income for immediate needs and access to future income stability.

- 10) Wherever possible, service providers for homeless young adults will focus on family engagement and seek opportunities to reunite young adults with their families while still referring to the other three systems of services.
- 11) The Kristi Love Foundation hosts weekly lunches for youth involved in drugs and prostitution to help young adults escape trafficking and drugs and assist in family reunification when possible.
- 12) Metro United Way, Louisville Metro Community Services Neighborhood Place prevention offices, and the JCPS Homeless Coordinator will make referrals for homeless prevention when appropriate and to the Common Assessment Team when not.

Need:

- 1) The Louisville CoC will seek funding to allow for drop-in centers to be open during additional hours identified by the Youth Advisory Board.
- 2) YMCA Safe Place will apply for continued RHYP homeless youth outreach. The community will work to provide back up and support, make referrals, and provide space for outreach at service facilities.

**Coordinated Assessment:** Family Health Centers operates the Common Assessment Team that works to identify, assess and rank the needs any homeless persons in the community. The team conducts assessments at specific access points identified for young adults, including overnight shelters, drop-in centers, groups, and visits to known camps with the RHYP outreach staff which are announced in a monthly outreach schedule. Additionally, the Common Assessment Team works closely with two providers that exclusively serve youth and young adults, HOTI, and YMCA's Safe Place program. These two providers create additional access points for youth to engage with Common Assessment. Both HOTI and Safe Place have staff trained to complete the Common Assessment's Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) screening instrument with homeless clients. Screenings completed by staff at these agencies are faxed or emailed to the Common Assessment Team, which enters the information into the HMIS system. The Common Assessment Coordinator and other staff engage in routine communication with both HOTI and Safe Place to stay current on the status of these clients, provide outreach if needed, and identify potential housing opportunities.

The VI-SPDAT is used to rank and serve homeless persons identified as needing permanent supportive housing, but most young adults do not qualify for this limited housing. The Common Assessment Coordinator does review special circumstances where a homeless youth may be very vulnerable in a way not identified by the VI-SPDAT and may prioritize these special cases when appropriate. The community has been engaged in a discussion on adopting the Transition Age Youth (TAY) screening tool to provide additional data on youth, or creating a separate assessment to assess the needs of young adults and homeless families that is used to assign clients to the most appropriate housing response (transitional, rapid rehousing, long-term transitional, or housing first permanent housing without supports). This assessment must consider vulnerabilities not included in the VI-SPDAT like human trafficking and youth. Youth under

18 identified through the shelter single point of entry are immediately referred and provided transportation to YMCA Safe Place. Youth 18 and over are referred through the Common Assessment Team and YMCA to other shelters and provided additional supports through YMCA Safe Place. Youth homeless providers are fully integrated into the homeless common assessment system, which will begin prioritizing youth in January of 2017. Youth also have access to transitional, rapid rehousing and long term transitional housing not available to those over 24 years of age. Mainstream service providers are now also integrated into the referral system through the Education/Employment Collaborative assessment and referral system which includes mentoring and other support services as well as education and employment.

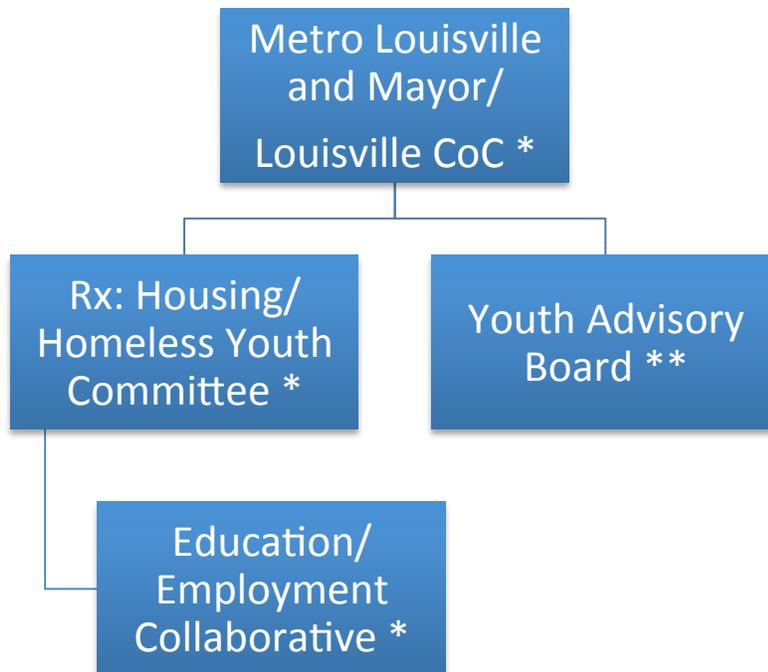
- 1) Outreach teams and local drop-in centers make referrals to the Common Assessment Team and provide times for the common assessment team to conduct assessments on site.
- 2) The common assessment team will meet any homeless young adults identified on the streets or in shelter to complete an assessment for housing placement.
- 3) The common assessment team follows all HMIS protocols for client confidentiality and will obtain waivers to share information for client referrals to housing and services.
- 4) If funded as part of the Homeless Youth Demonstration grant, Louisville will add additional youth common assessment outreach staff to reach youth not presently accessing homeless services. The National Safe Place (which was created and operates in Louisville) is working to help design this approach and practices as a new model.
- 4) The Youth Advisory Board will continue to work with the common assessment team to advise on the best procedures throughout this process.

**Permanent Connections:** In creating the network of services necessary to insure success for this effort, the Rx Housing/Homeless Youth Committee identified four key systems. In bringing these systems together, we have discovered significant gaps in communication that have led to barriers and deficiencies that make programs inaccessible to homeless young adults, often unintentionally. Meeting with the WIOA provider, KentuckianaWorks, revealed that several homeless young adults were staying in their facility, using computers daily but not accessing workforce training or other opportunities because they were not aware of providers and hours for drop-in services like showers, laundry, and counseling. Meanwhile, young adults were leaving some employment opportunities within a month because hours and transportation were inaccessible from their neighborhoods.

Success for this plan will be measured by housing all of the homeless young adults on Louisville's by-name list and creating a system to prevent homelessness of future young adults through connections to appropriate housing, education, employment and

social/emotional well-being services, but also by evaluating how well the connections created between the four systems lead to permanent systems of communication to create on-going process improvement.

- 1) The Louisville CoC has expanded this effort to include over a dozen providers new to the homeless services system but key to the success of ending homelessness among young adults. We also created the Homeless Youth Committee of the CoC as well as an Education/Employment Collaborative for Homeless Youth and a Youth Advisory Board to meet the needs and create connections with these new important partners.
- 2) The Louisville CoC and The Coalition for the Homeless will prioritize connections between all four systems in the implementation of this plan and create new process improvement meetings to identify and correct policies that make services inappropriate or unreachable for homeless young adults.
- 3) Family and Children's Place and other community partners will support the Youth Advisory Board and provide support for food, child care and transportation to insure participation. The Coalition for the Homeless will provide funding for a per-diem for members of the Youth Advisory Board.
- 4) CSYA will provide trauma informed care training and repeat as needed for staff of participating agencies. Louisville Urban League will do likewise for implicit bias and institutionalized racism training.
- 5) The Human Trafficking Coalition will provide training to Department for Community Based Services staff and youth service providers on identifying and working with victims of human trafficking.
- 6) In 2017, CSYA will launch a year-long professional development program for training a cohort of "connectors," community-based educators and service providers who can quickly link homeless and disconnected youth.
- 7) The Youth Advisory Board will work with the Homeless Youth Committee to advise on each step of this process.



\* These groups are staffed by The Coalition for the Homeless

\*\* This board is staffed by Family and Children’s Place

(Training and support are provided to all levels from CSYA, Louisville Urban League, True Up, Human Trafficking Task Force, Louisville Youth Group and others)

**Emergency Shelter:** Because it takes 30-180 days for homeless persons to access permanent housing, emergency options are especially vital for young adults with little experience or support maintaining housing. There are presently 24 emergency shelter beds for homeless young adults under 18 at YMCA Safe Place and 10 emergency shelter beds for young adults 18-24 at the Salvation Army. Kristy Love Foundation also provides 14 shelter beds for victims of human trafficking and Volunteers of America targets seven units of shelter for parenting young adults. A local young adult shelter committee has been meeting for three years to help design an LGBTQ-inclusive, family-friendly, client-centered emergency shelter for young adults 18-24, including victims of human trafficking. In order to end young adult homelessness in Louisville, the committee believes Louisville must create adequate and inclusive shelter to insure that young adults can be safe until opportunities for housing, education and job training are available in order to avoid recidivism.

- 1) YMCA Safe Place presently operates 24 units of shelter for minor youth, which adequately meet the existing need for unaccompanied youth under 18. Services at YMCA Safe Place include truancy prevention, outreach, mentoring, group including programs for children of incarcerated parents, counseling, and educational support.

- 2) Salvation Army presently manages 10 shelter beds for single young adults in their emergency shelter (services to these youth are provided by YMCA Safe Place) and over half of the families (seven) who occupy shelter at Volunteers of America are homeless young adults under 25. Fourteen young women are sheltered by Kristy Love Foundation.
- 3) Hundreds of beds of recovery housing are available for young adults in need in Louisville. HOTI operates Project Keep Safe, which houses the children of participating young adults during recovery or other programs without the parent losing custody. All Louisville shelters have been trained in opioid safety due to the prevalence of opioid abuse in our community.
- 4) The Homeless Youth Committee will seek to create transitional slots in independent living programs in order to help make a more informed and permanent transition to housing.
- 5) The Youth Advisory Board will advise on the design and policies of any emergency shelter designed to serve this population.

Need:

- 1) YMCA Safe Place and members of the young adult shelter committee estimate the nightly shelter capacity for young adults 18-24 needs to grow from the existing 31 to a minimum of 50 shelter beds and that these units must move from a general population shelter to a youth-centered program that is both LGBTQ inclusive and welcoming to parenting young adults.
- 2) Unless emergency shelter is 24 hour, storage facilities are needed for young adults who will be using shelter and drop-in centers, employment, or other services during the day.

**Stable Housing:** A full spectrum of housing options are needed to meet young adults where they are and help them move to permanency. Over the past decades, Louisville has offered emergency, transitional, and permanent housing for young adults. Our plan seeks to increase transitional housing options for young adults and to continue to expand emergency, rapid rehousing, and permanent housing options where additional life-changing services are provided. It is important to make the best use of limited housing to serve this population, and we plan to measure five housing options through the planning phase in order to develop new housing that is most consistent with the program(s) found to have the best short- and long-term success for young adults.

- 1) The CoC will prioritize young adults in their ranking of new projects in the 2017 CoC and apply for the HUD Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program in order to create adequate stable housing for those on the by name list. Turnover of existing

- permanent housing resources should be adequate for the number of young adults who meet the chronic homeless definition with this prioritization and those served through this supportive housing turn over will be measured for their success in permanent supportive housing. These programs are all “housing first” in design.
- 2) The Common Assessment Team will make referrals for the existing 39 units of transitional (HOTI and Volunteers of America) and 30+ units of rapid re-housing (HOTI - coming on line in 2016) within 30 days of vacancy. Clients in these two housing components will be evaluated on their success in transitional and rapid-rehousing.
  - 3) Louisville Metro Housing Authority (LMHA) has committed 25 Housing Choice Vouchers for homeless young adults who are not chronically homeless but are unable to maintain housing through employment without a subsidy if the Youth Homeless Demonstration Grant is funded. These vouchers will be designed as “housing first” and their success will be measured for permanent housing.
  - 4) The Rx: Housing/Homeless Youth Committee will review the cases of difficult to serve homeless young adults in order to address their housing needs. Additionally, all housing providers will ensure that if a client is referred for housing but does not qualify or is not successful, that client will be handed back through referral to the Common Assessment Team so as not to be lost in the system.
  - 5) Permanent housing and permanent supportive housing options will be available as “housing first” with no pre-conditions. Transitional and rapid rehousing require case management but are both designed as low-barrier services.
  - 6) About half of the young adult homeless persons identified are expected to need access to an average of \$650 in security deposits and approximately \$1,100 in household items. The Coalition for the Homeless raises more than \$25,000 annually through Give-a-Jam and other events, and additional funding will be sought through websites, grant applications, and community events. The Homeless Youth Committee will also apply to Ignite Louisville in 2017 to help create an appropriate fundraising event.
  - 7) St. Vincent de Paul has agreed to accept furniture and other items and give Rx: Housing partner agencies vouchers of equal value so that their clients can shop in their stores for items they need to set up their homes.
  - 8) Community partners have provided multiple studies to show the community the cost savings of housing this population versus allowing them to live on the streets.
  - 9) The Youth Advisory Board will advise on the design and policies for each phase of stable housing.

Needs:

- 1) A waiver is needed to extend transitional housing beyond 24 months for youth completing education or other programs that will result in permanent housing stability.
- 2) Louisville will need an additional 175 units of rapid rehousing, transitional, permanent, and long-term transitional housing to address the existing need. We plan to apply for this funding through the Homeless Demonstration grant, LMHA commitments, future CoC proposals and other community resources, and will evaluate each year to determine the appropriate mix of these resources based on young adult need and program outcomes.
- 3) Even when subsidies are available, there is a great shortage of efficiency and one-bedroom rental units in the community making it difficult to use housing choice and CoC vouchers. We will continue to educate landlords about the need and may use policies from other communities (like a signing bonus) to get all homeless young adults housed. The Louisville Apartment Association has agreed to help support this effort and The Coalition for the Homeless will hire a housing advocate to help clients find apartments in the community.



**Stable Housing - A New Model – Family Scholar House:** The Family Scholar House (FSH) is a nationally recognized long-term transitional model that allows participants to enroll in the college of their choice to pursue the course of study of their choice, with the goal of obtaining a baccalaureate degree. FSH helps single parents obtain financial assistance to pay for classes and books. Through individual donations, financial aid, Pell grants, scholarships, and student loans, participants attend school on a full-time basis. Some of the parents also obtain work-study assistance through their college or university. All participants meet regularly with their Academic Advisor to review educational progress. FSH assists participants in obtaining needed support services and helps them address barriers to education. We believe that the results of this life changing focus, including employment and education, help to inform the benefits of success in education and employment resulting in housing stability. 70% of FSH graduates are securely housed and completely off all federal benefits within 90 days of graduation. Additionally, parenting youth in the FSH program work to prepare their own children for a future that includes college through FSH programming.

All FSH participants meet regularly with their Support Manager for services. Homeless young adults served by FSH may apply for the residential program. Students are able to apply for subsidized housing on the FSH campuses based upon family size (in accordance with HUD guidelines). Participants are responsible for their portion of the rent<sup>13</sup> and their own utilities. All participants meet regularly with their case manager for guidance on household management. The annual cost per client for this comprehensive model is surprisingly low at \$10,200 per client per year, an even better value considering the future benefit of that client no longer needing federal benefits. FSH and partners have agreed to the following:

- 1) FSH will expand their extended transitional housing program to create a 32 unit project for young adults exiting foster care in 2017.
- 2) Referrals of homeless young adults who qualify will be made to FSH for education and housing. The target population are young adults who were part of the foster care system in their past, who have a high school diploma or GED, and who are willing and able to enroll in a four-year college and work with advisors on their education.
- 3) Outcomes from FSH will be captured and can be compared to other transitional housing options to support a case for cost effectiveness and program expansion nationwide.
- 4) FSH has also obtained a planning grant for homeless youth health outcomes that will be coordinated with this planning project in order to create community-wide best practices in young adult housing and health.

Need:

- 1) While FSH can presently serve parenting teens and those exiting foster care, a waiver is needed in the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program to create additional FSH housing through the LIHTC program for young adults not exiting the foster care system.
- 2) A waiver will be needed to provide operating funds for FSH from the CoC because the program is designed for four years versus two.

**Education:** The Louisville plan to prevent and end young adult homelessness is based on the understanding that education and employment are equally important as housing for ensuring the success of long-term stability. Our data and history show that although the economy and increased education costs have resulted in a greater number of young adults without employment, a higher percentage of the young adults who are homeless have the ability through education and employment training to access increased income and future housing stability than that of other homeless sub-populations. We believe that the results of this focus will help to inform the benefits of success in education resulting in higher wages and housing stability.

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<sup>13</sup> Also based on HUD guidelines.

Louisville has a strong history of successful coordination that goes beyond homeless services that includes Louisville's participation in the Harvard Education Redesign Lab that created our Cradle to Career citywide accountability system and goals for education and employment. A copy of this model is attached and the goals are incorporated in our plan to prevent and end youth homelessness. Louisville has also created an Education/Employment Collaborative for Homeless Youth that includes education/employment leaders willing to assess and refer homeless young adults into a network of education/employment opportunities, including: FSH, JCPS, Kentucky Community and Technical College, Spalding University and University of Louisville. This group agrees to the following:

- 1) The Louisville Plan to Prevent and End Young Adult Homelessness has integrated the plan with the Louisville Cradle to Career citywide accountability for cradle to career system (see attached pipeline image.) All our efforts will be coordinated to increase the community's success toward increasing student proficiency in every subject, increasing graduation rates, increasing extended learning sites, increasing graduates that are college or career ready. We will also work to increase resources to insure that 40% of working adults hold bachelor's degrees by 2020.
- 2) True Up and CSYA will work to advocate for state policies that increase the number of youth who remain in the foster care system until they obtain a high school education or GED and have the supports needed to take advantage of college education. While state law presently allows persons to use this tuition waiver within four years of completing their high school education, True Up and CSYA will also work to extend this length of time if needed to insure the success of more homeless young adults. They will continue their partnership with JCPS to address the needs of disconnected youth and provide supports to help these young adults graduate from high school, and they will advocate for higher standards at alternative schools and the opportunity for more youth in alternative schools to attend traditional schools.
- 3) The CoC and Homeless Youth Committee will coordinate with the YouthBuild Preventing and Re-engaging Drop Outs Pilot Project, city efforts to increase the number of young adults exiting foster care who stay engaged to go to college and continue working with JCPS to increase the high school graduation rate and decrease future homelessness and instability.
- 4) FSH will continue to support hundreds of young adults pursuing a GED, while providing resources necessary to get access to and succeed in college beyond those in their transitional housing program.
- 5) Services must also be provided seamlessly from emergency shelter to permanent housing. These include subsidized transportation, child care, and case management.

The participating partners in this project will create coordinated materials about the resources available.

- 6) Metro Louisville will double the funding and enrollment of at-risk youth in Reimage, which seeks to keep youth in school and help navigate the issues of courts and drugs in order to access employment and higher education. Project partners will work to refer homeless young adults to these additional slots.
- 7) Metro Louisville and partners will continue to raise funding to match dollars from the Say Yes Foundation to make it possible for all young adults to attend college.
- 8) The Education/Employment Collaborative will work with young adults to ensure that choice and strengths are considered in the assessment and selection of appropriate education referrals, and that the supports provided to young adults in obtaining education are individualized to their particular needs.
- 9) JCPS has a very strong homeless education coordinator position, but the Education/Employment Collaborative has identified two changes to help improve coordination between JCPS and homeless services. First, the Coalition for the Homeless will provide an HMIS license to the homeless coordinator to use in the collaboration of services with homeless shelters and services. Second, JCPS will provide a tutor at TAYLRD and/or YMCA Safe Place drop-in centers to help homeless youth with their studies. The Education/Employment Collaborative is also interested in studying the best use of the JCPS eSchool program to determine if it can be used to help more homeless young adults graduate.
- 10) The Youth Advisory Board will advise on the design and policies of all education programs.

Needs:

- 1) Additional flexible funding is needed to help young adults address transportation and child care needs until funding is made available through federal and state programs.



Employment: Employment is the most direct line to increased income and future housing stability. Education and employment can lift young adults out of poverty and benefit programs, warranting an investment in programming funded now. Young adult employment also helps to fill slots for jobs that are presently unfilled in the community. Louisville has created an Education/Employment Collaborative that will assess and refer homeless young adults to a network of employment opportunities, including YouthBuild, Summerworks, Code Louisville, Department for Community Based Services, Kentucky Manufacturing, REimage, Louisville Urban League, Boys and Girls Club, Jewish Family and Career Services, Greater Louisville Inc./JCPS, Wellspring and Family and Children’s Place Supported Employment, and other KentuckianaWorks and JobCorps programs. This collaborative has agreed to the following:

- 1) Family and Children’s Place and Wellspring both operate locally supported employment programs. Both provide a preference for young adults, but most young adults do not qualify for these programs because the state only accepts level one disabilities to qualify for supported employment at this time. For that reason,

Wellspring is planning to expand their program to also accept clients for other WIOA programs that can serve persons with a lower level of disability to obtain and maintain employment.

- 2) Family and Children's Place and HOTI have hired income/employment specialists to help young adults access employment as well as housing. They will work with the Education/Employment Collaborative to insure appropriate assessment and referral.
- 3) Metro Louisville and the Mayor have doubled funding for the highly successful KentuckianaWorks REimage program identified as a model for serving homeless youth in the Ending Youth Homelessness: Collaboration with Mainstream Resources Guide created by HUD, USICH and HHS. REimage identifies young adults in the juvenile justice system for education, career prep, and work-based learning. All are paired with mentors through Right Turn and a preference is given for homeless young adults in the juvenile justice system. Over half of the youth participating have accessed education or employment and even more have avoided future participation in the justice system.
- 4) KentuckianaWorks also continues to increase the size of the model Code Louisville Program While this program was started at the :LFPLMain Library, where many homeless young adults gather during the day, collaboration is only now taking place to ensure spots for these homeless youth in the successful employment program.
- 5) Services must also be provided seamlessly from emergency shelter to permanent housing. These include subsidized transportation, child care, and case management. The participating partners in this project will create coordinated materials about the resources available.
- 6) Greater Louisville Inc., JCPS, KentuckianaWorks and local businesses like Ford, UPS, and Norton will implement up to 15 new "Generation of Learning" Talent Development Academies to train young adults for pathways to careers in our community. These opportunities will be made available to homeless and foster care youth and drop-in services will be available for homeless young adults in need of supports like showers and laundry.
- 6) The Department of Community Based Services (DCBS, our public child welfare agency) created a pilot "fostering success" program in 2016 for youth in foster care. This 10-week program provided employment at DCBS for 81 young adults (20 in Louisville). In this first year, 49 completed the program and 34 are still employed after the program. DCBS plans to expand this program in 2017 and include other state agencies.
- 7) Jewish Family and Career Services is expanding their very successful Kentucky Career Center GO career training and placement services (80% success rate) to include young

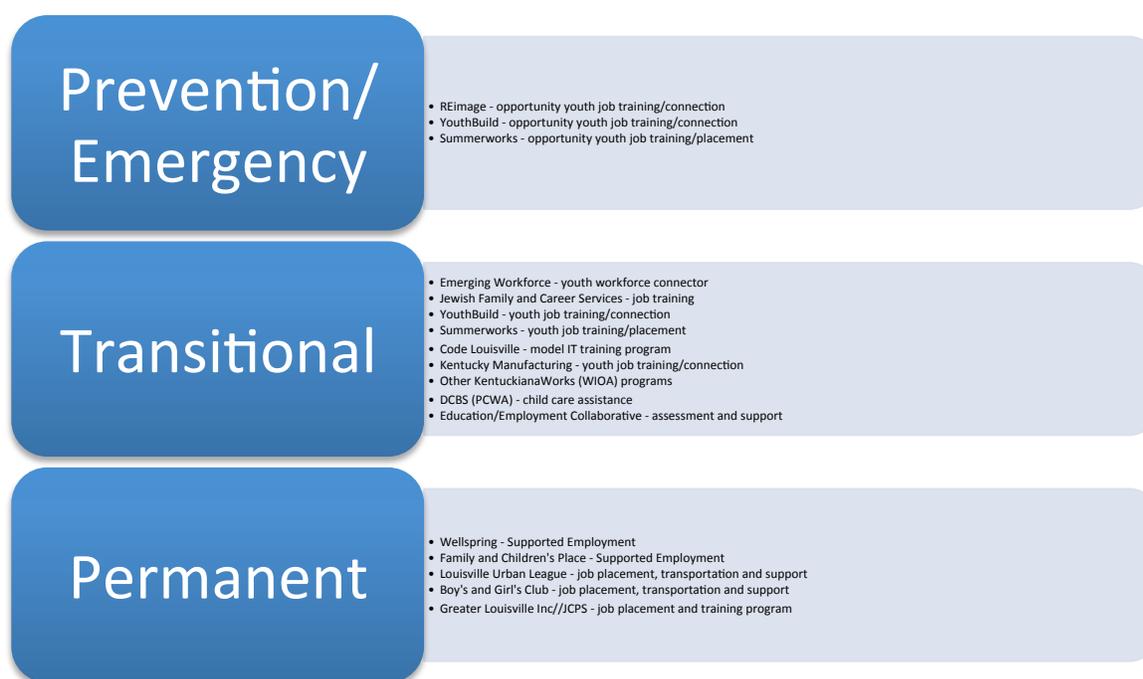
adults from 18-24. This program is tied to the Kentucky Career Center so that referrals can easily be made for GED classes as needed. This program is also reaching out to partner with KentuckianaWork's award-winning Internship Academy and can provide funding through the Jobs and Enterprise Center for young adults interested in starting micro-businesses or obtaining career assistance training.8) YouthBuild has the largest class of young adults participating in its job training services to date with 35 total, and more of these young adults were homeless than in any previous year. YMCA Safe Place discovered that homeless youth struggled to maintain placements in YouthBuild because the half day Friday schedule meant they got no lunch or transportation. YMCA now provides transportation on Fridays from YouthBuild to the YMCA drop in center and offers extended hours to ensure the homeless young adults can access lunch, laundry, and showers.

- 9) YouthBuild obtained the contract with Metro Louisville for the highly successful Summerworks Program that employs hundreds of youth each summer. They have agreed to target special supervised job opportunities for homeless young adults. The Louisville CoC is also encouraging them to expand their age limit to 24.
- 10) The Louisville Urban League discovered that job training and placement were not enough. While many of their young adults were successful in obtaining jobs, especially at third shift positions with local fulfillment centers, transportation took 2 ½ hours each way and was not available on weekends from west Louisville neighborhoods. They created a partnership with TARC to provide direct bus service from Louisville Urban League to employment centers and back. The project is already expanding to Boys and Girls Club and other job training and youth programs in west Louisville and could be replicated in other neighborhoods.
- 11) Early homeless youth employment collaborations have also shown that case managers must create systems to communicate about the progress of young adults and keep in touch to avoid drop outs. Young adults are more likely to follow through with employment opportunities when the program leaders come to them for sign-ups and when the employment opportunities consider lunch and transportation in their design.
- 12) The Education/Employment Collaborative will work with young adults to ensure that choice and strengths are considered in the assessment and selection of appropriate employment referrals and that the supports provided to young adults in obtaining employment are individualized to their particular needs. They will also work with providers in the social/emotional well-being service industry to find mentors for young adults in all employment programs, as modeled by the highly successful REimage Program.

- 13) The Louisville Free Public Library has changed fee and fine policies to make it possible for any youth to use their computers for free, including unlimited computer time at some locations. They also provide free faxing and printing for career and education purposes.
- 14) The Youth Advisory Board will advise on the design and policies of all employment programs.

Needs:

- 1) Additional flexible funding is needed to help young adults address transportation and child care needs until funding is made available through federal and state programs.



Education/Employment – A New Model – Education/Employment Collaborative for Homeless Young Adults: While working to create Louisville’s Plan to End Young Adult Homelessness, the Homeless Youth Committee was amazed by the plethora of education and employment opportunities for young adults and the strong desire by local employers to find qualified, committed employees. Unfortunately these employers were still not reaching homeless and disconnected young adults in our community, due to transportation, training, and communication. Barriers to reaching these young adults have existed for years and have not all been identified, much less addressed. On-going communication and coordination are necessary for true success. Under this model, one full-time employee can maintain the

collaborative and a full-time employee is needed to assist with approximately 50 young adults needing education and employment referrals matched with mentors.

- 1) The Education/Employment Collaborative is working to create an assessment that allows all homeless young adults to be assessed and referred to the most appropriate education or employment program. If any client is referred and then determined to be ineligible or unsuccessful, they will be given a warm hand off back to the collaborative for a new referral.
- 2) The Education/Employment Collaborative meets monthly at a different education or employment agency. The host agency shares information on their resources and programs and the committee shares any barriers to program entry that are addressed during the meeting.
- 3) Education/Employment Collaborative members can also discuss clients who may be struggling and seek additional services to ensure their success.
- 4) This collaborative gives Louisville the first opportunity to measure success of different sub-populations by program in order to improve referrals, outcomes and appropriate expansions in the future.

**Social-Emotional Well-Being:** While stable housing, education, and employment are the keys to future success for homeless young adults, success in these three systems is dependent on young adults being able to address their own social-emotional well-being, as well as having strong relationships with caring adults and supports to help with struggles they will encounter. Positive Youth Development research also shows that working to engage youth leadership and interests strengthens outcomes in housing and employment. Young adults in Louisville's needs assessment survey share that their greatest desire is someone to listen to them--including family, mentors, or other important adults in their lives. Some populations (including parenting young adults, those with disabilities, and young adults recovering from domestic violence and/or human trafficking) will need additional supports to address these needs.

- 1) While being assessed, young adults will be referred to SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) programming at Family Health Centers if they are eligible for benefits they do not presently receive, including Medicaid and food stamps.
- 2) Family and Children's Place provides a case manager to work with young adults who leave the foster care system in order to help these young adults maintain housing stability and avoid homelessness upon exit.
- 3) The Center for Women and Families and Human Trafficking Task Force provide support services for those who have experienced violence.
- 4) Louisville Youth Group provides group meetings for LGBTQ young adults.

- 5) The Department for Community-Based Services will help young adults with children access state-funded child care, a crucial support given the high number of parenting teens.
- 6) The Louisville CoC and Homeless Youth Committee will work to help Restorative Justice expand services to young adults up to (bringing the present cap of 18 years up to 24 years old) in order to help more homeless young adults avoid the judicial system and to bring the service into local programs like YouthBuild and Summerworks.
- 7) The Department for Juvenile Justice has embarked on a systems improvement process that will allow the department to work with homeless service providers and the YAB to identify and improve systems that do not presently serve the needs of homeless young adults and other providers who could be providing supports for these young adults.
- 8) When asked about supports necessary for their own success, local young adults identify mentoring as a key service in order to insure permanent connections. Mayor Fischer has called for community mentors for programs coordinated through Right Turn, a local non-profit, and the Louisville CoC will continue to call for more mentors and increased coordination to insure young adults in all programs have access to a mentor.
- 8) Kristy Love Foundation hosts a monthly meal program for over 400 youth at risk of trafficking, including those who may be engaged in sex work or active drug use. This collaborative will work to bring other services to these meals and help support the cost to ensure safety and services to this population with high levels of addiction and trauma and low levels of educational achievement.
- 9) Innovative programs will be created to address conflict resolution, job training and other barriers. Existing model programs include Kentucky Shakespeare's program created for other at risk populations, Mindfulness Training provided by the Kentucky Department for Education, and AMPed music education and Menaissance Programs, which help young men learn about adulthood through literature.
- 10) Transportation continues to be one of the barriers to success most often identified in program after program created for homeless young adults. TARC has agreed to participate in this project and has already seen benefits for their own bottom line by providing needed transportation in poor, underserved areas when the services are targeted to employment and education centers.
- 11) The Center for Women and Families and Metro Louisville Police Department operate one of only two domestic violence fatality reviews in the country. They review cases prior to the close of court proceedings with the hope of making fast system changes

to prevent further deaths. According to the Stalking Resource Center, the age group with the highest rate of domestic violence nationwide is 18-24.

- 12) Legal Aid provides free services for Louisville victims of domestic violence to anyone who files an emergency protective order. They provide free legal services in two day shelters that are available to homeless young adults and they provide free legal services to young adults in the REimage Program which are being expanded to Restorative Justice and could be expanded to other programs in this partnership if needed.
- 13) Louisville is a recipient of the Robert Wood Johnson Culture of Health Prize. This effort to create a more healthy Louisville including the Louisville CoC's effort to house local veterans, chronically homeless and now unaccompanied homeless youth and families.
- 14) The Youth Advisory Board will advise on the design and policies of all social-emotional well-being services.

Needs:

- 1) A waiver is needed to create evidenced based life-changing HUD Services Only programs including mentoring, housing counseling, assistance with supports for housing and employment, and employment services that prevent young adult homelessness and stabilize homeless young adults in housing, which results in future cost savings.



Measuring Success: Success for this plan will be measured against the following outcome goals:

- 1) Shorten length of time young adults are unsheltered to no more than 30 days
- 2) House all young adults on the by-name list (including reunification)
- 3) Maintain no more than 5% recidivism of young adults housed back in emergency shelter
- 4) Continue to house newly homeless young adults at the rate they become homeless
- 5) Maintain monthly meetings between the four systems of the plan through on-going commitments to remove barriers to homeless young adult success
- 6) 100% of young adults receive access to life-changing (transformative) services
- 7) 25% of young adults increase education levels (see Cradle to Career sub-outcomes attached)
- 8) 85% of young adults increase income (see Cradle to Career sub-outcomes attached)
- 9) 45% of young adults increase income to a level that benefits are no longer necessary

