

Montana Coordinated Community Plan: Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project



The Orphan Train Movement was an early welfare program that transported orphaned and homeless children in the United States. These children were taken from Eastern cities, placed alone on trains, and sent to foster homes and labor camps in rural areas of the Midwest, such as Montana. The Orphan Train Movement transported approximately 200,000 children from 1854 to 1929.

Photo Credit: The Orphan Trains and Newsboys of New York

CONTENTS

- Letters of Support Montana Continuum of Care2
- Letters of Support Montana Youth Advisory Board.....3
- Letters of Support Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services.....4
- Letters of Support Montana Office of Public Instruction.....5
- Montana Statement of Need and Risk Factors7
- Montana Youth Homelessness: By the numbers9
 - Point-in-Time..... 11
 - Montana Office of Public Instruction..... 11
 - Unaccompanied minors 12
 - Youth of color..... 14
 - LGBTQ Youth 15
 - Pregnant and Parenting Youth..... 16
 - Justice-Involved..... 18
 - Foster youth 19
 - Victims of Sex Trafficking and Exploitation..... 21
 - Youth with Disabilities (as per requested by MT YAB members) 22
- Governance25
- Vision and Goals31
- Vision.....31
 - Proposed Core Outcomes 31
- Goals and Action Steps.....34
 - HUD Guiding Principles 35
- Montana CCP Goals.....40
 - Goal One: Housing. 40
 - Goal Two: Social-Emotional Well-Being and Permanent Connections..... 44
 - Goal Three: Education and Employment. 46
 - Goal Four: Systems Change..... 49
- Montana-specific projects overview55
- Proposed Intervention Projects56
 - Intervention 1: Diversion 56
 - Intervention 2: Crisis Host Homes 57
 - Intervention 3: Transitional Housing (TH) - Rapid Rehousing (RRH)..... 58
 - Intervention 4: Flexible Rapid Rehousing (RRH) 60
 - Intervention 5: Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) 61
 - Intervention 6: System Navigators..... 62
- Improving data quality and system capacity.....64
 - Continuous Quality Improvement 64
- References.....66

Letters of Support



June 26, 2020

To Whom It May Concern;

The Montana Continuum of Care Coalition supports and endorses this the YHDP Coordinated Community Plan.

The CoC also wishes to acknowledge the expertise and assistance provided by our YHDP TA vendors and our draft plan authors, Folsom Strategies Group. We are pleased with the process and completion of our final document over the past many months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Buzzas". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Robert (Bob) Buzzas



Letters of Support

June 26, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

The Youth Advisory Board participated in Coordinated Community Plan planning meetings and has reviewed the Coordinated Community Plan. We support and endorse this draft of the Coordinated Community Plan.

Respectfully submitted,



Keegan Flaherty, Coordinator

John Brady, Member

Shania Burns, Member

Levi Ludwig, Member

Dylan Ziobro, Member

Letters of Support



Department of Public Health and Human Services

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Steve Bullock, Governor

Sheila Hogan, Director

March 3, 2020

Ms. Caroline Crouse
Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs
Community Planning and Development - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
451 7th Street, SW; Room 7256
Washington, DC 20410

RE: Letter of Commitment Implementing the MT YHDP Coordinated Community Plan.

Dear Ms. Crouse:

On behalf of the State of Montana's Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), I am pleased to provide this letter of commitment supporting Montana's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) Coordinated Community Plan (CCP) and the goal of ending youth homelessness.

The CCP has been the work of the YHDP Core Planning Team, an integrated array of stakeholders, including youth, committed to preventing and alleviating youth homelessness across Montana. The CCP is a comprehensive planning document containing essential data and insights on the issue of homelessness that will inform ongoing policy, system design and performance. As provided in the CCP and in partnership with HUD and the YHDP Core Planning Team, DPHHS agrees to do the following:

- Serves as a member of the Continuous Quality Improvement workgroup and provide a contact person to attend scheduled governance board meetings.
- Support leadership opportunities for the YHDP Youth Action Board under the Continuum of Care and attend scheduled stakeholder meetings, Operational Team Meetings, pertaining to submission, planning and implementation phases of the YHDP grant and the subsequent coordinated community approach to prevent and end youth homelessness.
- Refer, as appropriate, homeless youth to the CoC's Coordinated Entry System.

DPHHS recognizes that these efforts are vital to building a healthier and safer communities. The department is supportive of the CCP's mission to support all youth experiencing homelessness and to ensure that all youth have safe and stable housing through an accessible, youth-driven system of care. These efforts align with the departments mission to improve and protect the health of Montanans by advancing conditions for healthy living.

If you have any questions regarding this letter of commitment please email me at SheilaHogan@mt.gov.

Sincerely,

Sheila Hogan, Director
Montana DPHHS

Letters of Support

Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent

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OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
STATE OF MONTANA



March 9, 2020

Putting Montana Students First **A⁺**

Ms. Caroline Crouse
Office of Special Needs Assistance Programs
Community Planning and Development
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street, SW; Room 7256
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Ms. Crouse:

On behalf of the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI), I am pleased to provide this letter of commitment supporting Montana's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) Coordinated Community Plan (CCP) and the goal of ending youth homelessness.

The CCP has been the work of the YHDP Core Planning Team, an integrated array of stakeholders, including youth, committed to preventing and alleviating youth homelessness across Montana. The CCP is a comprehensive planning document containing essential data and insights on the issue of homelessness that will inform ongoing policy, system design, and performance.

As Montana's state education agency, the OPI administers the federal McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program. Educating children and youth in Montana who are experiencing homelessness presents many unique challenges due to the nature of our state. Most of our school districts are small and rural, with dedicated staff members filling multiple roles. Our communities have few resources or services designed to meet the needs of these families and youth, such as emergency shelters, transitional housing, or soup kitchens. Despite these challenges, our educators and communities work tirelessly to meet the needs of Montana's most vulnerable children.

The OPI agrees to the following:

- Serves as a member of the Education & Employment workgroup and provides a contact person to attend scheduled workgroup meetings.

Letters of Support

- Support leadership opportunities for the YHDP Youth Action Board under the Continuum of Care and attend scheduled stakeholder meetings pertaining to submission, planning, and implementation phases of the YHDP grant and the subsequent coordinated community approach to prevent and end youth homelessness.
- Refer, as appropriate, homeless youth to the CoC's Coordinated Entry System.

The OPI recognizes that these efforts are vital to building healthy and safe communities. The OPI is supportive of the CCP's mission to support all youth experiencing homelessness and to ensure that all youth have safe and stable housing through an accessible, youth-driven system of care. These efforts align with the OPI's mission of serving all Montana students through a whole-child approach to education.

If you have any questions regarding this letter of commitment please contact the OPI's Communications Director, Dylan Klapmeier. Dylan can be reached at dylan.klapmeier@mt.gov or 406-444-3559.

Sincerely,



Elsie Arntzen
Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction

Montana Statement of Need

Montana has a long-lasting culture of rugged independence, self-reliance, and privacy. This culture permeates the way individuals interact with one another and the systems around them. To this end, youth raised in Montana are taught to “pull themselves up by their bootstraps” at an early age, and help-seeking behaviors are often underutilized. These learned behaviors leave many of our most marginalized youth (e.g., unaccompanied, LGBTQ, pregnant and parenting, and youth of color) with unmet basic needs such as housing, education, employment, and social and emotional well-being. This culture of privacy and self-reliance makes documenting and collecting accurate data of these youth a challenge for school districts, providers, and communities-at-large. To further complicate matters, Montana services are often fragmented, and siloed services currently lack data sharing agreements or even basic referrals to increase access to resources. Nonetheless, for purposes of this plan, following system modeling, we have identified that the level of need is **850 youth ages 18 to 24** and **20 youth under the age of 18** for a total need of **870 youth**.

Montana Youth Homelessness: Risk Factors

The MT Continuum of Care (COC) conducted its first youth needs assessment on February 18 & 19, 2019, and community needs assessment on November 11, 2019. The Montana Youth Action Board (YAB) identified the following Montana specific factors leading to homelessness among youth:

- **Substance Use:** Methamphetamine, opioids, and alcohol were a shared experience among all of the participants. In some instances, their substance use was a reported coping mechanism for the isolation and homelessness they were experiencing.
- **Domestic Violence:** The YAB identified domestic violence as a primary contributing factor to their experience of homelessness.
- **Human Trafficking:** Montana, like many other states, struggles to know the current number of human trafficking victims due to its illegal and secretive nature. What we do know is the youth in Montana have reported to being arrested multiple times before being identified for services for victims of human trafficking, not jail.
- **Transportation:** Youth and young adults (YYA) in rural community’s experience gaps in care due to resources being hundreds of miles apart and YYA do not have a reliable adult gatekeeper to connecting them to services available outside of their locale.

Statement of Need

- **Lack of Youth Mental Health Resources:** In Montana, suicide is the second leading cause of death amongst our youth. Youth in Montana die by suicide at a rate almost three times that of the national average.
- **Overcrowding:** Youth and young adults in Montana describe household overcrowding as an experience before their homelessness. This characteristic of housing instability reiterates the MT Consolidated Plan that indicated that 5,192 households in MT were overcrowded.



We conservatively estimate **11,000 unaccompanied youth in Montana are at risk of homelessness.**

The afore-mentioned risks (e.g., substance use, domestic violence, human trafficking, and lack of youth mental health resources) mentioned above directly attributed to members of the YAB ending up homeless. One of the largest barriers many of these youth faced, and at-risk youth in Montana's face is access to housing. Montana has a shortage of beds for youth statewide. Currently, there are **1,315 statewide emergency housing beds in Montana, with only 43 available for youth.** Almost all overnight shelters in Montana will not serve minors. The reason being MT is a state with a robust legal precedent favoring parental rights. Custodial interference laws complicate the care of unaccompanied homeless youth who are under the age of 18. The result is many of our most marginalized youth who are fleeing domestic violence or family rejection are doubling-up or participating in survival sex. Of the providers who will serve unaccompanied minors, they often do so with high thresholds, such as requiring school enrollment, requiring sobriety, or mandatory participation in programming.

Youth in Montana also face barriers related to education. So far, in the 2019-20 school year, there are **708 unaccompanied youth in Montana schools** (Denny, 2019, slides 3, 4, 6). Most of these youth are couch-surfing and in their senior year of high school. Sadly, data indicates only 66% of those who start their final year of high school will graduate. Also, Montana has one of the highest rates of youth

who are identified as experiencing homelessness in the Early Head Start and Head Start programs. Homelessness for Montana students is not only occurring in our larger districts, but also in our rural, reservation, and one-room school rooms.

The educational barriers leave youth and young parents at increased risk. One such risk is limiting access to jobs with a livable wage. As stated above, many youth experiencing homelessness drop out of school, leaving them at increased risk for future loss of wages. The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (2019) found that an individual without a high school education has limited economic mobility. On average, they will make about \$8,000 less a year than someone with high school education and about \$10,000 less than someone with some college education. There is a breadth of research that cites the importance of education and early career training for youth as providing a protective factor for youth social and emotional well-being.

In addition to lost wages, Montana youth have less access to supplemental support after a large closure of the Office of Public Assistance. There are currently 34% of counties in Montana that have an office with in-person support to assist with the technical paperwork required to receive public benefits, especially for unaccompanied minors. As a result, many basic needs are unmet for youth in families experiencing financial insecurity, which places them at a much higher rate for experiencing homelessness.

Montanans, in general, have high rates of depression, anxiety, and isolation. Montana has the highest suicide rates in the nation and experienced a 38% increase over the past two decades (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018). Suicide is the second leading cause of death for youth ages 12 to 24 in Montana. The most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey found 31% of Montana high school students (57.9% of students in alternative schools, 42.9%-39.4% of Native American students on and off reservations, and 42.1% of students with disabilities) felt sadness or hopelessness for two or more weeks in the past twelve months (MT OPI, 2019c). Sadness as an indicator is one of the primary questions on universal depression screenings. Youth in Montana are at high risk due to limited access to providers. Youth and service providers also identified the following services as a high priority needs for their overall well-being: legal services, health care services (mental and physical), substance use/treatment, child welfare, runaway/safe places, law enforcement trafficking services, and, transportation.

Montana Youth Homelessness: By the numbers

Montana, like many rural states, is seeing an increase in rental and housing costs that are quickly outpacing wages (Ward, n.d). Though Montana has experienced a rapid boom in housing

Statement of Need

development, this has not shifted the market to fair renters or prospective homeowners. Ward (n.d.) reported that Montana has over double the national average of homes purchased as secondary homes for “...seasonal, recreational or occasional use.” With this increase, more and more Montanans are unable to affordable homes. Current data indicates that 45.4% of all households in Montana are rent-burdened (paying 30% or more than their income toward rent), with 22.3% of all renters paying more than 50% of their annual income (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). With many Montanans struggling to make ends meet, less visible and increasingly vulnerable youth are underreported and underserved by services.

As stated in earlier sections, no one data system can account for all youth experiencing homelessness in Montana. A recent report from leading experts at Chapin Hill stated, “...approximately **one in 10 American young adults ages 18 to 25** and at least **one in 30 minors ages 13 to 17**, endures some form of homelessness” (Morton, Dworksy, and Samuals, 2017). There is an estimated 137,564 youth between the ages of 15 and 24 in Montana (US Census, 2020). Applying Chapin Hill’s estimates to the Montana Census numbers, we conservatively estimate **11,000 unaccompanied youth in Montana are at risk of homelessness**. These youth may be experiencing one of the following risk factors:

- **Experiences of poverty** - Data from the National KIDS Count and U.S. Census Bureau indicate that as of 2018, **25% of youth ages 18 to 24 (22,000 young adults)** have incomes below the federal poverty level (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2019). In 2018, **257 housing cases** filed with Montana Legal Services to prevent homelessness due to rental increases or unpaid rent served **502 children under the age of 18** (Montana Legal Services Association, 2019).
- **Students experiencing family homelessness and housing instability** – Data from Montana’s Office of Public Instruction (OPI) indicates that **3,696 students** in Montana school districts were experiencing homelessness or housing instability as part of their family unit. Including 3,030 youth and their families staying in doubled-up situations, 330 staying temporarily in a hotel or motel, and 336 residing in a shelter (Montana OPI, 2019b).
- **Youth in crisis** – In 2017, **131 calls** were made to the National Runaway Hotline from youth and teens in Montana. Callers to the Hotline includes youth in crisis, those contemplating running away, those who had run away or were kicked out of their home, and those experiencing homelessness (National Runaway Hotline, 2017).
- **Youth involved or formerly involved in the child welfare system** – According to Montana’s Department of Health and Human Services, **2,349 children and youth** entered Montana’s child welfare system in 2019. Data from the National Youth in Transition Database indicates that approximately **21% of youth transitioning out** of foster care in Montana have experienced homelessness by age 17 (National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2016).

Statement of Need

- **Youth involved or formerly involved in the juvenile justice system** – The Montana Incident-Based Reporting System (2019) reported there were **13,779 youth** who were entered into the system as offenders. Of the almost 14,000 youth offenders, **33% (4,584)** were under the age of 18.
- **Disconnected Youth** - Disconnected youth are young people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not in school and not working. A 2019 report from Measure of America found that **10.4%** of youth in Montana, **12,800 youth** in total, are disconnected from school and employment, putting them at risk of poverty and homelessness (Lewis, 2019). Montana's disconnected youth are susceptible to predatory behavior and trafficking. In 2019, Tumbleweed, one of the only youth emergency shelters, served over **700 homeless youth** last year. Of those 700, about **100** had experiences with being trafficked.

Currently, we know Montana does not have enough shelter space to serve youth experiencing homelessness, and many providers would prefer not to serve clients under 25. Many providers strongly believe youth should be sheltered separately than adults because they are vulnerable and susceptible to exploitation. Montana has 1,300 total emergency shelter, transitional shelter, and permanent supportive housing statewide. Of those, only **43 beds are for youth**, with 12 beds in independent programs. The need far outweighs the means in Montana. By 2020, Montana will also have 75 Fostering Youth Independence vouchers for youth aging out of foster care. Twenty-five will be in Missoula, and 345 miles to the east in Billings, another 25 vouchers will be available, leaving the remaining 25 for the rest of the state.

Point-in-Time

Montana, like many rural states, has struggled to count youth during the Point-in-Time (PIT) survey accurately. As of 2019, Montana PIT documented **76 unaccompanied youth**, of which 28 were housed in emergency housing, 26 in transitional housing, and 22 were unsheltered (Montana Continuum of Care Coalition, 2019). The PIT also counted **19 homeless parents** under the age of 24. Of those 24 homeless parents, eight were utilizing emergency shelters, and 11 were in transition shelters.

Montana Office of Public Instruction

Montana's Office of Public Instruction is made up of 405 public school districts that operate independently with guidance from the Montana Office of Public Instruction (MT OPI, 2019a). These school districts educate about 147,785 young people. During the 2018-19 school year, there **were**

Statement of Need

4,216 homeless children enrolled in Montana schools. With an increase of approximately 25% from the 2015-16 academic year (Denny, 2019, slide 1). Of the 4,216 homeless students, 1,328 are high school students, with a majority (54%) coming from rural Montana schools. Anecdotally from our McKinney Vento school staff, we know this is not due to a rise in homelessness across Montana but is directly related to Montana's increased awareness around youth homelessness and better student identification and data collection. During the 2017-18 school year, Montana schools identified 4,057 homeless youth (Montana OPI, 2019b). **Three quarters of youth are double up** with another family, **8% at a hotel, 8% in a shelter, and 8% are unsheltered**. Additionally, **17%** (694) of all homeless youth counted at school **are unaccompanied** in Montana.

In addition to school staff identifying homeless youth, biannually, Montana administers the self-reporting behavior monitoring tool known as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) to students from 7th to 12th grade. Montana recently added questions related to homelessness to their YRBS as a means of additional data collection, and to be able to explore increased risk factors for Montana youth experiencing homelessness. Montana homeless youth were found to have increased utilization of substances, sexual behaviors, and decreases in school and personal safety (MT OPI, 2019c). The chart below provides an overview of the risk behaviors in which homeless students were statistically significantly more likely to possess than their housed peers (homeless youth numbers bolded below).

Table 1: 2019 Risk factors for Youth Experiencing Homelessness vs. Housed Youth

| | | |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Substance use | Drank alcohol 57% vs. 32% | Methamphetamine use 21% vs. 2% |
| | Marijuana 70% vs. 39% | Prescription meds (not as prescribed/without a prescription) 42% vs. 11% |
| | Ecstasy use 30% vs. 3% | |
| Sexual behaviors | Had sexual intercourse 72% vs. 43% | 4+ sexual partners 29% vs. 11% |
| | Forced sexual intercourse 25% vs. 9% | |
| School safety | Didn't go to school because they felt unsafe at school 19% vs. 9% | Electronically bullied 31% vs. 17% |
| | Threatened or injured with a weapon at school 24% vs. 7% | Teased because someone thought they were gay or lesbian 26% vs. 13% |
| Personal safety | Made a suicide plan 35% vs. 19% | Attempted suicide 35% vs. 9% |

Unaccompanied minors

During the 2019 Montana Point-in-Time Count, **eight unaccompanied youth under 18** were identified (Montana COC, 2019). Providers in larger counties in Montana have been researching and

Statement of Need

outreaching to neighboring states and other national homelessness leaders to understand better how to conduct a more inclusive point-in-time to gather more data from the harder to reach population of unaccompanied minors in the future. Montana's homeless system of care also served **seven child-only (under 18) households** from October 2017 to September of 2018 (Stella P Analysis).

In the larger urban center of Missoula, Montana, in 2017, a local medical center identified 34 patients age 14 to 17 that identified as homeless on their intake form. After additional review, the provider found 67 total patients aged 14 to 17 who had under-report on intake assessments of their homelessness status. During 2019, another urban area of Butte, Montana, identified and began providing services to 22 pregnant and parenting teens during its first six-month pilot of the Montana Healthy Young Parent Program (Sullivan, 2019). Montana's most recently reported teen birth rate is 25.3 births per 1,000, which are higher than the national average (MT DPHHS, 2017). The US Health and Human Services (n.d.) reported Montana had a 49% reduction over the past 30 years, Montana's decrease in pregnant and parenting teens rate remains 30% higher than the national decline average.

Unaccompanied minor needs as indicated by leading experts such as [HUD](#), [National Network for Youth](#), [National Health Care for the Homeless Council](#), and [Pride Foundation](#):

- Strengths-based coordinated entry system that provides youth-specific screening and assessment, prioritization, and referral to housing and supportive services to meet basic needs (such as food, shelter, and clothing) safely and quickly
- Providers to service medical needs (e.g., sexual health, behavioral health, primary care services)
- Legislative solutions to address liability concerns regarding a minor accessing overnight shelter to allow them to enter shelter care on their own without parental consent
- Access to document and services (such as bank account, obtaining a driver's license, and co-signing a lease for unaccompanied minors)
- Culturally aware programming that allows for youth self-determination

Unaccompanied minor engagement strategies:

- Provide access to basic needs (e.g., food, clothing, meetings in open settings)
- Easily accessible (near other youth services, no physical barriers such as gates or screened doorways, with youth inclusive furniture and décor)
- Family engagement and reunification when appropriate
- Harm reduction and shame-free low-barrier services
- MT CCP should employ youth or people with lived experiences

Statement of Need

- Gatekeepers, such as McKinney-Vento liaisons and trusted school staff, as engagement points with minors who can provide:
 - Tailored support helping youth stay to stay engaged in school/sports/after school activities
 - Connect to counseling and supportive adults to help address situations of bullying and to prevent dropping out
 - Help to navigate and signing up for public assistance such as SNAPs and health care
 - Support navigating transportation and access to internet

Youth of color

Montana is often stereotyped as having minimal diversity. Yet, Montana is home to seven reservations and 12 tribes, which are the Assiniboine, Blackfeet, Chippewa, Cree, Crow, Gros Ventre, Kootenai, Little Shell, Northern Cheyenne, Pend D'Oreille, Salish, and Sioux. The racial diversity of youth in Montana schools is higher than the state's racial diversity, as reported by the 2010 Census. In Montana schools, white students make up 78.7% (89.4%), Native American students 10.9% (6.3%), Hispanic students 4.8% (2.9%), Asian students 0.7% (0.8%), Black students 0.8% (0.4%), Pacific Islander students 0.2% (0.1%), and more than one race 3.9% (0.1%) (MT OPI, 2019a). Montana, like the rest of the United States, has a long history of colonization and historical racism, leaving youth at color with high-risk factors such as depression, poverty, homelessness, and violence. Montana OPI reported (2019b) that Native American students experience homelessness at a higher rate than all other students, representing about 39% of all homeless students.

Youth of color need culturally sensitive provided by local consultation and [United States Interagency Council on Homelessness](#) and [Housing Assistance Council](#) reports:

- Low-barrier centrally located access to housing
- On-site services that address health and wellness
- Language on intake forms and discussing programming (such as, not using the word homeless instead speaking about doubling up)
- Trauma-informed wrap-around services to address historical trauma and honor traditional healing
- Programming that includes traditional healing practices (such as sweats, tobacco ceremony, use of sage)

Statement of Need

- Representation and diverse mentors on YAB and within services
- Community education and training opportunities to improve cultural awareness to improve systems

Youth of color engagement strategies:

- Outreach to tribes through existing partnerships such as Montana Indian Education Association, Indian Education for All Unit, Tribal Education Directors, Governor's Office of Indian Affairs, Inter-Tribal Council, and direct contact with tribal councils.
- Provide an opportunity for community engagement and community building (e.g., community gardens, representation at Pow-Wows)
- Support providers in assessing intake process, service space, and shelter care have culturally inclusive images and iconography
- Consult with tribal leaders, Urban Indian Health Centers, and Indian Education for All specialists on an ongoing basis to ensure activities informed by local expertise

LGBTQ Youth

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Two-spirit, and Queer (LGBTQ) youth experience homelessness at rates higher than their straight and cisgender counterparts. There is an increased breadth of research that indicates that LGBTQ youth are at higher-risk for mistreatment and violence than their adult counterparts. For example, the New York City Anti-Violence Project (2017) reported LGBTQ youth under 25 are 4.6 times more likely to experience violence from a family member than those over 26. A national survey of homeless LGBTQ youth found 55.3% of LGBTQ youth and 67.1% of transgender youth experienced homelessness due to being forced out of their homes. An additional 16.5% of LGBTQ youth and 7.3% transgender youth identified leaving home because of family issues (Choi, Wilson, Shelton, and Gates, 2015). Meaning about 4 out of 5 times an LGBTQ and transgender youth left home, it was due to family difficulties. Additional barriers LGBTQ youth experience in Montana is the state does not provide enumerated protections against LGBTQ based harassment and violence in schools or communities.

Statement of Need

LGBTQ youth needs and culturally sensitive programming as defined by YAB, Pride Foundation, and a MT local informal LGBTQ housing network:

- Financial assistance for basic needs (such as; food, phone bill, transportation)
- Safe and affirming emergency housing
- One-stop services with housing and health providers (including sexual health and addiction services)
- Emotional support/mental health services that are free or low-cost
- Policy reform to eliminate discriminatory housing practices
- Public education campaigns to reduce family rejection
- Access to basic needs (such as clothing, meals, storage space, basic toiletries)

LGBTQ youth engagement strategies provided by LGBTQ advocates and providers in Montana:

- Connect with LGBTQ Centers in urban areas to offer specialized training for volunteers on youth engagement and combatting adultism
- Specialized training and education opportunities for staff within each system who interface with youth
- Safe gatekeepers to assist with relationship bridge-building and facilitating data collection (such as Point-in-Time count)
- Build on their natural network of chosen family to provide mentorship, housing, and other supports as available
- Visible signage and décor that indicates LGBTQ youth are safe and welcome (e.g., rainbow and other LGBTQ flags, gender-affirming sleeping and restrooms)
- Inclusive intake assessment (e.g., forms ask for pronouns, non-binary gender markers)
- Resource manuals to provide a list of safe services and providers

Pregnant and Parenting Youth

Nationally, it is estimated that about 1 in 5 homeless young women will become pregnant (Thompson, Bender, Lewis, and Watkins, 2008). As indicated in Table 1 above, Montana youth experiencing homelessness are engaged in higher rates of sexual behaviors, with more partners, and often without consent. The increase in sexual activity is often paired with no to low-access to medical providers, including family planning medicine. As teen pregnancy in Montana has dropped from 70

per 1,000 girls to about 47 per 1,000 girls ages 15-17, we do not have data about that suggests the same is true for unaccompanied or homeless youth (MT DPHHS, 2019). What we do know is that in 2018, the MT Continuum of Care Point-in-Time survey recorded 24 homeless parenting youth (0 under 18) and 119 unaccompanied youth under 25 (Montana CoC, 2018).

Additionally, Mountain Home Montana, a provider for pregnant and parenting youth experiencing homelessness in Missoula, Montana, reported receiving over **110 referrals** from youth ages 16 to 24 (McMullan, 2019, presentation). Of these, 70 percent of young women were experiencing homelessness at the time of referral. This is an overwhelming problem considering Mountain Home only can house eight mothers at a time. In 2019, Mountain Home Montana hired an outside agency to do an assessment. This group found an estimated **550 births to single mothers** between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four living at or below the poverty threshold in Missoula County. If current trends continue, there are likely to be **2,750 single mothers** age 16 to 24 living below the poverty line in Missoula County by 2021. Based on this information and feedback from key stakeholders in the community, Montana estimates that there is approximately **4,887 pregnant and parenting youth at risk of experiencing homelessness** across the state.

Data for pregnant and parenting youth of color is even more limited and often redacted to protect confidentiality due to low responses. As stated above, the largest cohort of youth of color in Montana is Native American youth. American Indian youth ages 15 to 19 have a birth rate of **74.2 per 1,000**, which is just over 200% higher than the national average of 23.2 (Martin, Hamilton, Ventura, Osterman, and Mathews, 2013; MT DPHHS, 2014). The only other racial demographic with a large enough denominator to report out is Hispanic youth who have a teen birth rate of 28.9, just above the national average.

A needs assessment conducted with pregnant and parenting teens at [Mountain Home Montana](#) identified the essential needs for **pregnant and parenting teens** as:

- Access to basic needs (such as diapers, personal hygiene items, household items, etc.)
- Affordable housing apartments
- Case management
- Quality employment (at least \$11/hr.) with predictable hours
- Affordable child-care that works with their schedule

Pregnant and parenting teen engagement strategies:

- Group activities (e.g., outdoor adventures, access to exercise)

Statement of Need

- Activities that engage their children (e.g., cooking, art projects)
- Opportunities to play with other children and families (e.g., mommy and child playgroups, groups that foster connections between parents)
- Services oriented programming and services (e.g., family therapy, parenting plans taught by an attorney, kindergarten preparation)

Justice-Involved

Montana's Supreme Court report (2019) reported a majority of justice-involved youth in Montana are male (64%). The racial breakdown of these youth is 78% white, 14% Native American, 4% Hispanic, 3% Black, and 1% all other races. It should be noted that there is an inflated number of youth of color in Montana's justice system compared to the relatively low number of youth of color. Thirty-seven percent of justice-involved youth in Montana have an Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) score of 4 or higher, placing them with an increased likelihood of failing grades, substance use, health problems and future incarceration (MT Supreme Court, 2019). Montana justice-involved youth had three times the rate of emotional abuse, parental loss, and criminal behavior than original ACEs participants.

The Montana Incident-Based Reporting System (2019) reported 13,779 youth were entered into the system as offenders. Of the almost 14,000 youth offenders, 33% (4,584) were under the age of 18. The crimes these young people were charged with were broken into three categories, which are crimes against a person, crimes against property, and crimes against society. The chart below details each type of crime by percent of the age cohort.

Table 2: Criminal Offenders by Age Cohort

| Age at time of Offense | Crimes against Person | Crimes against Property | Crimes against Society |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Under 10 | 54 | 87 | 1 |
| 10 to 17 | 1,424 | 2,282 | 971 |
| 18 to 24 | 2,236 | 5,233 | 2,279 |

For each age cohort, the most common crime against a person was aggravated assault. For every age cohort, the most common crime against property was the destruction of property or vandalism. And each cohort had high rates of crimes against society that involved the possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia. Youth over 18 also had a high percentage of theft and all other larcenies. Currently,

the Montana justice system does not release data related to homelessness for justice-involved youth. What we do know is in 2019, 4 youth in Montana’s homeless response system reported that their most recent living situation was a jail, prison, or juvenile detention facility (Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), 2018-2019).

Justice involved needs provided by Youth Court Services Bureau Chief and [Principles for Change](#) report:

- Supportive wrap-around transition services as youth age out of justice and child welfare systems
- Trauma-informed approaches to care, treatment and services during and after time in the juvenile justice system
- Mentorship and positive role models
- Opportunities to foster relationships with peers and caring adults
- In-state treatment and congregate care placements
- Decriminalize “survival crimes” and diversion programs that focus on education, family preservation, and behavioral health services

Justice involved engagement strategies:

- Low-barrier community services that assess for sex and labor exploitation to serve as referral services into programming
- Kinship and foster care placements (blending sentencing and placements)
- Culturally-sensitive justice staff with training in racial and LGBTQ equity
- Leadership roles for former justice-involved youth to serve as mentors and resources liaisons

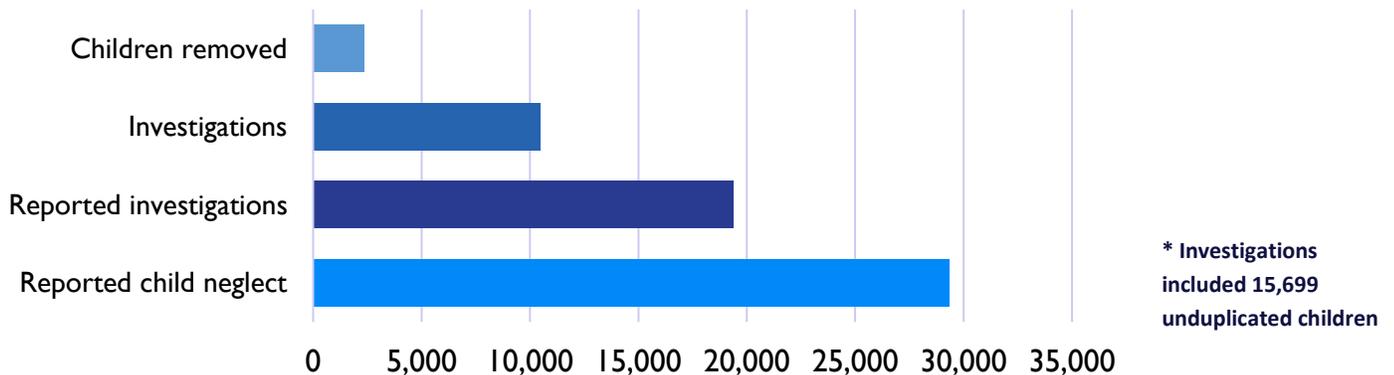
Foster youth

Across the nation, it is known that there is a pipeline that leads from foster care to homelessness. This pipeline is an integral part of the youth homelessness story in Montana since Montana has the second-highest removal rate in the nation at 16.8 per 1,000 children (Williams and Sepulveda, 2019). According to Montana’s Department of Health and Human Services (2019), 2,349 young people have entered Montana’s child welfare system this year (see Chart 1 below for more details). Since 2010, there has been a 65% increase in children entering foster care in Montana (DPHHS, 2019). It is unclear why Montana had such a stark increase, but a popular anecdote is the increased utilization of

Statement of Need

methamphetamines led to increased reports and removal. Data shows parental drug abuse as means for removal increased by 19% since 2007 (Williams and Sepulveda, 2019).

Chart I: Montana's Child Welfare System by the numbers



Currently, Montana does not have any statewide efforts to assist foster youth aging out of care, leaving youth at-risk of aging out into homelessness. Montana, like many states, has minimal data on youth after aging out of care due to possibly the youth's reluctance to participate in systems upon exiting the foster care system. In Montana, what we do know is, as of 2017, that 4% of all foster youth age out of care (Casey Family Programs, 2019).

***Foster youth* needs:**

- Long-term mentorship that lasts beyond state care
- Programming and outcomes that focus on permanency
- Wrap-around services that provide whole-client care (such as physical, emotional, educational, employment, and economic independence)
- Youth voice in service selection
- Trauma-informed transition services focused on life skills, decision-making, and leadership development

***Foster youth* engagement strategies:**

- Empower leadership from the existing Montana Foster Youth Advisory Board to serve as ambassadors and YAB members
- Cross-sector collaboration to bridge systems with a warm handoff
- Ongoing case management that spans minors and youth up to age 24
- Peer-to-peer mentorship to provide ongoing leadership development and support

Victims of Sex Trafficking and Exploitation

The Human Trafficking Hotline (2019) reported that in 2018, there were a total of 173 calls, texts, online chats, emails, and web forms filled out reporting human trafficking in Montana. That is an increase of 425% since 2012. As with many rural states, this is due to an intensive campaign educating communities on the identification of victims of trafficking, not necessarily an increase in incidence. The Human Trafficking Hotlines' data estimates about 20% of all human trafficking victims in Montana are minors.

Anecdotally, there was a significant increase in human trafficking associated with natural gas boom development in the Bakken Shale Field across northeastern Montana. Tumbleweed, a homeless youth provider in eastern Montana, shared from that area alone 83 trafficked youth were identified. Tumbleweed in Billings, Montana began a program to serve youth victims of human trafficking four years ago. In that time, they have served 120 youth and young adults who self-identified as being trafficked, labor and sex trafficking — at least 85% of these youth and young adults identified through Tumbleweeds drop-in center.

In addition to victims of sex trafficking and exploitation, Montana is home to one of the largest crises of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women in the country. Currently, there are 180 cases of missing and unsolved murders of indigenous women in Montana (Reilly, 2019). National and state reports highlight that women of color experience high rates of violence and other risk factors. The United States Department of Justice (Rosay, 2016) reported four out of every five Native and Indigenous women experiencing violence in their lifetime.

Victims of sex trafficking needs provided by [Tumbleweed](#) and youth providers:

- Low barrier safe emergency shelter
- Welcoming community resources that provide basic needs (e.g., food, primary health care)
- Trauma-informed clinicians, professionals, and law enforcement
- Youth shelter for minors under 18
- Wrap-around services with data-sharing agreements to minimize youth being re-traumatized when reporting or accessing services
- Decriminalize when youth come forward seeking help (such as not ticketing for being on substances or for self-reporting past sex work)

Victims of sex trafficking engagement strategies:

Statement of Need

- Prevention efforts such as family mediation, mental health, school support, crisis intervention
- Street outreach teams
- Specially trained staffing for working with families to help youth and young adults stay at home or reunite with families
- Youth as gatekeepers to refer other youth to services (ideally paid)

Youth with Disabilities (as per requested by MT YAB members)

American Fact Finder (2018) estimated in 2017, about 4% or about 9,000 youth under 18 in Montana have a disability. Montana youth with disabilities are at increased risk in even the most protective system we have for you in Montana, our public schools. The 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey found students with disabilities had increased risk for many risky behaviors compared to the baseline of all Montana youth (the report does not indicate if these were statistically significant). In the chart below, we can note that Montana youth are at higher risk for being victimized by peers, isolated, attempting suicide, being sexually assaulted, and not sleeping at their parents' home during the past 30 days.

| Risk Factors | All Montana students | Youth with disabilities |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school during the past 30 days | 9.3% | 14.5% |
| Were in a physical fight on school property during the past 12 months | 8% | 14.6% |
| Were ever physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to | 9.8% | 17.7% |
| Were bullied on school property during the past 12 months | 22% | 36.1% |
| Attempted suicide during the past 12 months | 10% | 20.4% |
| Did not usually sleep in their parent's or guardian's home during the past 30 days | 4.6% | 9.6% |

Nationally, we know youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, and mental health challenges are overrepresented in our homelessness services, such as shelters. When these youth are present at these shelters, they are often found to be presented with multiple

challenges such being, “...financially impoverished, experiencing mental health issues, having a history of trauma, and undiagnosed disabilities” (Collins, Schormans, Watt, Idems, & Wilson, 2018).

Anecdotally we hear from providers in Montana report that at times youth with disabilities can be mislabeled upon admission to services by providers. This mislabeling or inability to notice or identify a youth’s disability can put them at risk of loss of services for being seen as non-compliant. Mislabeled as non-compliance could be as simple as youth not being able to comprehend the rules or guidelines or, in some cases, being able to read and understand intake forms leaving youth with a disability at higher risk being pushed out of services and further isolated.

Researchers have found youth with disabilities to be at increased risk of homeless and at increased risk when homeless. Montana, like other states, has a dark history of locking up youth with disabilities within cold and ill staffed institutions. To address this, Montana must commit to keeping our child out of institutions and nursing homes and integrated into our communities whenever possible. Collins, et al. (2018) found the best way to do this is to have workers with specialized training. Workers with specialized training have been found to more likely to identify youth with intellection and developmental and other disabilities at intake. From this identification, the youth were able to provide appropriate services, and identification aided in fostering a more trusted relationship between providers and youth.

Youth with disabilities needs provided by [National Health Care for the Homeless Council](#) and [National Center for Homeless Education](#)

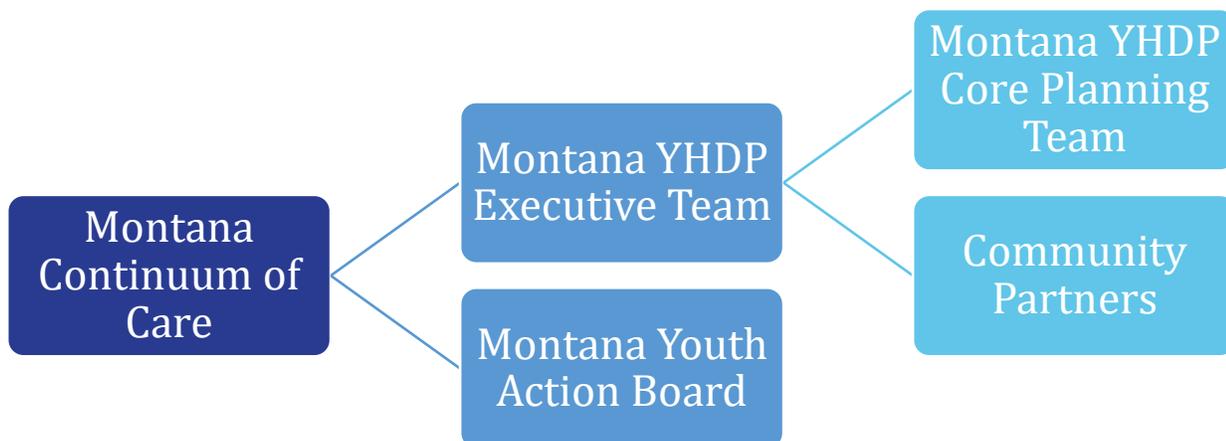
- Connect youth with Local Educational Agency to connect youth to supports, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Promote the inclusion of youth with disabilities by addressing systemic problems with eligibility and access to mainstream programs
- System staff that empowers, protects, and advocates on behalf of persons with developmental disabilities
- Housing units that are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Case management services to support filling out cumbersome disability service forms
- Youth choice to living independently in the community with access to in-home services as needed

Youth with disabilities engagement strategies:

- Prevention efforts such as family mediation, mental health, school support, crisis intervention, runaway programs, congregate care/group homes,
- Prepare for 18 and foster youth homes
- Caseworkers/supportive staff to guide to college and work – mentorship/guide through the process
- Partner with existing employment and transition programs such as Montana Youth Leadership Forum (MYLF)
- Behavior management plans that meet youths needs
- Partner with youth's choice of statewide organizations that serve youth with disabilities, such as the Rural Institute

Governance

To actualize our vision, we have established a network of youth, youth advocacy organizations, service providers, and government agencies. The governance established is as follows, Montana Continuum of Care (CoC), Montana Youth Action Board (YAB), Montana Youth Homelessness Interagency Collaborative (MHYIC), the MT YHDP Executive Team, and YHDP Community Steering Committee. Provided below is an organizational chart followed by text descriptions of each entity, their commitment to youth voice, and their decision-making process.



Montana Continuum of Care (CoC), lead YHDP agency, is a collaborative of Montana’s ten districts. These districts work together to ensure communication over long distances, expose communities to innovative models, and standardizes best practices across Montana’s diverse communities and variety of homeless populations.

CoC Youth commitment: CoC will incorporate YAB input and agenda items into all monthly board meetings as well as statewide membership meetings. The CoC will provide ongoing support of the YAB by allocating CoC Planning Grant funds to hire a YAB coordinator, to underwrite YAB youth participation through expense reimbursements and stipend payments for time away from job or school and to provide ongoing facilitation of the YAB.

MT YHDP Executive Team is comprised of a diverse cross-section of community leaders. Currently, the team members are the two Montana YAB leaders, the Director of the Montana CoC,

Montana Office of Public Instructions Title I & Homeless Specialist, the Program Bureau representative from Montana Child and Family Services Division, the Director of Tumbleweed, one of Montana's only homeless youth overnight shelters, Montana staff from regional LGBTQ philanthropy group Pride Foundation, and two independent consultants. A short-term goal is to have the Executive team comprised of half agency leaders and half youth leaders.

MT YHDP Executive Team *Youth Commitment*: All work will be meaningful to the youth on the executive team, providing them leadership opportunities. Youth are empowered to make decisions, and their voice and expertise are taken seriously. Meetings will be set in a manner to be more inclusive to youth schedules (i.e., meeting after 3 pm, meetings on holidays).

Decision-making process: MT YHDP Executive Team will have final decisions on all YHDP matters and will set the funding priorities and actions. They will serve in a similar capacity to a board of directors. They will continue to meet throughout the process to support the operationalization of drafts and monitor outcomes of projects to ensure they are meeting the needs of communities. Decisions will be made by each member holding equal voting responsibilities and authority.

Montana Youth Action Board (YAB) is a collection of young people ages 24 and under from Montana who have real lived experiences with homelessness. They will serve in an advisory role to the Montana Core Planning Team and have equal representation within the Executive Team. YAB members will help assess the needs of communities across Montana, support program selection, aid in project evaluation, and spread awareness about youth homelessness and resources within their local communities.

The YAB will host regular monthly teleconference calls and meet face-to-face at least once a year. YAB has elected youth co-leaders who will equally share the responsibility to report out to the CoC, Core Planning Team, and Executive Team during meetings. YAB co-leaders will maintain a youth listserv to relay information back to their peers. To increase transparency, all meeting minutes will be sent to YAB co-leaders to disseminate and discuss with the entire YAB.

Decision-making process: Discussions are well underway with the final decision-making process to be defined at the scheduled 2020 meeting.

Montana Core Planning Team is a coalition of youth-focused government programs and a diverse cross-section of nonprofit organizations. Montana Youth Homelessness Interagency Collaborative (MHYIC) is currently made up of several statewide organizations such as MT Office of Public Instruction (statewide), MT Department of Public Health and Human Services, Child and Family

Services Division (statewide), Pride Foundation (statewide), LGBTQ philanthropy and advocacy that serves Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington, and MT Continuum of Care (statewide). Additionally, membership includes individual youth-serving organizations: Sparrows Nest (Kalispell), a homeless youth shelter, Action Inc. (Butte), a broad homeless services provider with youth programming, and Tumbleweed (Billings).

Montana Core Planning Team *Youth Commitment*: Montana Core Planning Team’s primary purpose is to collaborate and lend their expertise to the Youth Action Board (YAB) to achieve their goals. All action steps will be set from the priorities set forth by the YAB. The group will operate with persistence to engage youth voice, a commitment to gather youth voice from across the state, and maintain consistent communication about opportunities for youth to participate in this process.

Montana Core Planning Team *Decision-making process*: Discussions are well underway with the final decision-making process to be defined at the scheduled January 2020 meeting.



“ Almost everything that is great has been done by youth. ”
-Benjamin Disraeli

The following chart outlines the entire list of partners involved in the larger coordinated community plan. The table also describes the partner group's involvement.

| Partners | Organization Identified | Description of Involvement |
|--|--|---|
| CoC Board (required) | Montana CoC | Project Lead |
| Youth Action Board (required) | MT state YAB | YAB will direct strategy and inform decision making. Strategic planning, recruitment, information input for CCP team |
| | Tumbleweed (Youth-Led Advisory Group for RHY program) | Participates in YAB & MHYIC planning. Housing provider, needs analysis, planning participant, CCP team, & CES access point. Exec Team |
| | Mountain Home (Youth-Led Advisory Group for RHY program) | Org sponsor Participates in YAB & MHYIC planning. Housing provider, needs analysis, planning participant, CCP team, & CES access point. |
| | Florence Crittenden (Youth-Led Advisory Group for RHY program) | Participates in YAB & MHYIC planning. Housing provider, needs analysis, planning participant, CCP team & CES access point. |
| | District 7 HRDC, Harmony House (Youth-Led Advisory Group for RHY program) | Participates in YAB & MHYIC planning. Housing provider, needs analysis, planning participant, CCP team, & CES access point. |
| | Blueprint | Participates in YAB & MHYIC planning. Housing provider, needs analysis, planning participant, CCP team, & CES access point. |
| | Sparrow's Nest (Youth-Led Advisory Group for Non-Profit Organization) | CCP (core team), strategic planning, housing, and supportive services provider |
| | Local and State Government (required) | DPHHS CFSD, OPI, AMDD, Children Mental Health, DOL/WIOA Youth |
| Public Child Welfare Agencies (required) | MT DPHHS, Child & Family Services | State funding analysis, CCP team - YAB |
| ESG Program Recipients | Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services (MT DPHHS) Community Action Agency | Provide housing, participate in needs analysis. |

| Partners cont'd | Organization Identified | Description of Involvement |
|--|--|--|
| Local and State Law Enforcement and Judges | Youth Court Admin. | Core Planning Team |
| Early Childhood Development and Child Care providers | All 10 Community Action Agencies Early Head Start, Head Start | Active local CoC participants, YAB recruiters, and sponsors, planning and data analyses, youth career, and skill-building. Housing providers, local and statewide planning, CES access points. |
| Local and State Educational Agencies | Montana Office of Public Instruction, Local Homeless Liaisons | Co-lead agency in the formation and continued operations of the YAB & MYHIC, participate in strategic planning, recruit LEA liaisons, and input for CCP team. |
| Runaway and Homeless Youth Program Providers | Harmony House, Blueprints, Tumbleweed, Mountain Home, Florence Crittenden, District 7 HRDC, Sparrow's Nest | see above information for Youth Advisory Board involvement |
| Non-Profit Youth Organizations | Empower Montana | Supports the CoC by providing training and youth access. Assist with YAB. |
| Montana State Public Corrections and Probation | Juvenile probation - Youth Court | Core Planning Team - provide expertise for restorative models, status offenses, diversion programs vs. criminality, prevention |
| Health, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Agencies | Southwest Montana Mental Health Center | Participate in local CoC planning and MYHIC. Participate in needs analysis, supportive services, access points for CES |
| | Western MT Mental Health Center | Participate in local CoC planning and MYHIC. Participate in needs analysis, supportive services, access points for CES |
| | Youth Dynamics Incorporated (YDI) | Participate in coordination and statewide delivery of mental health and substance abuse services for youth and young adults |
| | PATH Outreach | Statewide PATH Director serves on the CoC board. Outreach and referral, data |
| | Addictive and Mental Disorders Children's Mental Health | Core Planning |
| | Office of Public Instruction | A trauma-informed lens into YHDP Core Planning, Exec Team |

| Partners cont'd | Organization Identified | Description of Involvement |
|---|--|--|
| WIOA Boards and Employment Agencies | 8 of 10 Community Action Agencies | Active local CoC participants, YAB recruiters, and sponsors, planning and data analyses, youth career, and skill-building. Housing providers, local and statewide planning, CES access points. |
| Landlords | Formal relationship building in development | Varies by community. |
| Public Housing Authorities | Relationship building in development | Varies by community. |
| Institutions of Higher Education | Montana State University (MSU-B), Dawson Community College | An active member of MYHIC. Strategic planning, CCP team (working group), recruit YAB members |
| Community Development Corporations | Formal relationship building in development | Varies by community. |
| Affordable Housing Developers | Community Action Agencies | Active local CoC participants, YAB recruiters, and sponsors, planning and data analyses, youth career, and skill-building. Housing providers, local and statewide planning, CES access points. |
| Local Advocacy, Research, and Philanthropic Organizations | Pride Foundation Montana Health Care Foundation | Development of funding and programming for organizations supporting the LGBTQ population. Assist with fund development, Core Planning Team |

Vision and Goals

Vision and Goals

Vision

With shared responsibility throughout Montana, we envision a community in which all youth and young adults (YYA) know their rights and resources and that services and housing are readily available to them, creating a pathway for youth to achieve self-sufficiency and self-actualization.

To this end, we envision a future in Montana where all youth and young adults (YYA) are:

- Served with dignity and respect through youth-driven systems of care regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, religion or other identities;
- Provided with immediate, safe and supported housing through diverse and flexible options that pave the way for long-term, sustainable housing;
- Supported into adulthood through the process of self-actualization by chosen family and other natural supports;
- Accessing affordable and youth-oriented health and wellness supports, including reproductive health and life planning decision; and
- Provided access to educational resources to achieve their career goals.

Proposed Core Outcomes

Montana's YHDP planning process highlighted a significant amount of systemic and interpersonal challenges and barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness. Through a deliberate process, the core planning team was able to prioritize goals using the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) Youth Framework to End Youth Homelessness which is comprised of the following four components:

- 1) **Stable housing**, which includes a safe and reliable place to call home;
- 2) **Permanent connections**, which include ongoing attachments to families, communities, schools, and other positive social networks;

- 3) **Education/employment**, which provides for high performance in and completion of educational and training activities, especially for younger youth, and starting and maintaining adequate and stable employment, particularly for older youth;
- 4) **Social-emotional well-being**, which includes the development of critical competencies, attitudes, and behaviors that equip a young person to succeed across multiple domains of daily life, including school, work, relationships, and community.

A needs assessment was conducted in November of 2019 with YAB members and community leaders to assess better what each of these four tenants of the USICH framework meant to Montanans. The following provides a summary of identified needs by the USICH tenant.

Stable Housing Needs

- Significant need for more housing options with an emphasis on Native American youth on reservations and other urban and rural settings.
- Emergency shelter services or host homes that will serve minors with the minimal threshold (e.g., not a requirement to take a drug test, attend religious services, mandatory community volunteerism hours)
- Montana will benefit from strengthening and expanding existing resources such as transitional housing, as well as more suitable housing stock such as host homes drawing on existing natural supports.
- Host homes, or a similar model, that allows for youth-choice and a safe alternative to shelter care.
- Supportive peer support and case management services to support youth in chosen family finding and reunification when appropriate.
- Access to affordable market-rate housing options with supportive landlords or landlord liaison support.
- Implementing a statewide system mapping effort across the continuum of all housing options that match the needs of all identified homeless youth, including diversion, family and school engagement, socio-emotional supports, and employment.
- Strong support for state-wide education and understanding of the existence and impact of youth homelessness in all areas of Montana.

Education and Employment

Education Needs

- Targeted approaches to increase the graduation rate for youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

- Single points of contact in higher education, such as specialized navigators for students to connect to housing, education, and employment opportunities.
- Shift in mindset in schools to be strengths-based, goal-oriented, and create more stability and predictability between school districts to better support students who are highly mobile. Overall, Montana education systems can improve its focus on future planning and educational outcomes.
- Coordination and partnerships between the Office of Public Instruction, the states 500+ locally controlled school districts, and the Montana University System with a focus on the needs of youth and young adults experiencing and at risk for homelessness.
- Creating clear educational pathways beyond traditional two and 4-year post-secondary programs.
- Aiding youth in acquiring needed documents (e.g., birth certificate, social security card).
- Trained supports in navigating and applying for social services to increase academic and employment autonomy.

Employment Needs

- Identify, articulate, and educate youth on employment pathways.
- Statewide coordination at an interagency level with strong public-private partnerships.
- Employment options need to be expanded and developed that address the needs for:
 - Providing a living wage;
 - Creating support/incentives for employers to hire youth with lived experience;
 - Workforce development resources, including targeted job search assistance, social-emotional supports and life skills training;
 - Educational options beyond the traditional 2-4-year pathways; and
 - Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes.

Social-Emotional Well-Being Needs

- Improved teaching of emotional skills across a variety of professions and providers.
- Access to health resources in all regions of the state will require creative approaches, including the use of telehealth and the formation of new partnerships dedicated to special populations.
- Services and supports need to include a variety of knowledge and skill-based opportunities, including:
 - Pre-crisis self-regulation;
 - Safety planning

Vision and Goals

- Enhancing knowledge of reproductive life planning, healthy relationships, and violence prevention
- Suicide Prevention
- Specialized, flexible, individualized social-emotional and behavioral supports with improved transitions from youth to adult systems of care.
- Peer to peer/mentorship opportunities.
- Life skills, including opportunities for community connection and fun activities.
- Healthy transitions of youth from the youth homeless response system to the adult homeless response system and into adulthood.
- Community connection, including community (natural supports) and family-focused interventions to support the youth and the family by tapping into existing protective factors.



“About 75% of Montana youth experiencing homelessness report doubling up with friends and family.”

-MT OPI 2019

Goals and Action Steps

The Montana Planning Team collaborated with members across all levels of governance to create the following four goals aligned with our mission:

- YYA are connected to immediate, safe, and supported housing options through diverse and flexible options that reflect their individualized needs and pave the way for long-term, sustainable housing.

- The health and well-being of YYA are prioritized by meeting youth where they are and providing them with the resources, supports, and permanent connections they need to achieve happiness, health, self-sufficiency, and self-actualization.
- All YYA have access to educational resources to achieve their career goals, helping to prevent homelessness for at-risk YYA and create sustainable pathways to income and housing for YYA experiencing homelessness.
- YYA will be supported in navigating systems of care and transitioning into adulthood and out of homelessness through increased cross-systems coordination and collaboration.

HUD Guiding Principles

Additionally, the Montana planning team created each goal to align with HUDS guiding principles of Positive Youth Development, Trauma-Informed Care, Family Engagement, Immediate Access to Housing with No Preconditions, Youth Choice, Individualized and Client-Driven Supports, Social and Community Integration, and Coordinated Entry. Provided below is an overview of each guiding principle. Every funded project will be reviewed with these fundamental principles in mind.

Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development (PYD) reflects both a philosophical approach to policy and a grounded strengths-based approach to working alongside youth. It recognizes and honors youth as people in need of guidance, support, and learning opportunities. PYD also recognizes that youth have inherent worth as leaders, and in partnership, we must support their skill development, community participation, and healthy lifestyle choices. We believe a partnership of families, schools, and community are needed to develop environments that support youth. Montana recognizes that youth are experts in their own lives and that we are committed to supporting their path to safe, safe, and affirming housing.

To be eligible for Montana CCP funding agencies must:

- Show an understanding of PYD principles, as reflected in their policies and practices.
- Commit to ensuring that the strengths and abilities of each youth engaged are incorporated into all aspects of individual service planning and provision.

Montana YHDP will also offer PYD training to participating agencies and will connect participating agencies to additional technical assistance and support if necessary.

Trauma-Informed Care

Trauma impacts a large portion of Montana youth who have been exposed to violence and substance use in the home, academic stress, emotional rejection and abuse by peers, and experiences of unsafe or unstable housing situations. We know that youth who are LGBTQ, Native American or Indigenous, have been placed into protective custody of the state or a history of involvement with the juvenile justice system have a higher prevalence of traumatic experiences in their past that often result in homelessness. To further complicate these matters, many of these youth turn to drugs and alcohol, withdraw from education, or participate in self-harming behaviors.

To be eligible for Montana CCP funding agencies must:

- Provide safe, secure, and affirming environments for youth.
- Operate services using a trauma-informed lens.
- Understanding of historical trauma as related to specific cultural groups.
- Meet youth where they are and allow youth to advocate for their own needs based on their unique experiences instead of making assumptions about needs.
- Develop policies, procedures, and practices with strategies for services that address underlying trauma and its impacts on behavior.

Youth Choice

Youth choice is a model of practice that ensures that youth and young adults are seen as autonomous beings with self-determination. Youth and young adults have the power to identify their needed supports and the development of services. Service providers will honor and respect each unique youth circumstance and, when requested, will provide information and support to support youth in creating their individualized plans of care - includes giving youth the ultimate decision-making authority regarding their current and future plans to achieve self-sufficiency.

To be eligible for Montana CCP funding agencies must:

- Work alongside youth to help set self-defined goals.
- Offer intake and assessment processes that validate youth identity and support youth in choosing with whom they will live, the housing setting in which they will live, and the geographic location of their residency.
- Provide employment and education services based on individual interests and personal motivations of each youth.
- Provide voluntary services with the ability to opt-out of programming or services that do not preclude them from accessing services.

Progressive Family Engagement

Families and communities are a vital part of our identities as Montanans. These social networks are integral components of the health and well-being of all Montana's youth and young adults, regardless of age. In many of our communities and sub-cultures in Montana, the family is not only defined as blood relatives but also includes close family friends, neighbors, and entire tribal networks. We are proud of our kinship model that we seek to create safety nets and supports for our youth to thrive in their home communities. We are committed to strengthening, stabilizing, and reunifying families when it is in the best interest of the youth. We also value youth voice and will honor their expertise as they define their own family to us as providers.

To be eligible for Montana CCP funding agencies must:

- Operate services from a lens that acknowledges historical trauma and stabilizes youth where they feel safe and supported by maintaining a family of choice and fictive kin.
- Provide support for friends and families who are helping and housing youth to remain sheltered.
- Either directly provide or be willing to engage with existing community partners to ensure that services and supports are available to engage families, when appropriate.

Vision and Goals

Immediate Access to Housing with No Preconditions

Housing First is a cornerstone principle for meeting a multitude of basic needs necessary for success. Young people must be provided with rapid access to safe, secure, and stable housing that meets their needs. With no to limited access to emergency shelter care across Montana, access to all forms of housing should happen as quickly as possible, with low or no barriers, and without preconditions. As stated above, we will honor the voices and experience of youth, and youth and young adults will not need to prove that they are 'ready' for housing.

To be eligible for Montana CCP funding agencies must:

- Involvement of youth with lived experience in program design and implementation
- Commit to Housing First principles, including low or no barrier access to safe and stable housing.
- Demonstrate commitment and ability to gather and share data that demonstrates HUD principles.
- Participate in the Continued Quality Improvement program.

Individualized and Client-Driven Supports

Montana is committed to honoring the unique experiences, circumstances, and of youth as they move toward housing stability. To ensure we are providing housing and support services to prevent and reduce homelessness among youth, we will recognize and respond to individual challenges of each youth and be guided by their strengths and assets.

To be eligible for Montana CCP funding agencies must:

- Commit to developing a client-driven service menu that includes low-barrier shelter, housing, and services based on the unique identities and cultures of youth and young adults.
- Design flexible programs and systems to accommodate individuals with both high and low service needs, as well as both short and long-term supports.
- Offer client-driven options to create their own.
- Create programs that offer youth the ability to quickly get off the street, with immediate options for them, ensuring homelessness is brief, rare, and non-recurring.

Social and Community Integration

Youth homelessness services must be geared toward helping support healthy transitions for youth to adulthood. Montana values self-sufficiency and self-reliance, and we must prepare youth for successful integration into the broader community as positive, contributing members. To accomplish integration, the community must provide welcoming and supportive socially engagement, such as access to mentors and the opportunity for youth to participate in community activities that are culturally relevant and meaningful.

To be eligible for Montana CCP funding agencies must:

- Develop opportunities, such as access to peer and adult mentors, for youth to interact and integrate with positive influences and activities within their communities.
- Support and strengthen youth-driven relationships with the chosen family, friends, community, peers, teachers, school, and community at large based on geographic location, cultural relevance, and community norms.
- Aid youth in exploring transportation options to help youth make and maintain social and community connections.

Coordinated Entry

HUD has identified coordinated entry as a necessary component of a high functioning crisis response system. Montana must redefine our coordinated entry model as a system that incorporates youth voices and acknowledgment of their unique needs. This model must provide a holistic identification of each youth's needs specific to housing and should include resources that are culturally appropriate and meet the unique needs of each individual youth.

To be eligible for Montana CCP funding agencies must:

- Tailored training for all local coordinated entry leads on how to engage youth voice in the redesign of youth coordinated entry process, recognizing there is no singular solution for all youth and that each youth will need individualized options.
- Connect with Missoula to learn the successes and challenges of their youth-appropriate process and prioritizes youth as a model for other regions.
- Implementing youth-specific case conferencing to improve youth prioritization, matching, and referrals.

Vision and Goals

- Commit to the utilization of Montana’s coordinated entry tools to ensure that entry into the housing continuum of care is coordinated and youth-driven.
- Use of MT CoC CES Leads youth coordinated entry tool.

Montana YHDP will provide training and support to participating agencies on any required tools.

Montana CCP Goals

Montana’s planning committee determined USICH Youth Framework to End Youth Homelessness was determined to be an excellent framework to narrow the goals and action steps for the Montana YHDP. The planning process used the framework to highlighted a significant amount of systemic and interpersonal challenges and barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness. Through a deliberate process, the core planning team was able to prioritize goals into the following four focus areas: housing, social-emotional well-being, and permanent connections, education and employment, and systems change. In the following pages, each goal will be explored further by providing objectives, attainable and measurable actions, resource inputs, and timeframe. Each objective is designed, as delineated in the chart below, to reflect how Montana will map how each objective and subsequent action/interventions will target specifically identified ‘USIHC Four Core Outcomes’ and the ‘HUD Key Principles.’ Evaluation components will be designed to assure deliberate commitment and adherence to these outcomes.

Goal One: Housing.

YYA are connected to immediate, safe, and supported housing options through diverse and flexible options that reflect their individualized needs and pave the way for long-term, sustainable housing.

Objective 1.1: Increase the number of rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing by expanding existing services and vouchers for YYA by 20%*. *number may change after asset mapping.

- Action Step 1.1.1: Prioritize YHDP project funding to increase RRH and PSH, reflecting the housing needs estimates and priorities established by the Core Planning Team, Executive Team, and Youth Action Board (YAB).
- Action Step 1.1.2: Develop culturally appropriate rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing models for youth in Native American communities.
- Action 1.1.3: Work with youth to define culturally appropriate, comprehensive services to be offered as voluntary services in rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing programs.

| Partner(s) Responsible | | Timeframe | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Bob Buzzas, CoC with support from HRDC, ESG grantees, COC grantees, and YAB | | Fall, 2020 with YHDP grant award agreements signed. | |
| HUD key principles | | | |
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Objective 1.2: Assess for the role and place for youth-specific Emergency Shelter Beds understanding that temporary solutions are not the priority but an essential piece of the continuum of care.

- Action Step 1.2.1: Prioritize YHDP project funding to increase ES or crisis housing beds housing needs estimates and priorities established by the Core Planning Team, Executive Team, and YAB.
- Action Step 1.2.2: Identify new funding sources to support the development of low-barrier shelter models.
- Action Step 1.2.3: Advocate legislature to allow unaccompanied minors to consent to shelter.
- Action Step 1.2.4: Leverage existing resources to expand opportunities to provide emergency shelter, including the creative re-use of existing properties and working with faith-based organizations to provide shelter options.
- Action Step 1.2.5: Investigate AirBnB emergency housing model being used in Santa Clara, CA, and determine feasibility in Montana.
- Action Step 1.2.6: Increase the capacity of existing shelters to serve youth through training, capacity building and the inclusion of peer supports.
- Action Step 1.2.7: Develop culturally responsive emergency shelter options for Native American youth, including the potential use of tipis for emergency or crisis housing.
- Action 1.2.8: Provide diversion, case management, life skills training, and education and employment opportunities in emergency/crisis housing options to help youth resolve their immediate crisis.

| Partner(s) Responsible | | Timeframe | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Landlord liaisons, Helena CTI | | Fall 2020 – Fall 2021 | |
| HUD key principles | | | |
| Equity <input type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Objective 1.3: Develop a more suitable housing stock for youth experiencing homelessness suited to the locale and geography of Montana.

- Action Step 1.3.1: Research host homes to better understand if it fits for Montana.
- Action Step 1.3.2: Begin to develop a plan for identifying host homes – or a similar prototype for youth of color, LGBTQ youth, and pregnant and parenting youth – who remain disproportionately impacted by housing instability.
- Action Step 1.3.3: Prioritize YHDP project funding to respond to the statewide and regional housing needs estimates and priorities established by the Core Planning Team, Executive Team, and YAB.
- Action Step 1.3.4: Work with YAB and community partners to continuously evaluate and respond to the distinct needs of rural areas, urban areas, and tribal areas in the state of Montana.

| Partner(s) Responsible | | Timeframe | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Quinn Leighton, Pride Foundation Bob Buzzas, CoC with support from HRDC, ESG grantees, COC grantees, and YAB | | January 2021 | |
| HUD key principles | | | |
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Objective 1.4: Increase market-rate housing options and landlord incentives to house youth.

- Action Step 1.4.1: Examine Missoula Interfaith Collaborative landlord liaisons model to see if it is feasible to replicate in other counties.
- Action Step 1.4.2: Identify best practices and lessons learned from Missoula Landlord Liaison (LL) program that started in January 2020.
 - LL is the neutral professional between the landlords and the renters. If the landlord has issues with the renter the LL will know who is a supportive service provider (e.g., mental health case manager, medical social worker, caregiver)
 - LL holds a listing of landlords who are willing to work with populations (e.g., veterans, YYA, returning citizens).
- Action Step 1.4.3: Adapt the job description from HomeWord to build TAY landlord liaison in other parts of the state.
- Action Step 1.4.4: Look at the unique barriers to landlord engagement and renting to youth experiencing homelessness by each community, including credit scores, vacancy rates, application fees, background checks, etc.
- Action Step 1.4.5: Create a central directory of market-rate housing options and landlords who work with youth for use by housing providers across Montana.
- Action 1.4.6: Investigate other models of providing landlord incentives to determine if they would work in Montana, including:
 - Risk mitigation fund

Vision and Goals

| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Landlord/realtor appreciation events ○ Tax reimbursements ○ Program support in providing repairs, case management, conflict mediation, etc. | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Partner(s) Responsible | | Timeframe | |
| Marilyn Thorne, Parenting Place | | July 2020 | |
| HUD key principles | | | |
| Equity <input type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Objective 1.5: Use prevention and diversion strategies that provide support to youth and families. | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Action Step 1.5.1: Prioritize YHDP project funding to create System Navigator positions across the state of Montana, reflecting the project priorities established by the Core Planning Team, Executive Team, and Youth Action Board (YAB). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ YAB to explore how this program model can and should work for different populations of focus, including tribal youth, LGBTQ+ youth, pregnant and parenting youth, and youth transitioning out of the foster care and juvenile justice systems. ○ Document lessons learned from the system navigation program at Tumbleweed. ○ Ensure system navigators can help connect youth to social activities and skill-building opportunities that are culturally appropriate. ● Action Step 1.5.2: Prioritize YHDP project funding to support diversion across the state of Montana, reflecting the project priorities established by the Core Planning Team, Executive Team, and Youth Action Board (YAB). ● Action 1.5.3: Providing training to case managers and intake staff to explore diversion opportunities for all youth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training should include Positive Youth Development (PYD), Trauma-Informed Care (TIC), and family finding and engagement with families of choice. ○ Staff should be trained in cultural competency, awareness, and humility to ensure appropriate diversion options are provided for tribal youth. | | | |
| Partner(s) Responsible | | Timeframe | |
| Bob Buzzas, CoC and YAB with support from HRDC, ESG grantees, and COC grantees | | December 2020 | |
| HUD key principles | | | |
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Objective 1.6: Supporting youth in family finding.

- Action Step 1.6.1.: Support youth in developing a healthy sense of their own identity and worth and navigate past trauma from family isolation and/or violence.
- Action Step 1.6.2.: Support youth in developing meaningful connections with trusted adults who can support them across their lifespan.
 - Connect with child welfare agencies and non-profit sector organizations to connect with aging out foster youth.
- Action Step 1.6.3: Provide training to youth service agencies that address resilience and family connection for youth who have been removed from the home by child welfare agencies or by the juvenile justice system.
- Action Step 1.6.3: Partner with juvenile justice systems to reduce the likelihood of recidivism.

| Partner(s) Responsible | | Timeframe | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mick Leary, DPHHS CFSD, Bob Buzzas, COC & YAB | | December 2020 | |
| HUD key principles | | | |
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Goal Two: Social-Emotional Well-Being and Permanent Connections.

The health and well-being of YYA are prioritized by meeting youth where they are and providing them with the resources, supports, and permanent connections they need to achieve happiness, health, self-sufficiency, and self-actualization.

Objective 2.1: Increase youth peer-to-peer mentorship opportunities.

- Action Step 2.1.1: Research other state models for peer mentors to serve as the first point of contact in Montana schools and communities.
- Action Step 2.1.2: Develop training curriculum for peer mentors, including trauma-informed care (TIC), positive youth development (PYD), and cultural competency, awareness, and humility.
- Action Step 2.1.3: Connect peers to peers within their community.
- Action 2.1.4: Develop mentor matching program similar to Big Brothers, Big Sisters for youth.
- Action 2.1.5: Develop peer-led social groups within housing programs that connect youth to others with shared interests, such as sports and arts.
- Action 2.1.6: Support tribal youth in connecting with peers and engaging in cultural practices that build community and sense of belonging.

| Partner(s) Responsible | | Timeframe | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Rachel Donahoe, Dept. of Public Health and Human Services | | December 2020 | |
| HUD key principles | | | |
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Objective 2.2: Increase the role of community partners in improving the social and emotional well-being of youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

- Action Step 2.2.1: Ensure every homeless liaison in Montana has access to training in suicide prevention and other training priorities and needs to be focused on homeless youth.
- Action Step 2.2.2: Identify other key community partners such as LGBTQ+ organizations, after-school programs, and faith-based organizations that and build relationships with them to address the social and emotional needs of at-risk and homeless youth.
- Action Step 2.2.3: Workshops – Develop a variety of online webinars to provide information on best practices and interventions that can be implemented by educators and community members to increase awareness of the needs of youth experiencing homelessness.
- Action Step 2.2.4: Trainings are created and hosted on OPI’s Learning Hub by December 2020.
- Action Step 2.2.5: Develop marketing and information campaigns to share trainings and workshops with community partners.

| Partner(s) Responsible | | Timeframe | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Heather Denny, Office of Public Instruction Behavioral Health Community partners | | December 2020 - Trainings will be created and hosted on the OPI’s Learning Hub. | |
| HUD key principles | | | |
| Equity <input type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Objective 2.4: Network with previous YHDP grantees and discuss their youth homelessness identification systems and referral and data-sharing systems to formalized handoff between systems to increase youth success.

- Action Step 2.4.1: Identify other youth identification systems in place, such as Empower Pack Program in schools.

| Partner(s) Responsible | | Timeframe | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---------------|--|
| Bob Buzzas, CoC, YHDP Coordinator | | December 2020 | |

| HUD key principles | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| Equity <input type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

| Objective 2.5: Increase health and wellness as a priority for youth-at-risk of and experiencing homelessness. | |
|--|---------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Step 2.5.1: Partner with the Montana Department of Public Health and community providers to implement evidence-based public health interventions. • Action Step 2.5.2: Incorporate fun social activities and life skills activities into programs to address the social needs of youth and combat feelings of loneliness or isolation. | |
| Partner(s) Responsible | Timeframe |
| Rachel Donahoe, Department of Public Health and Human Services & Community Partners | December 2020 |

| HUD key principles | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Equity <input type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Goal Three: Education and Employment.

All YYA have access to educational resources to achieve their career goals, helping to prevent homelessness for at-risk YYA and create sustainable pathways to income and housing for YYA experiencing homelessness.

| Objective 3.1: Increase the graduation rate for YYA experiencing homelessness to 75% in 5-years. | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Step 3.1.1: Provide professional development workshops for school counselors on how to help homeless students access post-secondary options • Action Step 3.1.2: Increase awareness among youth about post-secondary options; college and vocational education developed collaboratively with the YAB | | | |
| Partner(s) Responsible | Timeframe | | |
| Heather Denny, Office of Public Instruction (OPI) | December 2020 | | |
| HUD key principles | | | |
| Equity <input type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Objective 3.2: Increase the number of YYA engaged in Career and Technical Education (CTE) by 50% by 2021.

- Action Step 3.2.1: Provide training to school counselors on the use of CTE courses as a dropout intervention
- Action Step 3.2.2: Collaborate with the CTE Division at OPI to provide training and technical assistance to CTE teachers regarding the recruitment of homeless youth into CTE programs
- Action Step 3.2.3: Engage and increase awareness of CTE programs on a statewide level through effective outreach with stakeholders and partner agencies that serve youth
- Action Step 3.2.4: Facilitate the enrollment process where appropriate
- Action Step 3.2.5: Determine financial assistance and or other support mechanisms to encourage youth to consider and enroll in CTE programs

| Partner(s) Responsible | Timeframe |
|---|--|
| Melissa Walker, MSU-B Heather Denny, OPI | December 2020 - Workshops are developed and hosted for CTE teachers. |

HUD key principles

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| Equity <input type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Objective 3.3: Increase training and education on homeless resources, interventions, and best practices for homelessness liaisons and other vital school staff.

- Action 3.3.1: Expand access to universal interventions, such as aiding youth, in acquiring needed documents (i.e., birth certificate) and applying for social services to increase academic and employee autonomy.
- Action Step 3.3.2: Collaborate with the MUS system to include information on the McKinney-Vento Act and the role of homeless liaisons within training programs for school administrators and school counselors. (This could also include information for teachers and CTE teachers.)
- Action Step 3.3.3: Develop and deliver trainings and educational resources for school staff through collaboration between the YAB and adult education stakeholders.

| Partner(s) Responsible | Timeframe |
|---|--|
| Heather Denny, Office of Public Instruction (OPI) & YAB | December 2020 - OPI's Learning Hub. Fall 2021 - Dawson Community College's online learning portal |

HUD key principles

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| Equity <input type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Objective 3.4: Build a formal relationship with leaders in the Montana University System to establish single points of contact to support youth, such as Upward Bound and Montana University System’s TRIO Student Support Services.

- Action Step 3.4.1: Explore Upward Bound and Montana University System’s TRIO Student Support Services as models.
- Action Step 3.4.2: Determine an appropriate MSU Billings department/office (e.g., TRIO, student success, financial aid, etc.) to develop a potential pilot for a single point of contact (SPOC).
- Action Step 3.4.3: Create relationships with Board of Regents
 - Attend meetings and introduce/visit with Regents
 - March 5-6 2020 UofM Western, Dillon
 - May 20-21, 2020 MSU-Northern, Havre
 - September 16-17 MSU – Billings
 - November 19-20 University of MT, Missoula
- Action Step 3.4.4: Work with MCAN (Montana College Access Network) to gain support, guidance, and opportunities.
- Action Step 3.4.5: Collaborate with Reach Higher Montana for support of the project
- Action Step 3.4.5: Conduct outreach to students in higher education through single points of contact to share information and recruit new YAB members.

| Partner(s) Responsible | Timeframe |
|--|---------------|
| Melissa Walker, MSU-B Leslie Weldon, Dawson Community College | December 2020 |

HUD key principles

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Objective 3.5: Outreach Dawson Community College to better understand the model for debt-free college for foster youth who experience homelessness and outreach to MUS to promote adopting the model.

- Action Step 3.5.1: Work with Dawson Community College to better understand the model for debt-free college for foster youth who experience homelessness.
- Action Step 3.5.2: Identify opportunities to expand existing debt-free college model for fostering youth experiencing homelessness to all youth experiencing homelessness.
- Action Step 3.5.3: Outreach to the Montana University System (MUS) to promote adopting or adapting a debt-free college model for students experiencing homelessness. (Coordinate with Objective 3.4.2) **Nov 2020**
- Action Step 3.5.4: Explore how other communities are increasing access to higher education and housing for young adults experiencing homelessness.

Vision and Goals

| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Step 3.5.5: Identify campus liaisons and work with post-secondary leaders to move the initiative forward. | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Partner(s) Responsible | | Timeframe | |
| Leslie Weldon, Dawson Community College | | March 2020 | |
| HUD key principles | | | |
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

| Objective 3.6: Increase housing and homelessness resources for youth in higher education who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Step 3.6.1: Work with Dawson Community College to determine a potential model for resources for MSUB students Action Step 3.6.2: Determine how and where MSUB students will access these resources (i.e., Where will the resources “live” at MSUB? With TRIO? Some other department? The SPOC?) Action Step 3.6.3: Explore opportunities. Attend NAEHCY Homelessness Conference to outreach etc. October 31 – November 3, Dallas TX Action Step 3.6.4: Collaborate and work with homeless liaisons in high schools. Ongoing December 2020 Action Step 3.6.5: Explore opportunities for homeless youth in unfilled residence halls at the post-secondary level. Connect with postsecondary leadership. Ongoing December 2020 | | | |
| Partner(s) Responsible | | Timeframe | |
| Melissa Walker, MSU-B Leslie Weldon, Dawson Community College Community Partners | | December 2020 | |
| HUD key principles | | | |
| Equity <input type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Goal Four: Systems Change.

YYA will be supported in navigating systems of care and transitioning into adulthood and out of homelessness through increased cross-systems coordination and collaboration.

Objective 4.1: Increase local capacity to coordinate resources for addressing youth homelessness.

- Action Step 4.1.1: Hire YHDP coordinator with duties to include access to virtual training and resources for all homelessness providers to increase their knowledge for supporting marginalized YYA and enhancing awareness of reproductive life planning, healthy relationships, violence prevention, and other priority areas.
 - Have YAB provide training for YHDP Coordinator.
 - YHDP coordinator will work with existing local CoCs to engage local YAB youth in planning.
- Action Step 4.1.2: Improve coordination with tribal communities to coordinate resources and the community response for addressing homelessness among tribal youth.
- Action Step 4.1.3: Evaluate local coordinated entry processes to make access, assessment, referral, and prioritization more appropriate for youth.
 - Learn from Missoula’s local coordinated entry system for youth to inform other local/regional processes.
 - Improve transportation/outreach to connect youth experiencing homelessness to services.
 - Evaluate existing assessment tools for appropriateness for minors and LGBTQ+ youth. Work with YAB to develop questions and language that resonates with youth.
 - Support the development of youth case conferencing in local coordinated entry processes.
- Action Step 4.1.4: Improve engagement with non-traditional community partners such as faith-based organizations and local businesses to support youth homelessness efforts.
- Action Step 4.1.5: Improve connections between the homeless response system and external services and resources (ex: legal assistance) through relationship-building.
- Action Step 4.1.6: Build a grant submission scoring element into project proposal assessment, so partnerships with external agencies that are tracking system issues that impact youth homelessness can be prioritized (ex: generational mental health issues).

| Partner(s) Responsible | | Timeframe | |
|--|--|---|---|
| Bob Buzzas, CoC and YAB | | January 2021 | |
| HUD key principles | | | |
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Objective 4.2: Collaborate to produce an Economic Impact Report of Youth Homelessness with a focus on best practices addressing immediate needs and prevention for rural communities.

- Action Step 4.2.1: Identify key aspects of the economic impact of youth homelessness in Montana to investigate for the impact report
- Action Step 4.2.2: Contact State Chief Economist regarding the proposal
- Action Step 4.2.3: Track key outcomes from increasing investment in youth homelessness (ex: cost savings, decreases in juvenile justice involvement among youth experiencing homelessness) and use this data to advocate for additional youth homelessness funding and resources

| Partner(s) Responsible | | Timeframe | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Quinn Leighton, YAB | | January 2021 (depends on chief economist) | |
| HUD key principles | | | |
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Objective 4.3: Create a system map to identify existing services, service hotspots, service gaps, and innovative practices to support youth experiencing homelessness statewide, including where problems in the system are originating from or being compounded (ex: treatment centers, foster care system).

- Action Step 4.3.1: Identify young leader with lived experience to help facilitate system mapping exercise **[completed March 2020]**
- Action Step 4.3.2: Conduct a system mapping exercise in Spring 2020 **[completed March 2020]**
- Action Step 4.3.3: Synthesize the information gathered from the system mapping exercise into digestible products:
 - Product 1: Visual of a system map for Montana that includes identification of gaps, frictions, and issues in the system.
 - Product 2: Decision tree outlining processes and outcomes.
 - Product 3: Documents detailing community-level analysis of origination and identification of system gaps.

| Partner(s) Responsible | | Timeframe | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Andrew Palomo, National Network for Youth Quinn Leighton, Pride Foundation Bob Buzzas, CoC | | July 1 st , 2020 | |
| HUD key principles | | | |
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Objective 4.4: Collaborate with local human rights advocacy groups to support the passing of inclusive anti-discrimination laws to ensure protections for marginalized populations, such as LGBTQ YYA.

- Action Step 4.4.1: Introduce conversation regarding youth homelessness as a compelling argument to other organizations leading up to the legislative session
- Action Step 4.4.2: Communicate with YAB members regarding who is interested in sharing their story and testifying at Montana Legislature during the hearing
- Action Step 4.4.3: Develop and provide trainings on advocacy and legislative action for interested YAB members.
- Action Step 4.4.4: Work with YAB to develop state bills in support of increasing the rights of minors, including self-emancipation, ability to sign a housing contract, and to enter shelter unaccompanied.

| Partner(s) Responsible | Timeframe |
|--|--------------|
| Quinn Leighton, Pride Foundation Bob Buzzas, CoC, & YAB | January 2022 |

HUD key principles

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Objective 4.5: Develop community-specific education campaigns to help people understand youth homelessness.

- Action Step 4.5.1: Collaboration between YAB and adult partners to develop an education and awareness campaign to target diverse community partners and the general public.
 - Recruit cross-system partners to engage in this campaign together.
 - Develop messaging and resources that are specific to each community.
 - Invite Editorial Committee to be part of the conversation.
- Action Step 4.5.2: Provide education to the general public about the distinct challenges facing tribal youth, including high rates of missing indigenous women and sexual trafficking and exploitation.
- Action Step 4.5.3: Share information at community events and forums, led by YAB members.

| Partner(s) Responsible | Timeframe |
|------------------------|-------------|
| YAB | Spring 2021 |

HUD key principles

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Objective 4.6: Develop community-specific education campaigns to educate youth about available resources and rights.

- Action Step 4.6.1: Collaboration between YAB and adult partners to develop an education and awareness campaign targeted to youth at-risk of and experiencing homelessness regarding available resources and rights.
 - Develop messaging and resources that are specific to each community to share information on locally available resources and ways to join the YAB.
 - Work with local youth to identify the best ways to share information (ex: radio, social media, word of mouth).
- Action Step 4.6.2: Share resources and information at schools, LGBT centers, community centers, and youth-focused events to help reach as many young people as possible.

| Partner(s) Responsible | Timeframe |
|------------------------|-------------|
| YAB | Spring 2021 |

HUD key principles

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Objective 4.7: Commit to authentic youth engagement and collaboration at all levels – program, community (local/regional), CoC, and state.

- Action Step 4.7.1: Encourage youth-specific housing and service programs to develop a Youth Action Board to help continuously shape and improve programming and services.
- Action Step 4.7.2: Advocate for positions of leadership to be made more accessible for YAB members in their communities (ex: youth seats on local Boards) and at the state level (ex: MT Statewide CoC Board).
- Action Step 4.7.3: Develop Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Plan with the YAB, including defined opportunities for YAB leadership in monitoring and evaluation of programs.

| Partner(s) Responsible | Timeframe |
|--|-----------|
| YAB with support from CoC and community partners | Fall 2020 |

HUD key principles

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Objective 4.8: Establish LGBTQ+ and race equity as guiding principles for our statewide efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness.

- Action Step 4.8.1: Establish a shared language and understanding of LGBTQ+ and race equity to be utilized across the state of Montana and throughout YHDP.
- Action Step 4.8.2: Create safe spaces to promote positive expressions of race, sexual orientation, gender, and intersectionality of identities, including art, music, painting, and poetry.
- Action Step 4.8.3: Utilize national training resources (ex: True Colors United) and local trainings to ensure that all YHDP providers are knowledgeable of LGBTQ+ and race equity in their policies and practices.
- Action Step 4.8.4: Ensure that housing and services provided through YHDP are informed by youth to be culturally and LGBTQ+ appropriate.
- Action Step 4.8.5: Require that all YHDP housing and service providers have an inclusive, nondiscrimination policy in place that addresses race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity, among others.
- Action Step 4.8.6: Help youth make connections to their cultural roots when they are accessing housing, services, or moving through youth-serving systems.

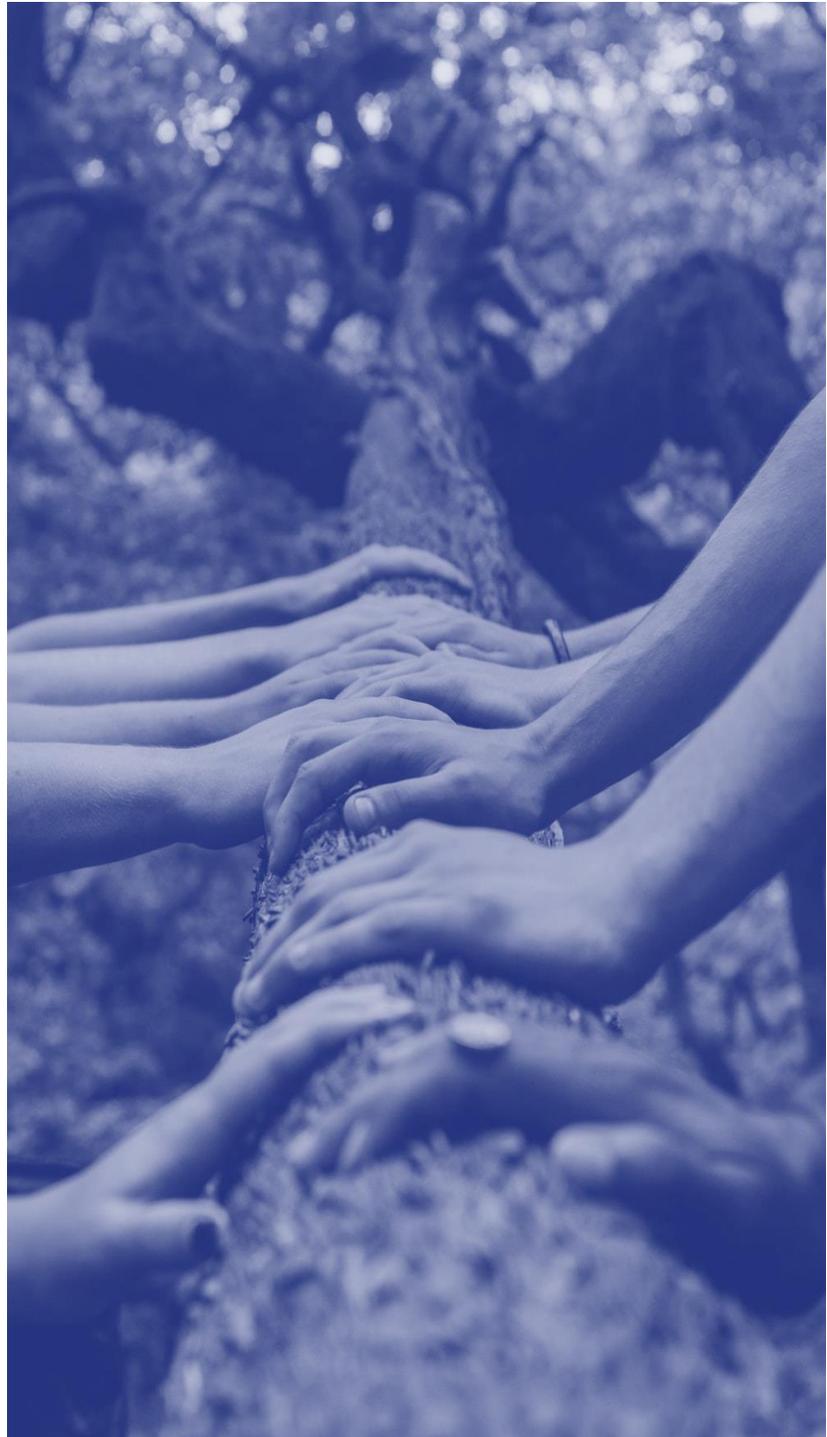
| Partner(s) Responsible | | Timeframe | |
|---|--|---|--|
| All community partners, guided by the YAB and YHDP Core Planning Team | | Fall 2020 | |
| HUD key principles | | | |
| Equity <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Positive Youth Develop. <input type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Housing first <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |

Montana-specific projects overview

The Montana YHDP planning group proposes the following interventions to be utilized to reduce homelessness in Montana. Each of the interventions was created within the framework of the guiding principles, as set forth by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which are

- Positive Youth Development,
- Trauma-Informed Care,
- Family Engagement,
- Immediate Access to Housing with No Preconditions,
- Youth Choice,
- Individualized and Client-Driven Supports, Social and Community Integration,
- and Coordinated Entry (see explanation in the section above).

The process involved asking youth, providers, and program managers to reflect on how Montana’s unique needs could be met with the support of the best practices of HUD’s guiding principles. Additionally, funded projects will be provided with training and oversight of participating agencies on how to align more with HUD guiding principles, expectations, and requirements. These agencies will also be charged with providing any needed information, and support will be given to landlords, host homes, and community partners regarding Housing First principles to support compliance.



Proposed Intervention Projects

| Intervention I: Diversion | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Overview of Intervention | Diversion will be used to connect all unaccompanied minors and youth with safe and supportive housing. Diversion will also support permanent connections through youth-defined family reunification. The model will build on existing support networks to support creative problem solving that promotes the social and emotional well-being and peer supports. Montana’s Diversion model will also utilize case management and family finding for minimizing entry into the homeless response system. | | |
| Positive Youth Develop. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Immediate Access <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Client-driven Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |
| USICH Core(s) Outcome: Permanent Connections Social-emotional well-being | | Montana Goals and Objective: Goal 1: Objective 1.5, 1.6; Goal 2: Objectives 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5; Goal 4, Objectives 4.1, 4.7 | |
| Target Population(s) & Special Populations | | | |
| Unaccompanied youth ages 18-24 and unaccompanied minors ages 14-17, specifically aged-out foster youth, Native American and Indigenous youth, and LGBTQ youth. | | | |
| Timeframe | One-time flex fund assistance offered to stabilize the household. | | |
| Services | <p>We will support youth/their families to stay stabilized in housing, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited emergency housing financial assistance • Family mediation • Family/individual counseling • Food assistance • Referrals to community resources • Case management • Peer supports | | |
| Expected Outcomes & Data Collection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % decrease of youth who become homeless for the first time • % decrease of youth experiencing unsheltered homelessness • % decrease of youth who become homeless for the first time | | |
| Innovation Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stabilize where they feel safe and supported by maintaining family of choice and fictive kin • Target interventions and case management for youth who are unstably housed—specifically unaccompanied youth | | |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divert youth and young adults exiting foster care from the trauma of homelessness into supportive home environments |
| Promising practice in Montana | <p>Replicate Dawson Promise, a program that provides a two-year education without debt to unaccompanied, homeless, and aged-out youth. Dawson Community College not only provides education it also includes wrap-around supports such as year-round on-campus housing, community host family, employment support, and mentorship.</p> <p>Expected Outcome: Increase future employment opportunities and earning potential for all youth experiencing homelessness, and engaging a new statewide stakeholder, Montana University System.</p> |

| Intervention 2: Crisis Host Homes | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Overview of Intervention | Crisis Host Homes will provide short-term housing in the homes of vetted community volunteers as an alternative to shelter care. The community volunteer hosts will provide stabilization in the form of a meal and place to stay as youth seek out more permanent housing options. The Montana Crisis Host Homes model will also be used to provide small food/housing stipend to hosts to cover actual costs. Crisis Host Homes will be extremely vital in rural communities where crisis options are extremely limited and creates the opportunity for youth integration into stable communities. | | |
| Positive Youth Develop. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Immediate Access <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Client-driven Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |
| USICH Core(s) Outcome: Stable Housing Permanent Connections Social-emotional well-being | | Montana Goals, Objective, and Action Steps: Goal 1: Objectives 1.2, 1.6, Objective 1.3; Goal 2: Objectives 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5; Goal 4, Objectives 4.1; 4.7 | |
| Target Population(s) & Special Populations | | | |
| Unaccompanied youth ages 18-24, specifically LGBTQ youth, gender diverse youth, and Native American and Indigenous youth. | | | |
| Timeframe | Depending on the youth's needs, youth will likely receive assistance from two weeks to six months. | | |
| Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mediation Referrals Family/individual counseling | | |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case management • Stipends for food/support with basic needs • Stipends paid directly to home • Robust training for hosts, including cultural and trans awareness, white privilege, conflict mediation, and trauma-informed. • Possible temporary housing during post-secondary education breaks |
| Expected Outcomes & Data Collection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % youth exiting to permanent, independent housing • % decrease in the total number of days youth are unsheltered to no more than 30 days • % youth do not return to homeless status within 12 months |
| Innovation Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable and affirming housing for LGBTQ youth where they feel safe and supported by maintaining family of choice and fictive kin • Target interventions and case management for youth who are unstably housed—specifically unaccompanied youth • Divert young adults from the trauma of homelessness into supportive home environments that maintain ties to communities of origin • Safe storage for personal belongings |
| Promising practice in Montana | <p>Montana does not protect against housing discrimination for LGBTQ individuals, and many youth experience family rejections leading to homelessness. A natural network has been developed in Missoula, Montana, amongst the trans community. This model provides housing, food, and emotional supports. Also, this natural network provides support accessing gender-affirming clothing, legal name change documentation, employment coaching and resume review, and gatekeeper connections to emotional supports in the form of support groups or professional mental health services.</p> |

Intervention 3: Transitional Housing (TH) - Rapid Rehousing (RRH)

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|---------------------------------|---|
| Overview of Intervention | <p>Transitional Housing - Rapid Rehousing will provide youth in immediate crisis access to short-term low-barrier, shame-free, safe emergency housing. Youth in the intervention will be provided navigation services to connect youth/young adults with supportive services and an expedited pathway to permanent housing. In short, youth will be offered both crisis housing (TH) and rapid rehousing (RRH) assistance. This model is vital in</p> |
|---------------------------------|---|

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|---|--|--|--|
| Montana, where there is a significant scarcity of emergency shelters, especially those that will admit youth. | | | |
| Positive Youth Develop. <input type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Immediate Access <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Client-driven Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |
| USICH Core(s) Outcome: Stable Housing Social-emotional well-being | | Montana Goals and Objectives: Goal 1: Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6; Goal 2: Objectives 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5; Goal 3: Objectives: 3.3, 3.5; Goal 4, Objectives 4.1; 4.4, 4.7 | |
| Target Population(s) & Special Populations Unaccompanied youth ages 18-24, specifically LGBTQ youth, gender diverse youth, justice-involved youth, and aged out foster youth. | | | |
| Timeframe | Youth will be provided with up to 24 months across both TH and RRH assistance. To increase success among youth with continuing unmet needs, youth may access supportive services for an additional six months after rental assistance ends on a case-by-case basis. A waiver extending rental assistance to 36 months has been requested from HUD to meet the needs of transition-age youth better. | | |
| Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer-support • Low-barrier shelter that serves as pathways to permanent housing • Rapid Re-housing • Family Finding, Family Engagement, Family Reunification • Housing resource and benefit navigation • Intensive case Management focused on safe and stable housing • Connection to mental health, especially substance use treatment (can include telehealth options) • Support accessing education and employment support services • Robust staff training | | |
| Expected Outcomes & Data Collection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth exit to permanent, independent living • % of youth do not re-enter homelessness within 12-months • % decrease the length of time youth wait for housing | | |
| Innovation Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe, inclusive, and affirming spaces for LGBTQ youth • Housing navigation and connection to necessary services for youth 18 to 24 outside mainstream shelter services • Stabilize LGBTQ youth where they feel safe and supported by maintaining family of choice and fictive kin | | |

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|--------------------------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divert young adults ages 19 to 24 out of from the trauma of mainstream shelter services |
| Promising practice in Montana | <p>Montana has limited access to substance use treatment options for all populations. This model of housing could allow for an opportunity to partner with Montana Department of Public Health and Humans Services Addictive and Mental Health Disorders Division to assess gaps in services areas and lack of youth-focused substance use professionals. This model could explore offering a diversity of programs (e.g., harm-reduction models and abstinence-only programs) to support youth into a recovery that makes sense for themselves.</p> <p>Possible result: Increased access to youth-specific trauma-informed substance use treatment.</p> |

Intervention 4: Flexible Rapid Rehousing (RRH)

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| Overview of Intervention | Flexible Rapid Rehousing connects youth and young adults to safe, permanent, inclusive housing. This intervention will provide low-barrier housing with intensive case management and supportive services. This model will include short or medium-term housing, such as clustered or scattered apartments with or without roommates. | | |
| Positive Youth Develop. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> | Immediate Access <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Client-driven Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| USICH Core(s) Outcome: Stable Housing Social-emotional well-being | Montana Goals and Objectives: Goal 1: Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5; Goal 2: Objectives 2.1, 2.4, 2.5; Goal 4, Objectives 4.1; 4.7 | | |
| Target Population(s) & Special Populations | | | |
| Unaccompanied youth ages 18-24, specifically pregnant and parenting youth and youth with some independent living skills. | | | |
| Timeframe | Flexibility to house youth for up to 36 months for independent or shared housing options. Services will continue to be provided, as needed, for an additional six months after rental assistance stops to ensure long-term housing stability and overall social and emotional wellbeing. | | |
| Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Finding, Family Engagement, Family Reunification Housing resource and benefit navigation | | |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive case Management for housing planning and independent living skills • Connection to mental health, especially substance use treatment (can include telehealth options) • Support accessing education and employment support services |
| Expected Outcomes & Data Collection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth exit to permanent, independent living • % of youth do not re-enter homelessness within 12-months • % of youth are provided with an opportunity to participate in life skills, including educational and employment services • % reduction in the length of time it takes to move from literal homelessness to permanent housing |
| Innovation Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth choose to live where they desire – in shared housing or private residences. • Target interventions and case management for youth who are unstably housed—specifically unaccompanied youth • Divert young adults from the trauma of homelessness into supportive home environments that maintain ties to communities of origin • Collaborate with partners to offer master-leased apartments or congregate homes to provide a social-emotional support network for youth. |

Intervention 5: Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| Overview of Intervention | Permanent Supportive Housing will offer a non-time limited, low-barrier supportive housing for youth who have serious and long-term disabilities - such as mental illness, substance use disorder, chronic health conditions, and developmental and physical disabilities. This intervention will provide individually tailored, intensive case management, and community-based supportive services. | | |
| Positive Youth Develop. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input type="checkbox"/> | Immediate Access <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Youth Choice <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Client-driven Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| USICH Core(s) Outcome: Stable Housing Permanent Connections Social-emotional well-being | Montana Goals and Objectives: Goal 1: Objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6; Goal 2: Objectives 2.2, 2.4, 2.5; Goal 4: Objectives 4.1, 4.6, 4.7 | | |

| Target Population(s) & Special Populations | |
|--|---|
| Unaccompanied youth ages 18-24, specifically youth with the highest vulnerability and service needs. | |
| Timeframe | Non-time limited, indefinite support dependent on continued YHDP funding. |
| Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Finding, Family Engagement, Family Reunification • Housing resource and benefit navigation • Intensive case Management focused on safe and stable housing • Connection to mental health, especially substance use treatment (can include telehealth options) • Support accessing education and employment support services • Staff training on supporting youth with disabilities |
| Expected Outcomes & Data Collection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of youth do not re-enter homelessness within 12-months • % decrease the length of time youth wait for housing |
| Innovation Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stabilize youth with disabilities where they feel safe and supported by maintaining family of choice and community services • Target interventions/case management for youth with disabilities • Divert young adults from additional trauma of homelessness or forced institutionalization by maintaining freedom by housing within the community |

| Intervention 6: System Navigators | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Overview of Intervention | System navigators will allow us to provide a single point of contact for youth to aid with navigating complex systems in addition to their housing needs. Schools, law enforcement and juvenile justice systems, foster care services, and social service providers (e.g., health care, SNAPs, workforce programs), will collaborate with a system navigator to connect youth to the coordinated prevention and diversion resources. System navigators will be integral for supporting community partners to meet the needs of youth and serve as a safe and supportive resource for youth who may not be present in the exiting homeless services programming. | | |
| Positive Youth Develop. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Trauma-Informed Care <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Family Engage <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Immediate Access <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Youth Choice <input type="checkbox"/> | Client-driven Support <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Community Integration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Coordinated Entry <input type="checkbox"/> |
| USICH Core(s) Outcome: Permanent Connections Education/Employment | Montana Goals and Objectives: Goal 1: Objective 1.5, 1.6; Goal 2: Objectives 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5; Goal 3: Objectives 3.1, 3.2, | | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Social-emotional well-being | 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, Goal 4: Objectives 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 |
| Target Population(s) & Special Populations | |
| Unaccompanied youth ages 18-24, specifically LGBTQ youth, gender diverse youth, justice-involved youth, and Native American and Indigenous youth. | |
| Timeframe | Ongoing. |
| Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized peer navigators for marginalized groups (LGBTQ, Native, justice-involved) • Specialized trained staff in family finding, engagement, and reunification |
| Expected Outcomes & Data Collection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # new partner agencies improving system capacity to triage, engage and connect youth to needed supports • % decrease in the total number of days youth are unsheltered to no more than 30 days • % decrease of youth who become homeless for the first time |
| Innovation Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stabilize youth where they feel safe and supported by maintaining family of choice and fictive kin • Housing navigation and connection to immediate resources for youth and young adults • Navigators work with local service partners to understand their program changes and availability and maintain a list • Elevate local peer-navigators to guide youth at-risk or experiencing homelessness to services • Divert young adults from the trauma of homelessness into supportive homes that maintain ties to communities of origin |
| Promising practice in Montana | <p>Forty-six of Montana's 56 counties have less than six people per square mile, which leaves many Montana's without access to service providers. Thus, to increase the quality of care, McKinney-Vento school staff, and existing youth service case managers who are established service providers in the area will be incentivized to be trained as systems navigators. These providers will provide all youth with a supportive and warm handoff with the appropriate resource/housing solution. A general statewide training could be created and allow sections for each community to custom tailor to meet the needs and resource scarcity of their community.</p> <p>Possible result: Youth are accessing gatekeepers in their community and strengthening their relationship with trusted adults.</p> |

Improving data quality and system capacity

Montana’s homeless systems have historically been unsuccessful in collecting, maintaining, sharing, and reporting data related to youth homelessness. The lack of consistency in data collection and dissemination is a direct result of scarcity and competition for resources in our frontier state. The Coordinated Community Plan to date has strengthened relationships and unified various government and non-profit youth-serving organizations. The shared goal will be to increase Montana’s capacity to collect and share useful data to improve systems for Montana’s most vulnerable youth.

Data collection for proposed projects will involve individual programs and service providers to report outcomes to Montana’s CoC. All CCP objectives and action steps are mapped in the above sections and demonstrate consistency with and adherence to the USICH Four Core Outcomes and HUD Key Principles. The YHDP-funded programs will be responsible for working with the YHDP Coordinator to ensure their program-related data is entered into the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS). All data will be reviewed every quarter to ensure quality data collection is occurring and program compliance.

Continuous Quality Improvement

To ensure compliance with USICH outcomes, HUD key principles, and Montana’s vision for ending youth homelessness, we must first clarify what youth homelessness will look like in the community as a result of the Montana Coordinated Community Plan. As a result of the interventions mentioned above, we will see youth experiencing homelessness have quick and reliable

“...I've met a lot of folks who're struggling, who're fighting incredibly hard just to make it from one day to the next. However, despite the challenges they're facing, almost every person experiencing homelessness I've met still had faith that a better day was on the horizon.

They hadn't let their hardship extinguish their hope.

They hadn't let their despair dash their dreams.

They just needed somebody to help them find their footing and believe in them. All of us have come together today because we believe.

We believe in these Americans. We believe that no child or family should be subjected to the hardship that comes with life in a shelter or on a street.

We believe that no youth should have to choose between a night on the street or night in a hotel room in exchange for sex. And we believe that every American deserves an opportunity to live with dignity and pride.”

Julián Castro, 2014-2017 HUD Secretary

assistance to access appropriate housing. We will also see youth experiencing homelessness report that they feel supported during their homeless experience. And lastly, we will have data that demonstrates that after youth enter the YHDP system in Montana, these youth progress towards stable and rewarding futures (e.g., continuing education, gainful employment, and individualized goals as defined by youth). To reach these goals, we are committed to evaluating our partnerships, working groups, and systems alongside YAB. We will do this by engaging in **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)**. We will strive to recognize a solid return on investment and create a recognizable and sustainable system change to decrease youth homelessness events and improve our systems. Montana's CQI will include activities such as supporting:

- **Ongoing communications** and monthly calls to ensure collaboration and reduce silos between critical stakeholders, funded sites, and YAB. Minutes sent out to sub-committees and YAB to support progress and accountability.
- **Leadership development** of YAB members to increase youth voice and participation in all aspects of project design, implementation, and evaluation.
- **System analysis** to identify existing and persistent gaps and barriers and relocation of resources to make processes and programming more efficient.
- **Data-driven oversight of projects** to ensure essential activities and projected timelines are on target, and if not, engaging the YHDP governance structure for possible resolutions (i.e., adjustments to objective).
- **Quantitate data collection** of systems data, individual project data, and youth outcomes data. This includes but is not limited to, HMIS data, project outcome data collection, project satisfaction surveys, and individual agency youth participants surveys.
- **Qualitative data collection** by way of focus groups from youth who participated in a funded program to seek feedback and provide opportunities to improve system navigation and programs.
- **CQI sub-committee** to support program monitoring and data collection that consists of 5 to 8 YAB, Executive Team, and program staff. This team will hold monthly meetings to review system performance measures and spending reports.
- **Disseminate quarterly reports** that share updates on goals and objectives and challenges faced by funded sites, YHDP special workgroups, YAB, and the MT YHDP Executive Team. Possible utilization of data dashboards to easily share snapshots of critical indicators and reports to partners.
- **Partnership with additional funding sources** to supplement additional project dollars and expand the work of the CCP.

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