

The Northern Panhandle Continuum of Care

A Collaboration of Homeless Assistance Providers in the Northern Panhandle

Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A.	Introduction	2
a.	Stakeholders	3
b.	Common Acronyms	4
B.	Statement of Need	7
a.	State of Youth Homelessness	7
i.	Unaccompanied Youth	8
ii.	Pregnant or Parenting Youth	13
iii.	Additional Special Populations	16
iv.	Racial Equity	20
b.	System Mapping	23
i.	Strengths	24
ii.	Gaps	25
c.	Needs	26
i.	Stable Housing	26
ii.	Employment/Education	27
iii.	Social-emotional well-being	29
iv.	Permanent Connections	30
C.	Vision, Mission and Values	31
D.	Action Plan	33
a.	New Projects List	42
b.	Alignment to YHDP Key Principles	45
E.	Governance Structure	48
a.	Existing NPCOC Structure	48
b.	YHDP Project Identification and Approval	49
F.	Signature Pages	50

Introduction: What is this plan? Who is it for?

The Northern Panhandle region is made up of Hancock, Brooke, Ohio, Marshall and Wetzel counties. The region is the northernmost in the state, bordered by the Ohio river to the west and north and the state of Pennsylvania to the east. Most of the five-county area is rural. This part of West Virginia feels more like the Midwest than the south; it's physically closer to Ohio and Pennsylvania than most other parts of West Virginia.

The two largest cities in the area are Wheeling (population 27,052, according to the 2020 Census) and Weirton (population 19,163, according to the 2020 US Census), both of which consist of more suburban sprawl than urban center. Downtowns close at 5:00 PM. Public transportation is limited in the cities, and nonexistent for rural counties. Small towns dot the hilly landscape, considered the foothills of the Appalachian mountains.

The Northern Panhandle Continuum of Care (referred to throughout the document as NPCOC, and formally designated by HUD as the Wheeling/Weirton Area Continuum of Care) was established by a group of local leaders in 1995. Those leaders represented housing and shelter facilities, supportive services, charitable organizations, and local clergy. They have worked collaboratively to prevent and end homelessness in the five county region for nearly three decades. In that time, the NPCOC has evolved from a small group of concerned leaders to a comprehensive planning body. Their 36 diverse members meet regularly to share information and coordinate services all focused on their goal of preventing and ending homelessness.

The NPCOC has accomplished much over the past twenty-seven years. And, homelessness for youth and young adults remains a significant concern for the five-county region. NPCOC members are eager to address the challenges of youth and young adult homelessness through the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP).

The YHDP was funded by Congress to implement projects that demonstrate how a comprehensive approach to serving homeless youth, age 24 and younger who meet HUD's definition of homeless, can dramatically reduce homelessness. Under YHDP, the NPCOC will be able to administer a variety of projects specifically targeted toward youth. There is great need in our community, and few programs specifically designed to support youth and young adults experiencing or at-risk of homelessness across the five counties.

Throughout this plan, we've collected data from multiple sources to offer a broad view of homelessness in our region. By collecting data from multiple sources, it is important to remember each source follows its own definition of homeless. This [YHDP Homeless Definition Quick Guide](#) published by HUD provides a detailed overview of HUD's definition of homeless which must be used by YHDP. HUD's guide also provides other homeless definitions followed by other funding sources, such as the Department of Education and Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, which are referenced in data throughout this document.

Stakeholders

To create this Coordinated Community Plan, the NPCOC convened a number of its members and community stakeholders. Those individuals contributed to the creation of the Coordinated Community Plan during a series of meetings and planning sessions held throughout February, March and April of 2022. Below we have included a list of all organizations who participated, as well as the names and titles of their representatives, and a description of their involvement in the Youth homelessness Demonstration Project. Organizations are listed in alphabetical order. Meetings were facilitated by Tara Sumrall, an independent consultant hired to support the development and creation of the CCP.

Stakeholders		
Organization	Participants and Title	Role in YHDP and Continuum of Care
Bethany College	Melanee Sinclair, Chair of the Department of Social Work/Professor	Bethany College is not a COC member; Melanee participated as a stakeholder in CCP planning meetings, contributing her expertise as a professor of social work.
CHANGE, Inc.	Marissa Collett, Domestic Violence Director	CHANGE, INC. shares referrals with the COC for domestic violence victims experiencing homelessness. Marissa contributed to planning sessions for the CCP.
Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless	<p>Lisa Badia, Executive Director</p> <p>Jordan Harris, Program Development Specialist & YHDP Lead</p> <p>Brandon McLendon, Homeless Management Information System Specialist/Admin</p>	<p>The Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless is the YHDP Lead, NPCOC Lead, and HMIS Lead. GWCH is also a COC Stakeholder/Provider. As a provider, GWCH is one of two access points of the Coordinated Entry System serving all five subpopulations defined by HUD, including youth ages 18-24, and offers various housing and supportive service programs in the five-county region. As YHDP Lead, GWCH organized all planning for the CCP to meet the requirements of the YHDP grant. They will support the YAB to use the Review and Rank process to approve YHDP projects (see the governance section for more information). They will operate YHDP-required projects, as well as potentially other projects.</p> <p>Lisa also serves as the COC Co-Chair, and Jordan as the YHDP lead. They both served as members of the project management team, attending weekly project management team meetings. Both also shared data, and contributed as stakeholders to planning sessions for the CCP.</p>
Ohio County Schools;	Amy Minch, Attendance Director & Homeless Liaison	Amy is the homeless liaison for Ohio County Schools, responsible for carrying out the mandates of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Amy also serves as Co-Chair of the COC and an older adult YAB member. She served as a member of the project management team, attending weekly project management team meetings. Amy also contributed as a stakeholder to planning sessions for the CCP.

YWCA Wheeling	Laura Albertini Weigel, Women Inspired In New Directions (WIND) Director	YWCA provides access to the Womens Boutique, Human Trafficking services, Domestic Violence services advocacy and support groups, anger Management Services, Narcotics Anonymous Meetings, Project ID, and services for parenting and cultural concerns/issues. Laura is the Director of Women Inspired In New Directions, or WIND program, which is a non-treatment recovery home in Wheeling, WV. WIND offers peer support and case management services for women in recovery. Laura contributed to planning sessions for the CCP; the YWCA will also potentially contribute to YHDP projects involving services for victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation.
Youth Action Board	Aaron Beaver, Bee Evans, Kameron Johnson, Jesse Pelkey, Aliyah Pelley, Destiny Scrofani	The Youth Action Board functions as a formal committee of the NPCOC. YAB members will approve all YHDP projects; they also contributed to the CCP planning process, providing insight into the experiences of youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness through focus groups and attending both project management and planning meetings.
Youth Services System	Tammy Kruse, interim CEO Jill Eddy, Chief Program Officer/Community Based Services Director Pam Jeffers, Transitional Living Program Manager Melissa Mackrella, Director of Operations	Youth Services System, Inc. is a Runaway and Homeless Youth Provider for a Basic Center and Transitional Living Program. They are the largest provider of youth-specific services in the Northern Panhandle for justice-involved and foster care youth, and will potentially contribute to or operate YHDP projects. Representatives of YSS shared data on their youth services and contributed to planning sessions for the CCP.
West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Children and Families	Mark Paree, Community Service Manager for Ohio, Brooke and Hancock Counties	State of West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources provides casework for families and youth, including Child Protective Services and Youth Services (JD and status offenses). When children become wards of the state, they provide casework for transitioning to adulthood. Mark also serves as an older adult YAB member. Additionally, Mark served as a member of the project management team, attending weekly project management team meetings. He also contributed as a stakeholder to planning sessions for the CCP.
Wheeling Housing Authority	Carol Barnette, Site Manager Cait Karr, Resident Services Coordinator,	The Wheeling Housing Authority provides subsidized housing for eligible citizens of Ohio County. Cait and Carol contributed to planning sessions for the CCP; the Housing Authority will also potentially contribute to YHDP projects involving housing services for youth.

Common Acronyms

In the table below, please find a list of acronyms and their meaning commonly used throughout the plan. We hope this can serve as a helpful reference.

Acronyms and Meaning	
COC	Continuum of Care: According to HUD, the COC is the group organized to carry out the responsibilities prescribed in the COC Program Interim Rule for a defined geographic area. A COC should be composed of representatives of organizations including: nonprofit homeless providers, victim service providers, faith-based organizations, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, organizations that serve homeless and formerly homeless veterans, and homeless and formerly homeless persons, governments, businesses, advocates, public housing agencies, school districts, social service providers, mental health agencies, hospitals, universities, affordable housing developers, law enforcement, organizations that serve homeless and formerly homeless veterans, and homeless and formerly homeless persons.
CCP	Coordinated Community Plan: Per HUD, the CCP is the plan developed by a selected community which includes specified components outlined in the YHDP NOFO.
DOE	Department of Education: The department of the U.S. Federal government that administers federal programs dealing with education.
GWCH	Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless: GWCH is the YHDP Lead and works directly with the Youth Action Board to ensure the completion of the CCP and implementation of new projects. GWCH is also the Northern Panhandle Continuum of Care Lead Agency/Collaborative Applicant and HMIS Lead Agency.
HUD	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development: The United States federal department that is tasked with helping individuals and families gain access to affordable housing that is safe and secure.
Joint TH-PH RRH	Joint Transitional Housing-Permanent Housing Rapid Re-Housing: Per HUD, the project type that includes two existing program components and offer a safe place for people to stay – transitional housing – with financial assistance and wrap around supportive services determined by program participants to help them move to permanent housing as quickly as possible.
NPCOC	Northern Panhandle Continuum of Care, formally designated by HUD as the Wheeling/Weirton Area Continuum of Care. The NPCOC offers a collective opportunity for the providers of homeless services to organize and develop, through the input of many ancillary members, a system of assistance that focuses on every facet of care throughout a person's transition from life in the streets to permanent housing and follow-up monitoring.
PMT	Project Management Team: The YHDP Project Management Team is comprised of the YHDP Lead, Youth Action Board, and YHDP Technical Assistance Providers who meet regularly to ensure the implementation of the YHDP grant.
PSH	Permanent Supportive Housing: Per HUD, the project type that offers permanent housing in which housing assistance and supportive services are provided to assist households with at least one member (adult or child) with a disability in achieving housing stability.

RRH	Rapid Re-Housing: Per HUD, the project type that rapidly connects families and individuals experiencing homelessness to permanent housing through a tailored package of assistance that may include the use of time-limited financial assistance and targeted supportive services.
SSO	Supportive Services Only: Per HUD, the project type that provides supportive services—such as conducting outreach to sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons and families and providing referrals to other housing or other necessary services—to families and individuals experiencing homelessness.
SSO-CE	Supportive Services Only-Coordinated Entry: Per HUD, SSO-CE is the project type that is designed to develop or operate a centralized or coordinated assessment system.
YAB	Youth Action Board: Per HUD, a group of at least 3 youth with voting power on policy decisions of the CoC, particularly on policies that relate to preventing and ending youth homelessness. Each YAB member must be age 24 or younger, and at least two-thirds of the YAB members must have lived experience of homelessness and should be representative of the youth and young adult population experiencing homelessness in the community. The Youth Action Board must be a formal committee within the CoC.
YHDP	Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project: Per HUD, the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) is an exciting new initiative designed to reduce the number of youth experiencing homelessness. The goal of the YHDP is to support selected communities, including rural, suburban, and urban areas across the United States, in the development and implementation of a coordinated community approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness.

Statement of Need

State of Youth Homelessness: What is the state of youth homelessness in our community?

Consider first point-in-time data for the state, which provides a snapshot of how many people are experiencing homelessness on a specific night each year. Point-in-time counts use HUD's definition of homelessness, which includes those who are literally homeless, at imminent risk of homelessness, homeless under other federal statutes, and those fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence. It does not include those at risk of homelessness who are doubled up or who may be living in hotels or motels paid for with their own funds. This [YHDP Homeless Definition Quick Guide](#) published by HUD provides a detailed overview of HUD's definition of homeless which must be used by YHDP.

West Virginia's point in time data shows a steady increase in the number of people, including young people, who have experienced homelessness between 2017-2020.

West Virginia Point-in-Time Data					
<i>Please note: Point-in-Time Data uses HUD's definition of homelessness. More info here.</i>					
	Total People Experiencing Homelessness	Total Family Households Experiencing Homelessness	Total Veterans Experiencing Homelessness	Total People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness	Total Unaccompanied Young Adults (Ages 18-24) Experiencing Homelessness
2020	1,341	58	104	174	112
2019	1,397	79	137	161	89
2018	1,243	73	131	154	61
2017	1,309	95	137	206	79

The same is true for the Northern Panhandle area of West Virginia.

Northern Panhandle Continuum of Care Point-in-Time Data					
<i>Please note: Point-in-Time Data uses HUD's definition of homelessness. More info here.</i>					
	Total People Experiencing Homelessness	Total Family Households Experiencing Homelessness	Total Veterans Experiencing Homelessness	Total People Experiencing Chronic Homelessness	Total Unaccompanied Young Adults (Ages 18-24) Experiencing Homelessness
2020	129	5	5	20	18
2019	136	12	5	13	10
2018	108	9	8	21	6
2017	118	14	4	23	5

While we know point-in-time data may not capture every person experiencing homelessness in a community, it's still concerning to see the steady increase in the number of unaccompanied young adults experiencing homelessness in the Northern Panhandle Area, which tripled from 2017 to 2020.

Unaccompanied Youth: How many unaccompanied youth are at-risk of or experiencing homelessness in the Northern Panhandle?

At any given time, we estimate there are at least 34 unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness under HUD's definition of homelessness, and more than 2,300 at risk of becoming homeless, based on data from the McKinney Vento Act and U.S. Census.

How did we estimate the number of unaccompanied youth and young adults experiencing homelessness?

We used Coordinated Entry data to estimate the number of unaccompanied youth and young adults who experience homelessness each year. This data is provided by the Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless, who (as the NPCOC HMIS Lead) is responsible for compiling all coordinated entry data. It is certainly possible that we miss people each year who would qualify under the HUD definition of homelessness, but representatives of GWCH believe this to be a reasonably good estimate of the actual number of people experiencing homelessness each year.

To get our estimate, we averaged the number of unaccompanied youth who access the coordinated entry system from FY17, FY18, and FY19. We dropped the information from FY2020, as representatives from the Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless believe that data to be undercounted, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. That gave us an estimate of 34 unaccompanied youth.

Coordinated Entry Project Data from HMIS		
	Total number of people	Unaccompanied youth
FY 2020	409	25
FY 2019	463	32
FY 2018	482	35
FY 2017	419	35

How did we estimate the number of unaccompanied youth and young adults at risk of homelessness?

Four sources were used to estimate the number of unaccompanied youth at risk of homelessness: [2020 Census Reporter](#), [The West Virginia Kids Count Data Center](#), [2018-2019 West Virginia Kids Count Special Report on Homelessness](#) and data provided by Ohio County Schools.

We know childhood poverty isn't the only cause of homelessness, and that this data has a large margin of error. We still wanted to ground our estimates in demographic data for our counties.

2020 US Census Data: Population and Poverty Rates by County

County	Population and population density	% of people living below the poverty line*	% of children living in below the poverty line*
Brooke	22,162	12.3%	17%
Hancock	29,118	14%	21%
Marshall	30,900	15.5%	24%
Ohio	41,875	14.4%	15%
Wetzel	15,291	20.1%	29%

**Margin of error is at least 10 percent of the total value. Take care with this statistic.*

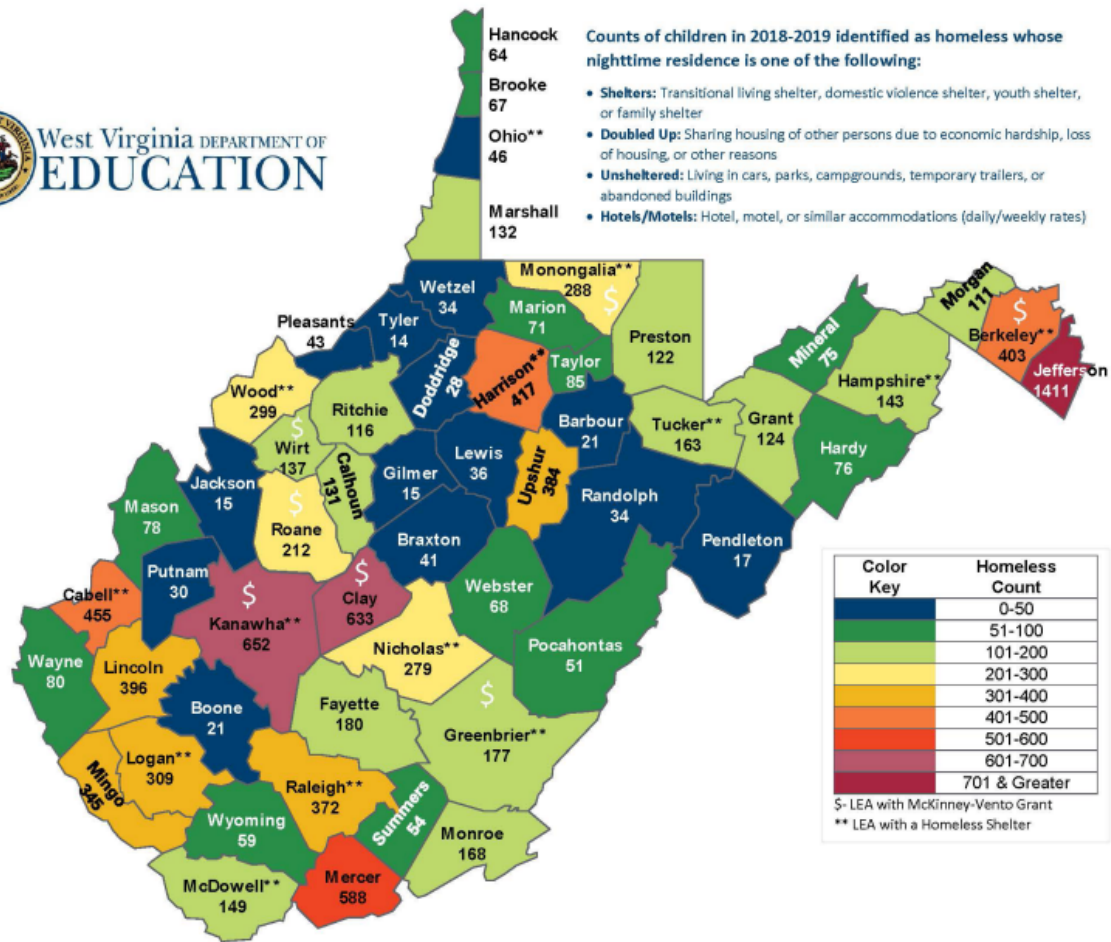
DOE Data: West Virginia Kids Count Youth Homelessness Report

In 2018-19, West Virginia Kids Count published a special report on [Rising Numbers in Youth Homelessness](#). Data was provided by the West Virginia Department of Education, who defines homelessness broadly, including families who are doubled up, living in motels or shelters, awaiting foster care placement, or living in cars. While this differs from the HUD definition of homelessness, we thought considering department of education data would help us understand the number of children who are still in school that might be at-risk of becoming homeless.

As you can see in the graphic below, the Northern Panhandle counties counted 343 children whose nighttime residence was in a shelter, doubled up, unsheltered, or living in a hotel or motel during the 2018-19 school year.



West Virginia DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



We considered those numbers in the context of the size of each county's school districts, the rate of students in each county who are considered economically disadvantaged, and the rate of children living below the poverty line in each county.

School District Demographics, most recent information					
County	Number of students in the school district, according to US News and World Reports	Number of students who report homelessness according to WV Kids Count	% of students who report homelessness	% of students who are economically disadvantaged according to US News and World Reports	% of children in the county living in poverty, according to the US Census
Brooke	2,691	67	2.5%	22.2%	17%
Hancock	3,787	64	1.7%	34%	21%
Marshall	4,460	132	3%	37.2%	24%
Ohio	5,269	46	0.9%	32.9%	15%
Wetzel	2,459	34	1.4%	41.6%	29%

DOE Data: Ohio County Schools Data

The Ohio County Schools Homeless Liaison was able to provide even more data for Ohio county, which gave us even more insight into the number of youth in schools who are experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

Ohio County Schools keep an ongoing account of the number of students who are experiencing homelessness (under the DOE's broad definition) at any given time. Even using the expanded definition of homelessness, we knew this data likely doesn't capture every student who is facing hardships that put them at risk of homelessness. Additionally, some youth (or their families) may not have not reported their living arrangements to the school system. This report also doesn't include youth who have dropped out of high school.

Ohio County Schools: Current Number of Students Experiencing Homelessness (reported Feb 18, 2022)									
School	Total Homeless Currently Enrolled	Nighttime Residence				Unaccompanied Youth			
		Un-sheltered	Hotel/Motel	Shelters	Doubled Up	Un-sheltered	Hotel/Motel	Shelters	Doubled Up
Bethlehem Elementary	0								
Elm Grove Elementary	0								
Madison Elementary	2			2					
Middle Creek Elementary	0								
Ritchie Elementary	1				1				
Steenrod Elementary	0								
West Liberty Elementary	0								
Woodsdale Elementary	0								
Bridge Street Middle School	5		2		3				
Triadelphia Middle School	6			6					
Warwood School	2				2				
Wheeling Middle School	4			4					
Wheeling Park High School	25		1	16	8		1	2	1
Total	45	0	3	28	14	0	1	2	1

Based on the breakdown Ohio County Schools shared, we saw that 28 students reside in shelters, 26 of whom are with a guardian. Those 28 students could qualify under HUD's definition of homelessness.

This helped contribute to our estimate for the number of children still in school who are at-risk of homelessness. 62% of the students counted by the Department of Education would likely be considered

homeless under HUD's definition. 2 students, or roughly 4% of those students are likely to be unaccompanied. If we use those numbers to estimate rates of youth who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness across all five counties, we could estimate:

- ~212 youth and young adults who are still in school are homeless under HUD's definition
 - ~14 of those youth and young adults are unaccompanied
- ~131 are at risk of homelessness

Given the census information, as well as the data provided by the West Virginia Department of Education all of that information, we believe it's reasonable to estimate that there may be approximately 14 unaccompanied youth and young adults who are still in school and homeless. Those youth are likely underrepresented in PIT count data, as only 18 *total* youth and young adults were identified, which includes youth 18-24 who are *not* in school.

Youth who are classified by the DOE, but not HUD, as homeless should be considered at-risk of homelessness for the purposes of this report. That gives us 131 who are still in school and at risk of becoming homelessness - a big but non-comprehensive number.

West Virginia Kids Count Data Center

We also need to consider the number of 18-24 year old youth and young adults who are *not* in school and who are experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

There is limited information available about this demographic. Based on data from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Kids Count Data Center, we know that, in West Virginia, in 2019, 17% of youth aged 18-24 were not attending school, not working, and had no degree beyond high school. That amounts to ~26,000 youth and young adults throughout the state of West Virginia. Although that percentage has fallen from 20% in 2016, it is still tied with Mississippi as the second-highest rate of disengaged youth in the United States.

That data isn't available by county, but if we use population counts from the US Census, we know roughly 8% of West Virginia's population resides in the Northern Panhandle. If we conservatively estimate that 8% of those disengaged youth and young adults reside in the Northern Panhandle, that could mean as many as 2,080 youth and young adults who are not in school or working.

Add that to the Department of Education data, and we estimate more than 2,300 youth and young adults who are 18-24 could be considered at-risk of becoming unaccompanied and homeless in the Northern Panhandle region.

Pregnant or Parenting Youth: How many pregnant or parenting youth are at-risk of or experiencing homelessness in the Northern Panhandle?

At any given time, we estimate there may be as many as three pregnant or parenting youth experiencing homelessness under HUD's definition of homeless and, based on various data sources, at least 150 more who could potentially become at risk of homelessness based on HUD's definition of homeless.

How did we estimate the number of pregnant and parenting youth and young adults experiencing homelessness?

We used several sources to estimate the number of pregnant or parenting youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness, all of which are described in greater detail below. Here's a quick summary of our sources:

- [2020 Census Reporter](#) and [US News and World Reports](#)
- Coordinated Entry Data
- [The West Virginia Kids Count Data Center](#)

2020 Census Data

Before sharing how we used available information to estimate the number of pregnant or parenting youth experiencing or at-risk of homelessness, we again wanted to ground in the population and poverty rates of the Northern Panhandle Counties.

US Census Data: Population and Poverty Rates by County			
County	Population and population density	# and % of people living below the poverty line*	# and % of children living in below the poverty line*
Brooke	22,162	12.3%	17%
Hancock	29,118	14%	21%
Marshall	30,900	15.5%	24%
Ohio	41,875	14.4%	15%
Wetzel	15,291	20.1%	29%

**Margin of error is at least 10 percent of the total value. Take care with this statistic.*

We used Coordinated Entry data to estimate the number of pregnant or parenting youth and young adults who experience homelessness each year. This data is provided by the Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless, who (as the NPCOC HMIS Lead Agency) is responsible for compiling all coordinated entry data. It is certainly possible that we miss people each year who would qualify under the HUD definition of homelessness, but representatives of GWCH believe this to be a reasonably good estimate of the actual number of people experiencing homelessness each year, including youth who are pregnant or parenting.

To get our estimate, we averaged the number of unaccompanied youth who access the coordinated entry system from FY17, FY18, and FY19. We dropped the information from FY2020, as representatives from the Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless believe that data to be undercounted, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. That gave us an estimate of 3 pregnant or parenting youth.

Coordinated Entry Project Data from HMIS, Special Populations			
	Total number of people	Total number of Unaccompanied Youth	Pregnant or Parenting Youth
FY 2020	409	25	1
FY 2019	463	32	0
FY 2018	482	35	2
FY 2017	419	35	3

How did we estimate the number of pregnant and parenting youth and young adults at risk of homelessness?

West Virginia Kids Count Data

The West Virginia Kids Count Data Center provides data on the well-being of children throughout the state; much of the data is available by county. One such data point is the number of teen births per county.

Teen Births per 1,000 females aged 15-19, according to WV Kids Count Data Center			
County	2019	2020	2021
Brooke	20.9	13.1	15.3
Hancock	29.3	22.6	20.7
Marshall	35.1	22.5	20.8
Ohio	27.4	18.6	17.7
Wetzel	34.3	43.6	35

Given the estimated number of high school students across the five counties and the average number of teen births per 1000 females, we estimate that means approximately 64 teen births each year.

Teen Births per 1,000 females aged 15-19, according to WV Kids Count Data Center					
County	~ # of HS students who could give birth	Estimated # of teen births	2019	2020	2021
Brooke	453	8	20.9	13.1	15.3
Hancock	604	15	29.3	22.6	20.7
Marshall	654	17	35.1	22.5	20.8
Ohio	451	10	27.4	18.6	17.7
Wetzel	391	14	34.3	43.6	35

According to the [Urban Institute](#):

- Only 38 percent of girls who have a child before age 18 get their high school diplomas by 22.
- Two-thirds of teen mothers who move out of their family home live in poverty, and a similar share receive public benefits in the first year of their child's life.
- Seventy-eight percent of children born to teenage mothers who never married and who did not graduate from high school live below the federal poverty level.

It's likely then, that teens giving birth in the Northern Panhandle region experience higher-than-average poverty rates. If we use $\frac{2}{3}$ as our estimate, then we estimate that 43 pregnant or parenting teens in high school are likely to be at risk of homelessness.

We were not able to find reliable information on birth rates for 18-24 year olds to do a similar estimate. For our estimated number of pregnant and parenting youth who are no longer in high school and who are at risk of homelessness, we multiplied the estimated number of pregnant or parenting teens by 3.5. We think that's a reasonable estimate for two reasons: Teen birth rates are fairly consistent year over year; tripling the number would include youth continuing to parent in the next age bracket up, and new births for 18-24 year olds, and more people likely give birth between the ages of 18-24, so we added an additional .5 multiplier

Even as we acknowledge that some teens who were living below the poverty line might find themselves in economically improved situations by the time they are twenty, we still find 3.5 to be a reasonable multiplier. Using data from various sources, that makes our estimate approximately 150 pregnant or parenting youth who could potentially become at risk of homeless based on HUD's definition.

Despite these relatively low numbers we know that pregnant and parenting youth are particularly vulnerable, and those who experience or are at-risk of experiencing homelessness have specific and unique needs and challenges. In our focus group, one youth described their challenges in the first few days of their child's life:

I was on my own. I felt alone. <My apartment's> heater is an electric bill killer, and it was even more difficult after having my son. It was difficult for me to keep him warm. I ended up in the hospital due to dehydration, because I wasn't taking care of myself. I couldn't find the time with a newborn baby to take a shower, eat, do anything. I was not able to carry him in his carseat, and getting him on to the bus was impossible. I couldn't lift him, and the carseat, and the stroller.

Additional Special Populations: What is the experience of other special populations who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness in the Northern Panhandle?

As we consider the needs of youth and young adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness in the Northern Panhandle, we want to consider the experiences of special populations, including LGBTQ+ youth and young adults, minors, justice-involved youth and young adults, foster care involved youth and young adults and victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation.

HMIS point-of-entry data for each fiscal year provides us a quick snapshot into the number of youth and young adults who use services in the Northern Panhandle each year, disaggregated by race, gender, and membership in some special populations. At the point of entry, HMIS captures data on gender, race and ethnicity, mental health needs, pregnant or parenting youth, LGBTQ+ and gender non-confirming youth, and youth who share they've been living in a juvenile justice facility. We'll include two tables summarizing the data we have here, and references to the data in the sections that follow.

Coordinated Entry Project Data from HMIS, Special Populations						
	Total number of people	Total number of Unaccompanied Youth	Pregnant or Parenting Youth	LGBT+, including transgender or Gender Non-Conforming Youth	Youth involved in the juvenile justice system	Youth reporting a mental health condition
FY 2020	409	25	1	3	0	14
FY 2019	463	32	0	1	0	20
FY 2018	482	35	2	0	2	18
FY 2017	419	35	3	3	0	21

We also know, data only tells us part of the story. Our conversations with youth and young adults who have experienced homelessness give us great insight into their needs and experiences, and we've included quotes from those individuals in each of the following sections.

LGBTQ+ Youth and Young Adults

PIT Count data does not include information about youth or young adults sexual orientation. PIT Count data does include gender, and there are options for people to identify themselves as transgender or gender non-confirming. Between 2017-2020, no gender non-confirming youth or young adults were counted in the PIT count; however, we know that transgender or gender non-confirming youth access our system. For example, an existing YAB member who has accessed the NPCOC Coordinated Entry System on multiple occasions over the years has identified as part of this special population during their most recent access of the system. PIT count data captures just one moment in time; coordinated entry data can paint a more accurate picture.

HMIS coordinated entry data shows between 0-3 LGBTQ+ or gender non-confirming youth accessing the coordinated entry system each year. Even this number may be low. Anecdotally, we know of and have spoken

with several trans and gender nonconforming youth and young adults in our community who have experienced homelessness.

We also know that nationally, a disproportionate number of youth experiencing homelessness are LGBTQ+. The [Voices of Youth Count Initiative](#), led by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, found that LGBTQ+ youth had a 120% higher risk of homelessness, compared to their peers. True Colors United published the report [Serving Our Youth 2015](#), where they found that although 7% of youth in the United States are LGBTQ, 40% of youth experiencing homelessness are LGBTQ. It's possible LGBTQ+ youth might be utilizing our system without identifying themselves. We also suspect that many more LGBTQ+ youth are at-risk of homelessness in our community.

Our conversations with youth and young adults in the Northern Panhandle have consistently highlighted the needs and experiences of LGBTQ+ youth in our community. While we don't have an exact number for how many youth and young adults in our community are LGBTQ and at-risk of homelessness, we do have stories of youth and young adults becoming homeless as a result of coming out to their parents. Here's one example from a young adult who recently experienced temporary homelessness:

I had come out freshman year to my parents. They were not accepting of it. They sent me to a summer camp at church. I came back and told them I was straight - which was a lie - and I kept that going to protect myself. That's what a lot of kids do. I didn't want to be kicked out... I came out again senior year. There was a big argument. They said, "If you disrespect us one more time <by coming out as gay>, we'll be removing you. You're 18. We'll try to support you, but you'll need to leave." I'd come to the conclusion that I can't keep staying here with a looming fear that I'm going to be kicked out, and have nowhere to go. I went up to them and said I need my legal documents. This isn't working out. I need some space. Three days later, I left.

Transgender and gender nonconforming youth have also shared some of their struggles with the homelessness system in the Northern Panhandle. Some share that they experience misgendering from support staff, which leads them to feel even more alienated. Caseworkers can serve as an important permanent connection for youth; however youth need to feel seen and valued for that to become true.

Youth recommended including questions on intake forms about gender and the names they'd like to be called, as well as training for staff. One trans youth said, "It's about creating trust between clients and workers - that helps you know you won't be exploited. Helps you feel respected and heard. In this big world of bigoted people you feel alienated. Things like this make LGBTQ people feel safer." They may not have known it, but that young adult is describing trauma-informed care, service providers that consider who they are as people, and all the experiences that might have led a young person to become homeless.

Justice Involved Youth and Young Adults

According to the coordinated entry data, only 2 youth or young adults have shared at their intake that they had contact with the juvenile justice system; we suspect this number may not be an accurate representation of the number of youth who experience or are at risk of homelessness who also have had contact with the juvenile justice system. In one of our focus groups, 3 of 3 young adults participating (that's 100%) had experienced residential juvenile justice facilities. We asked service providers supporting youth and young adults in the justice system to share more data, but they did not respond.

According to the young adults we spoke with, after leaving those facilities, it can be especially difficult for youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness to navigate the justice system. One youth described the challenges they faced meeting the expectations of the court while homeless.

Considering I was homeless, I didn't have a phone, and couldn't contact my PO. But, every time I needed to take a urine test I was there. When he could get ahold of me, I was there, but he had a hard time getting ahold of me. Trying to find a ride to get to his office was hard. This was my first time being on probation, and me showing that I was willing to work with the court system is why I'm no longer on probation. And I don't think I'll be back soon.

Paying fees, staying in contact with their parole officer, and finding transportation to court appointments - it's all more difficult when you are struggling with homelessness. Services which promote navigation of the system and linkage to resources are necessary for successful outcomes. Being sent to a juvenile justice center can have consequences beyond literal incarceration for young adults. One youth described how they're still grieving the loss of their emotional support animal.

I also had an emotional support dog before I got locked up, and they took my dog and put them in the pound. He was a wonderful dog. They took the dog away because no one else was there <to care for him>.

Foster Care Involved Youth

According to the [Casey Family Programs West Virginia Fact Sheet](#), in 2019 approximately 7,211 children were living in foster care. Most children who exit the foster care system in West Virginia (51%) are reunited with their families; 46% are exited to adoption or to live with relatives, 2% age out, and 1% are designated "other," which means they transferred to another agency, ran away, or died.

Youth Services Systems (YSS) is the largest provider of youth-specific services in our area. They are a comprehensive provider of youth-specific services including foster care, as well as justice involved and runaway homeless youth. Their programs served 121 youth and young adults during fiscal year 2021 by either housing them in one of their facilities or providing rental assistance. YSS estimates that half of those - around 60 youth - were in foster care during or prior to utilizing their services.

Victims of Sexual Trafficking and Exploitation

The [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#) offers some information about the total number of victims of sex trafficking reported to them in any given state. They report 41 instances of trafficking in West Virginia in 2020, 36 of which involved sex or sex trafficking (and six of which did not involve sex or sex trafficking). While they don't disaggregate their data by age *and* type, 21 cases reported were minors; thus, even if all six of the cases not involving sex or sex trafficking were minors, that still means that at least 15 and possibly more of the instances of sex trafficking reported in the state of West Virginia involved minors.

We don't have this information disaggregated by county, and we don't know how many youth or young adults in the Northern Panhandle region have been the victims of sexual exploitation. Anecdotally, we do know that youth and young adults have experienced sexual exploitation in our area. One young adult in our focus group

shared their experience reporting their sexual abuse, which directly led to them becoming homeless.

My homelessness started a few months after I turned 18. I was in a therapy session with my old therapist...when I told her, my mom, and my aunt at the time about my sexual abuse. I became homeless a week after the court case started.

This youth shared how they experienced great trauma before, during, and after their experiences of homelessness. Like many other youths who experience homelessness, victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation need more than a safe place to stay. They need mental health support, and sometimes support navigating complex legal systems. They need and deserve trauma-informed care at every step of the process.

Minors

Our estimate of unaccompanied youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness under HUD's definition showed that up to 14 high school students (who may be minors) may be unaccompanied and experiencing homelessness each year. Youth Services System - the largest provider of foster care and juvenile justice services - increased our confidence in that estimate, as they shared that they served around 14 unaccompanied minors in fiscal year 2021.

With child poverty rates between 15-29% across the five counties, we know a large number of children are at-risk of becoming homeless while still minors. In fact, most of the youth in our focus groups experienced the risk of homelessness (and sometimes literal homelessness) while they were under the age of 18. Some of the young adults in our focus group described parents struggling with substance abuse or mental health challenges; those difficulties led to conflict, which sometimes led to minors experiencing homelessness. Youth who shared their experiences as minors were often also a part of other special populations, which only exacerbated the challenges they faced.

Racial Equity: What do we know about racial equity for youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness in the Northern Panhandle?

According to the [2020 US Census](#), all five counties in the Northern Panhandle are overwhelmingly white.

Northern Panhandle - Racial Demographics by County, According to the 2020 US Census							
	White	Black or African	American Indian & Alaskan Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	Hispanic or Latino
Brooke	96.3%	1.5%	.2%	.5%	-	1.5%	.9%
Hancock County	94%	2.7%	.2%	.5%	-	1.6%	1.6%
Marshall County	97.4%	.8%	.3%	.4%	-	1.1%	1%
Ohio County	93%	3.7%	.2%	.8%	-	2.3%	1.3%
Wetzel County	97.8%	.5%	.1%	.3%	0%	1.2%	1.1%

Still, it's essential to consider the experiences and needs of youth and young adults of color, as being part of such a small number could exacerbate the inequities faced by youth and young adults in the Northern Panhandle region.

Three of our data sources disaggregate data by race: Point-of-Entry data, PIT count data, and the 2022 data provided by Ohio County Schools. All three show people of color consistently over-represented in the homeless population.

We're looking at numbers that are quite small; even one person of color in a sample size under 20 represents a large proportion. However, if the demographics of the homeless population mirrored the entire population, we would expect to see fewer than one person of color each year. That's not the case.

Coordinated Entry Project Data from HMIS, Racial Backgrounds							
	Total number of people	Total number of Unaccompanied Youth	White	Black or African American	Multiple Races	American Indian, Alaskan Native or Indigenous	Hispanic/ Latino
FY 2020	409	25	17 (68%)	5 (20%)	3 (12%)	-	-
FY 2019	463	32	24 (75%)	5 (16%)	4 (13%)	1 (3%)	-
FY 2018	482	35	24 (69%)	9 (26%)	2 (6%)	-	-
FY 2017	419	35	27 (77%)	5 (14%)	3 (9%)	-	-

PIT Count Data, Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adults by Race and Ethnicity, 2017-2020

	Total Unaccompanied Young Adults (Ages 18-24) Experiencing Homelessness	# and percent of Unaccompanied Young Adults by Race and Ethnicity						
		White	Black or African American	Asian	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Multiple Races	Hispanic or Latino (may be counted 2x)
2020	18	13 (72%)	2 (11%)	-	1 (6%)	-	2 (11%)	-
2019	10	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	-	-	-	-	-
2018	6	5 (83%)	1 (17%)	-	-	-	-	-
2017	5	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	-	-	-	-	-

The Ohio County Schools provided data that also gives us some insight into inequities youth and young adults of color might experience as they navigate the school system. In considering Ohio County Schools data on homelessness from 2016-present, we can see that Black or African American students and students of two or more races are consistently over-represented in counts of youth experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.

Ohio County Schools Data - Youth Experiencing Homelessness, Disaggregated by Race

Race	% of youth experiencing homelessness (according to district internal report on homeless children and youth)						% of school population (according to US News & World Reports , accessed Feb 20, 2022)	% of Ohio County Population in 2021 (according to US Census)
	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	current		
White	70%	80%	78%	81%	80%	78%	85%	93%
Black or African American	23%	13%	13%	9%	5%	11%	6.6%	3.7%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.1%	.2%
Asian	-	-	-	-	3%	-	0.7%	0.8%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific	-	-	2%	-	-	-	0.1%	0%

Islander								
Two or More Races	7%	7%	7%	8%	12%	11%	6.3%	2.3%
Hispanic or Latino	-	-	-	2%	-	-	1.2%	1.3%

This over-representation of youth of color in Ohio County Schools is consistent with the broader population of all people who experience or are at risk of homelessness under HUD's definition of homeless. In 2019, the NPCOC conducted a racial disparities assessment, based on data from GWCH programs accessed through the NPCOC Coordinated Entry System. The assessment found that of people who access coordinated entry, people who are African American/Black are overrepresented in homelessness by 9% compared to the general population living in poverty and by 13% compared to the overall general population. People who access coordinated entry and are White are underrepresented in homelessness by 11% compared to the general population living in poverty and by 16% compared to the overall general population.

While African American/Black people are overrepresented in the population of those experiencing homelessness, the same report found that African American/Black people and people who identified themselves as Other/Multi-Racial tend to have more successful outcomes related to permanent housing exits as a result of receiving homeless assistance.

People who are African American/Black and experiencing homelessness have a 6% higher rate of successful exits to permanent housing compared to persons who are White and receiving homeless assistance. People who are Other/Multi-Racial and experiencing homelessness are overrepresented in the homeless system by 4%, however they have an 8% increase in the rate of exits to permanent housing compared to persons who are African American/Black and a 14% increase in the rate of exits to permanent housing compared to persons who are White.

System Mapping and Analysis

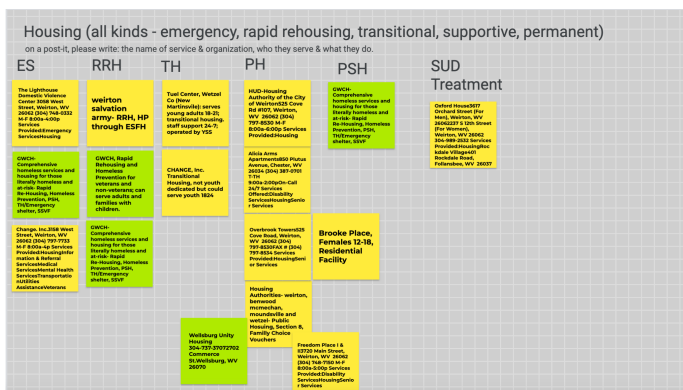
To better understand the strengths and weaknesses of the support available to youth and young adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness in the Northern Panhandle, stakeholders convened throughout March of 2022 to gather and analyze local data, conduct a systems mapping exercise, and perform a SWOT analysis.

Much of the data analyzed appears throughout this report. For the Systems Map, we use Google Jamboard to map all services - housing, education, employment, social-emotional well-being, physical well-being, permanent connections, and transportation - across Greater Wheeling in one document and Weirton/Rural Areas in another. These are considered live documents; stakeholders can return to them year after year to update with new information.

Systems Maps for the Northern Panhandle

- [Greater Wheeling Services](#)
- [Weirton and Rural Services](#)

Below: Screenshot of the Wheeling and Weirton/Rural Systems Map.



Strengths: What are our strengths when it comes to youth and young adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness in the Northern Panhandle?

Stakeholders identified a number of strengths in their work with youth who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Perhaps our greatest strength is the Continuum of Care. That group is strong; it's existed for more than two decades, and the people who are part of the COC have strong habits of collaboration. They meet regularly, and understand both the coordinated system and the people using it. That allows COC members to thoughtfully prioritize their work, and match individuals based on their needs and available resources.

In the Northern Panhandle, we see a low recidivism rate for transitional housing serving individuals and families with children under the HEARTH Act definition of homeless. In the 20-year lifespan of the Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless' Transitional Housing program, only 7% of the households served returned to homelessness, demonstrating a 93% success rate in ending homelessness permanently. Despite its success, HUD eliminated 50% of Transitional Housing projects nationwide in 2015 as part of its effort to shift to Housing First, resulting in the defunding of GWCH's Transitional Housing project. In 2016, the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG), which also offered operational support for Transitional Housing, cut all funding from the program. Both Transitional Housing facilities have been defunded by all Federal funding sources. Without any dedicated financial support, GWCH has utilized the unfunded facilities as a shelter option for those who are experiencing literal homelessness under the HEARTH Act definition and are awaiting permanent housing placement. The shelter facilities have been predominantly sheltering unaccompanied homeless youth between the ages of 18-24, specifically those in special populations such as LGBTQ+, as the non-congregate layout of the two facilities offer a level of privacy and safety cited by participants as a significant need not available in local area congregate shelters, such as the Winter Freeze Shelter.

The NPCOC has also seen success when we implement programs targeting specific populations of people experiencing homelessness. For example, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs established the Supportive Services for Veteran Families program in 2011 to rapidly re-house homeless Veterans and their families, as well as prevent homelessness for those at imminent risk due to a housing crisis.

In 2013, three organizations within the five-county Northern Panhandle region of West Virginia were awarded SSVF funding to target Rapid Re-Housing and Homeless Prevention for veterans and their families. Community planning efforts among the three SSVF providers led to the community locally achieving "functional zero," which is defined by Community Solutions as "the milestone, which must be sustained, that indicates a community has measurably ended homelessness for a population. When it's achieved, homelessness is rare and brief for that population." Using a by-name list of all persons experiencing homelessness, all three SSVF providers attend monthly NPCOC's Provider Committee meeting to prioritize all persons, including Veterans and their families, for permanent housing placement. For each Veteran who cannot be diverted from entering the homeless system, it has been determined there are sufficient available resources to resolve their homelessness quickly and permanently.

Youth Services System is another asset for youth and young adults who are experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. They primarily serve youth under 21, and offer services specifically for youth involved in foster care, in the juvenile justice system, and runaway or homeless youth. YSS programs include an all-age winter freeze shelter, emergency shelters, two transitional housing options, and educational and employment programs.

Gaps: What are our biggest gaps when it comes to supporting youth and young adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness in the Northern Panhandle?

Stakeholders identified four significant gaps when it comes to supporting youth and young adults who are at-risk of or experiencing homelessness.

- The Continuum of Care is strong, but it doesn't differentiate services specifically for the unique needs of youth.
- There are services available, but all too often youth and the people who come in frequent contact with youth don't know what support exists or how to access it.
- Geography makes things challenging. There isn't enough housing available in rural areas, and it's difficult to secure transportation throughout the Northern panhandle.
- Homelessness is mentally taxing. Youth need to be able to access trauma-informed mental health support and positive, healthy development opportunities.

The Systems Map showed that there are services available, but parents, teachers and mental health professionals – the people who are most likely to come in contact with youth who experience the threat of homelessness – don't always know about those services, or how to help the youth they encounter.

And even when services are available, they often aren't youth-focused, and therefore aren't able to meet the unique needs of youth and young adults. That's true of everything from the availability of emergency shelters to the coordinated entry system itself. Youth themselves share a need for youth-focused mental health support, as well as engagement and learning opportunities.

And all of these weaknesses are exacerbated by geography. There are fewer services available in the most rural areas of the Northern Panhandle community, and it's more difficult to find transportation between those rural areas. We hope to alleviate many of these gaps through administration of the YHDP.

Needs: What do youth and young adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness in the Northern Panhandle need?

Stable Housing

As we learned through our systems mapping and SWOT analysis, youth need youth-specific housing options. While youth can access housing services that are for all ages, nearly every young adult we spoke with during our focus groups brought up the need for emergency shelters and transitional housing specifically for youth – and how life-changing it can be for youth who are able to access youth-focused housing services. Several YAB members are enrolled in GWCH programs that meet their housing needs. These models are evidence-based, and could be adopted for youth-focused projects.

One young adult summed it up this way:

Young people have a lot of anxiety. They won't go to the places adults go to because they've been told their whole life that those are people to avoid – until you became one of those people. There are places giving away what they need for free, but they won't go because they're scared. They might go to a store and steal things instead – and then you've got an arrest record. Youth need services that take their needs into account.

Two of the youth talked about their struggles in all-age facilities. One talked about their experience with PTSD after sexual abuse, which can make it difficult to shower and share space. Some of the facilities they've been exposed to have not been understanding about their specific needs. LGBTQ+ youth described being constantly misgendered by staff. Other young adults described feeling rushed, and feeling like their mental health needs are not understood by some support staff.

Another young person described their need for safety and human connection while experiencing homelessness:

The shelters we have around here are not comfortable for people. People feel... not safe. There's not much interaction going on among the people who are in there. There needs to be some kind of interaction with people who are staying there to make them feel like they belong. They have this sense that I'm alone. Friendship, happiness, that can change the demeanor of people, a lot.

As mentioned before, there are two transitional housing options for youth aged 17-21 in the Northern Panhandle: the Tuel Transitional Living Training Center in New Martinsville and the McCrary Center in Wheeling. Several of the young adults who participated in our focus groups shared that they had used those services in the past and found them helpful. One had moved in and out of one of the Centers twice; they described that they didn't like being there, but that the Center helped them “get from where they were to where they needed to be.” Another young adult described a positive experience living at one of the Centers, but felt significant anxiety as they approached their 21st birthday and struggled to secure new housing.

Even with two transitional facilities for youth 17-21, the availability of housing doesn't always match up with young adult's needs for employment and transportation. One youth described their joy at finding housing being tempered with having to quit their job, as they had to move to a different town and had no way to get to work. In fact, several of the youth in our focus groups described their challenges with transportation.

Our buses go from 6 AM to 6 PM, and there aren't a whole lot of routes. They don't run on Sundays. No night routes. If you work the night shift, you're screwed. And at the beginning of the month, those buses are packed. I get very claustrophobic! And if you miss the bus, you might as well just consider walking. Some routes run every hour, but only a couple run every half hour. And some routes run on highways – so you can't walk.

If buses aren't available, young adults often find themselves walking – which can be difficult, especially in the winter. One participant spoke about their experiences struggling to get to work:

With me living a 40 minute walk from my job it definitely causes a more stressful day, especially when it's cold. When you're tired and cold and then you have to work a 10 hour day... With these living expenses how do you expect us to pay for a car as well?

Another young adult, who is also a high school student, talked about the time it takes to walk everywhere they need to go.

<Transportation> is always the hardest. That's probably the biggest hindrance to all the things I want to do. It's the thing that stopped me from doing extracurriculars. I have to choose between work and extracurriculars, because I don't have time <to get to both>. It makes you grow up. Prevents you from getting some of those accomplishments or scholarships. And whatever I pick as a job, I've got to be able to get there. It's always a constant thought. Luckily <my current job> is a block away. Before, I had to walk about 40 minutes every day. That takes a lot of time.

Stakeholders noted that while the COC has a strong coordinated entry system, creating a version of that system to be youth-focused could help youth find their way to services that are a strong fit for them; it could also be a source of permanent connection, through caseworkers or other service providers who understand the unique needs of youth and young adults. Additionally, providing more housing options - specifically in rural areas - could be a game-changer for rural youth who are homeless or at-risk of experiencing homelessness. We know that youth-focused, stable housing can provide a foundation from which young adults can build. Consider these words from one focus group participant who recently acquired transitional housing after a short stint of homelessness.

I'm proud of the fact that I didn't break down. I wanted to provide for myself and <my partner> and that's all that mattered to me. As soon as we got in a safe place where we can stay as long as needed... There are still some struggles, like getting a job. But I felt safe as soon as we were in housing where we can stay longer than a week.

Education/Employment

Youth experiencing or at-risk of homelessness face many challenges when it comes to securing employment or education. Transportation, mental health, physical health, trauma – addressing all of those barriers will help youth get to a place where they can more easily access the educational or employment opportunities available

to them. Youth need housing options that are near their places of employment, and/or transportation between their homes and work. Youth also expressed a need to develop their own knowledge and skills, to be better prepared for the workforce. Understanding what resources are available is the first kind of education many youth need. It can be difficult for youth who find themselves at-risk of homelessness to know where to go, or what to do. Consider one young adult's story:

I had no idea what I was doing. I had \$300 saved, so we spent two days in a hotel. I was still working, but we didn't have a house to go to. We stayed at <my workplace> until my shift was over. We had suitcases in one of my coworkers' cars. I was working and I was asking all my coworkers, what do I do, and where do I go? They gave me a list of motels, the housing authority. The housing authority had a long list. It was going to be months before we could get some kind of assistance. We thought we were going to be going to the Salvation Army at night, and during the day on the streets just roaming around. I was stressed. Homelessness is very stressful. Thank the lord we were able to get to YSS. I'm glad <my partner's> counselor knew that. Four days we were without a home. I didn't want to be on the streets. I'm young, and it was terrifying.

Another of the young adults in our focus group talked about the limitations of their school during their first experience with homelessness.

For me, there's not enough support in our school system to prevent homelessness. The only thing they can do is direct us to places that can help. It was a weekend when I became homeless. Friday afternoon. Last few weeks of my senior year. I didn't tell my school I was homeless.

Youth and young adults also advocated for more opportunities to connect with people like themselves, and to build useful life skills, both during and after high school.

I would have liked to have seen more PRIDE support groups. Sexual abuse groups. Homeless prevention groups. We don't even have curriculum on sexual abuse prevention or homeless prevention. There's not enough education on sexual abuse, how to notice it, how you can help someone who is in that kind of situation, physical abuse as well.

Several young adults talked about the need for support in learning to manage their finances. One shared their challenges, saying, "I'm not very good at counting money. I'm not good at budgeting at all." Another recommended teaching high school students about budgeting money.

I don't remember a whole lot about my HS, but I wish they would teach students more about financial advice. I wish they'd teach you how to budget money. I feel like that'd benefit people a lot more in life. That'd reduce the homeless population a lot. Teach people how to get money and save it.

Other young adults described how education and employment support helped them. After losing their job when they secured housing in a different town, one youth had the opportunity to attend a job fair in their new town with their caseworker. That resulted not only in employment, but in a better paying job, with accessible transportation, that also offered benefits.

GWCH runs an evidence-based employment program for those 18 and older; this is another example of a project that could be adapted to serve youth specifically. As the YHDP lead agency, GWCH recently offered YAB members a workshop on self-employment tax, led by a local attorney who donated their time. YAB members found the workshop helpful. Workshops like this could be a model for youth-focused education programs that have a swift, positive impact for young adults.

Social-Emotional Well-Being

All of the youth in our focus group talked about mental health. Some discussed the way their mental health challenges contributed to their experiences becoming homeless.

With all of this, it's making my depression worse, my anxiety worse. I've been banned from the Salvation Army. I've tried my best getting help from places but it just didn't work out very well. I was an emotional wreck, with my bi polar. I have an explosive disorder. When they all kick in, when I black out, I don't even want to be around myself.

Some shared about traumatic experiences that led to their homelessness, or that they experienced while homeless. Young adults described parents who struggle with substance abuse and mental health challenges of their own. One young adult described how their mother's mental health challenges contributed to her being at risk of homelessness.

Throughout high school, my mom has had severe mental health issues. I support her, but it's a very traumatic situation. I don't feel comfortable being around her. She's very verbally abusive and physically intimidating. On my birthday she had a bad meltdown...I had no idea what to do. I need an address, and someone to help me with things like phone bills. Now I'm at my grandma's, but it's still really stressful, because she has anxiety.

All of the youth - six out of six young adults - described the mental strain homelessness places on young adults, and their need for mental health support.

My homelessness - the first time - that's the reason I have mental issues. I seen some things on the streets that I shouldn't have seen. People dying and getting shot, things like that. I don't want to go further in detail about that.

It was very stressful. I have so much stuff popping up...I don't even really know. It's just a mixture of everything, everywhere. When I take my meds, half the time it doesn't work. My temper gets pretty bad. I try not to let that go, cause I tend to bottle stuff up, when I blow it's not so pretty.... If you had the chance to be in my head you'd want to leave instantly. It can get pretty dark.

Homelessness does put a mental and emotional strain on you. There's been times I've called my mom, crying, saying I'm done, I can't do it.

There are helpful mental health services in our area. PATH offers homeless individuals with a serious mental illness, including those with co-occurring substance use disorders, intensive and personalized outreach and engagement services. PATH acts as a bridge to traditional community and behavioral health services, and are intended to engage participants in interagency coordination and cooperation. Community Engagement supports a similar population by working with individuals to offer linkage to community supports which reduce instances of hospitalization throughout housing search and placement in housing. Both projects are trauma-informed and person-centered.

Permanent Connections

Whether they're securing housing, navigating service systems, or participating in educational programs, youth expressed a consistent desire for those experiences to be sources of connection and understanding. A few of the young adults from our focus groups described their connections - both helpful and unhelpful - with teachers and caseworkers. Here are some reflections from a youth who described how positive relationships have impacted them:

If a youth is in school, having understanding educators makes a world of difference. Two of my teachers have made an endless impact on my education. They've been there to be emotional comfort. They wouldn't blame you for not having assignments done when you're dealing with larger issues. Someone to understand your limitations when you're dealing with serious home, housing, mental health issues. They're patient, understanding. They provide you with resources. I'll still have those resources coming out of high school.

One of the young adults in our focus group made clear that personal connections and mental health are intimately connected. When asked what they needed most, they responded this way:

Honestly? A friend. That's literally it. A friend. If I just had somebody I could share my thoughts, fun, experiences with, it would have made the greatest difference.

In our work with youth so far, we've found that the YAB itself can be a source of support, community integration and permanent connections. After their most recent weekend retreat, YAB members expressed that it was nice to have an opportunity to spend time socially with other young adults who have similar experiences.

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision: We envision a Northern Panhandle Community where Continuum of Care partners and the Youth Action Board stop youth and young adult homelessness before it starts. While we know that young people in Brooke, Hancock, Ohio, Marshall and Wetzel counties may find themselves homeless or at risk of homelessness, those instances will be rare, brief, and non-recurring. Youth and young adults in all five Northern Panhandle counties will be able to access a comprehensive system of services that are effective and responsive to young adults' needs – especially the needs of special populations, including LGBTQ+ youth, gender non-conforming youth, minors, youth involved with the justice system, youth involved in foster care, victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation, and youth with disabilities.

The youth in our community are vibrant and resilient, and we imagine a future full of opportunity for them. Youth will be empowered to make decisions about their lives, with access to stable housing, employment, and education. They'll have mental health support, physical health support, and support for their social and emotional well-being. Youth and young adults who have first-hand experience with homelessness or the risk of homelessness will have strong connections to the community. The Youth Action Board will be leaders, shaping the direction of support for youth in the community and sharing resources with the next generation.

Mission: The NPCoC and YAB will work to end youth homelessness in the five-county region by...

- Utilizing the Youth homelessness Demonstration Project (and other funding sources) to identify, develop and support specific projects to support youth and young adults who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Building community awareness about the state of youth and young adult homelessness, and existing resources to alleviate youth and young adult homelessness
- Partnering to provide services in all five counties that ensure youth and young adults - especially special populations of youth and young adults, including LGBTQ+, gender non-conforming, minors, justice involved, foster care involved, victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation...
 - acquire and maintain stable housing without preconditions
 - access opportunities for education and employment
 - build permanent connections in the community
 - access physical and mental health resources
- Building relationships with youth, mentoring and advocating for youth
- Support, develop and maintain the composition of the Youth Action Board
- Maintaining collaborative relationships across stakeholder groups, especially youth-serving organizations and schools

Values: When we set goals, pursue projects, and make decisions, we will operate with these values at the forefront of our hearts and minds:

- **Creativity:** We're a small, unique, and a rural community. We may not always have access to the same resources or opportunities other communities do, but we will be creative and flexible in our approach to ending homelessness. We'll be open to new ways of doing things.
- **Sustainability:** We must be able to keep our work going; that takes people and money. We will ensure we're pursuing funding sources and resources that will allow us to support youth in our community, and we will develop relationships with youth and each other that enable us to provide that support.

- Collaboration: No one can do this work on their own. We must capture information in writing for everyone, and ensure our work is aligned to our vision. We will communicate across agencies frequently and use our energy well.

To reach this vision and administer the YHDP, the Northern Panhandle COC has created a goal-driven action plan, captured on pages 30-35.

Action Plan

Goal 1: Improve prevention, identification, and intervention for youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Prevent youth homelessness by keeping youth in safe, stable housing where possible. If prevention is not an option, end youth homelessness by identifying safe, affordable housing options for youth.			
Objectives	Action Steps: Description	Timeline	Ownership
Objective 1A: Develop a point of coordinated entry for youth that provides referral, placement and ongoing intensive case management to access and sustain housing	<p>Action Step 1Ai: Solicit projects that include a youth-centric coordinated entry point. Support the current coordinated entry system and its accessibility for youth by considering applicants for coordinated entry programs that can offer the following provisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entry points offer youth immediate access to safe, secure and stable housing without preconditions (housing first) - Entry points are accessible for youth - Develop a preliminary screening tool that's creative and app-based and/or web-based - Work with the Youth Coordinator (to be hired by GWCH), to ensure aligned referrals, outreach and education and alignment to the YAB 	<p>Identify potential partners April and May; they'll apply as soon as the grant is funded</p> <p>Any applicant needs to meet these requirements; if a project is funded, you have 60 days to ensure your system meets our requirements for youth.</p>	Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless for Coordinated Entry; YWCA Coordinated Entry for Domestic Violence.
	Action Step 1Aii: Provide youth-specific, individualized and client-driven housing case management services; support youth to gather required vital records required for housing, etc. Set caseworkers up to serve as a permanent, supportive connection for youth, and to support youth to build or maintain other permanent connections, including with their families. Ensure youth have agency and choice throughout the process.	As soon as the grant is funded	Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless
	Action Step 1Aiii: Youth Coordinator will identify and offer supportive services specifically for youth, including special populations and prioritizing trauma-informed care and positive youth development	Ownership shifts to Youth Coordinator within 30 days of Youth Coordinator being hired	Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless Youth Coordinator

Objective 1B: Improve youth and young adult's access to housing, especially in rural communities	Action Step 1Bi: Identify existing providers who conduct outreach in rural counties who can expand their outreach efforts to include youth and refer to the designated Coordinated Entry access point, to eliminate side door admissions and improve the use of the HMIS system	Within 60 days of hire	Youth Coordinator
	<p>Action Step 1Bii: Develop youth-focused housing and supportive service projects (Rapid Re-Housing, Joint Transitional – Permanent Housing Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing) that must provide comprehensive geographic accessibility in all five counties, including rural communities that lack access to shelters or other community support. Ensure we offer youth immediate access to safe, secure, and stable housing without preconditions, and prioritize any youth who is experiencing unsheltered homelessness in a rural community.</p> <p>Estimated Household Targets per Maximum Allocation Amount</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rapid Re-Housing: Target of 15 households, blend of 1 and 2 bedrooms at FMR for 12 months, including various fees, and security and utility deposits. ● Joint Transitional Housing – Permanent Housing-Rapid Re-Housing: <u>Transitional Housing Component:</u> Four households at 6 months equals a target of 8 households annually. <u>Rapid Re-Housing Component:</u> Target of 15 households, blend of 1 and 2 bedrooms at FMR for 12 months, including various fees, and security and utility deposits. ● Permanent Supportive Housing: There is an assumption under PSH that units do not exceed Fair Market Rent for the county in which they exist. Based on the differential of FMR and unit size, the target is a minimum of 10 households per year. 	<p>Identify potential partners April and May; they'll apply as soon as the grant is funded</p> <p>Execute project within regulations set by HUD</p>	YHDP lead agency, with support from the NPCOC will identify potential owners of this project; they'll look for partners who have the capacity and interest in taking on this project.

In the box below, highlight the YHDP Key Principles connected to this goal

Four Core Outcomes.

- Stable Housing
- Permanent Connections
- Education/Employment
- Social-emotional well-being

Special Populations

- LGBTQ+
- Gender non-conforming
- Minors
- Justice involved
- Foster care involved
- Victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation

Other Key Principles

- Equity
- Trauma-Informed Care
- Housing First
- Youth Choice
- Positive Youth Development
- Family Engagement
- Unsheltered Homelessness
- Individualized and Client-Driven
- Social and Community Integration
- Coordinated Entry for Youth
- Improvement of Data Systems

Goal 2: Improve interagency coordination of core services for youth			
Objectives	Action Steps: Description	Timeline	Ownership
Objective 2A: Educate the community on the youth response system, including systems serving special populations	Action Step 2Ai: Marketing. Create visual resources to help those who have consistent contact with youth understand what resources are available, especially for special populations. Options include videos, infographics, a maintained website	Within 120 days of CCP submission - info graphic on every counties website for school system	Owner: Amy Minch - Ohio County Schools Homeless Liaison - Need to get names contact of all county liaisons in area we serve for support
	Action Step 2Aii: Create system to connect youth to the resources that are available (juvenile justice involved youth, run away youth, minors, victims of sex trafficking and exploitation, LGBTQ+ and gender non-confirming youth), including designating members of the community as a contact person/ outreach representative—someone to guide youth to the process (Guidance counselors, social workers, therapists, CPS workers, Court advocates, POs). Include any agency where the youth present themselves.	With 90 days of Youth coordinator being hired	YAB & Youth Coordinator, in partnership with FRN resource list for each county tweaked to address all youth needs, distributed to all local social service, legal, schools public, private, mental health, community centers
Objective 2B: Improve collection and sharing of data on youth homelessness through the use of the Homeless Management Information System.	Action Step 2Bi: The Youth Coordinator position will use the existing Coordinated Entry process established by the NPCOC but will reach out to partners, school systems, YHDP providers to facilitate the collection of information for homeless youth.	Ownership shifts to Youth Coordinator within 30 days of Youth Coordinator being hired	NPCOC HMIS lead agency-the Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless.
	Action Step 2Bii: Expand the current HMIS system to capture the additional data gathering required by YHDP for point of entry and for each new project. As additional new projects are approved, HMIS lead agency will identify the additional data needed, and be responsible for expanding the system to meet those needs.	The project can be created in HMIS within 60 days of receiving HMIS data collection requirements from HUD.	NPCOC HMIS lead agency-the Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless.
	Action Step 2Biii: Expand the duties of the existing HMIS Specialist to develop the program specific data elements necessary for tracking the unique elements of youth subpopulations such as, foster care, sex trafficking	60 days after receiving funds	NPCOC HMIS lead agency-the Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless.

	exploitation, youth parents, LGBTQ+, and gender non-conforming.		
	Action Step 2Biv: Develop a position to assist the HMIS Specialist to work with YHDP programs to train end users, monitor data entry accuracy and timeliness, as well as assist with reporting requirements.	90 days after receiving funds	NPCoC HMIS lead agency-the Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless.

In the box below, highlight the YHDP Key Principles connected to this goal

<p>Four Core Outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stable Housing Permanent Connections Education/Employment Social-emotional well-being 	<p>Special Populations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGBTQ+ Gender non-conforming Minors Justice involved Foster care involved Victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation 	<p>Other Key Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equity Trauma-Informed Care Housing First Youth Choice Positive Youth Development Family Engagement Unsheltered Homelessness Individualized and Client-Driven Social and Community Integration Coordinated Entry for Youth Improvement of Data Systems
---	--	--

Goal 3: Use the YHDP to maintain and continuously grow the YAB

Objectives	Action Steps: Description	Timeline	Ownership
<p>Objective 3A: Develop a structure that maintains the composition of the YAB.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand that YAB membership will be fluid. - Adult membership will likely be consistent, but youth members will change, so we will set up systems to prepare for YAB members to change year over year 	Action Step 3Ai: The lead agency will hire a Youth Coordinator to help steward projects, and build and maintain the YAB.	Will have a Youth Coordinator position filled within 80 days after funding award.	Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless
	Action Step 3Aii: Ensure new YAB members understand their role in administering YHDP and working with the NPCOC Compliance Committee	Ownership shifts to Youth Coordinator within 30 days of Youth Coordinator being hired	Youth Coordinator and YAB
	Action Step 3Aiii: Market the YAB opportunity to youth in the community; identify opportunities for the YAB to integrate into the community, especially in events or spaces oriented toward members of special populations (like the Youth Fair or Gay Pride)	Ownership shifts to Youth Coordinator within 30 days of Youth Coordinator being hired	Youth Coordinators and YAB
	Action Step 3Aiv: Set exiting or former YAB members up to mentor new members of the YAB; each YAB member that ages out will serve as a mentor for identifying and supporting replacements	Ownership shifts to Youth Coordinator within 90 days of Youth Coordinator being hired	Youth Coordinator
<p>Objective 3B: Develop opportunities for youth to develop leadership skills, using YHDP key principles to guide us.</p>	Action Step 3Bi: Define the future role of TCU in YAB leadership development for new members; potentially use true colors united training to develop YAB as members transition.	Youth Coordinator can lean on TCU for early support; define longer term future within 90 days of hire	Youth Coordinator
	Action Step 3Bii The Youth Coordinator and YAB will connect agencies who need training and support with providers who can lead training on support services for youth, such as trauma-informed care, equity, or the needs of special populations	Ownership shifts to Youth Coordinator within 60 days of Youth Coordinator being hired	<p>Youth Coordinator, with support from agencies who can offer training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YWCA and SAHC • YAB • US Attorneys office • Northwood

In the box below, highlight the YHDP Key Principles connected to this goal

Four Core Outcomes.

- Stable Housing
- Permanent Connections
- Education/Employment
- Social-emotional well-being

Special Populations

- LGBTQ+
- Gender non-conforming
- Minors
- Justice involved
- Foster care involved
- Victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation

Other Key Principles

- Equity
- Trauma-Informed Care
- Housing First
- Youth Choice
- Positive Youth Development
- Family Engagement
- Unsheltered Homelessness
- Individualized and Client-Driven
- Social and Community Integration
- Coordinated Entry for Youth
- Improvement of Data Systems

Goal 4: Fund a coordinated system of youth-based interventions to address all existing gaps in our geographic catchment area			
Objectives	Action Steps: Description	Timeline	Ownership
<p>Objective 4AB: Determine a holistic approach that provides funding for opportunities that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4A: fall within the parameters of YHDP and its targeted population 4B: fall outside the parameters of YHDP. 	Action Step 4Ai: Partner with FRN to conduct (or use) their annual systems map; conduct a gap analysis each year to identify needed youth-focused projects	As per FRN timeline	Stakeholders, YAB, and GWCH, FRN
	Action Step 4Aii: Use the CCP gap analysis and systems map to identify needed projects; determine which projects fall within the parameters of the YHDP. Repeat gap analysis and project generation process annually.	Within 30 days of CCP submission	Stakeholders, YAB, and GWCH
	Action Step 4Aiii: Develop a YHDP Request for Proposal process to solicit project application	Within 60 days of CCP submission	YAB and GWCH
	Action Step 4Aiv: Convene the NPCOC's Review and Rank Committee and YAB to review project applications and rank for funding	Within 60 days of CCP submission	GWCH
	Action Step 4Bi: Identify entities interested in coordinating and operating youth-based projects that fall outside of the YHDP	Within 6 months from the start of year 2 funding	Youth Coordinator and YAB
	Action Step 4Biv: Identify funding sources that will support projects that fall outside of the YHDP	Within 6 months from the start of year 2 funding	Youth Coordinator and YAB

In the box below, highlight the YHDP Key Principles connected to this goal		
<p>Four Core Outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stable Housing Permanent Connections Education/Employment 	<p>Special Populations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGBTQ+ Gender non-conforming Minors Justice involved 	<p>Other Key Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equity Trauma-Informed Care Housing First Youth Choice

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social-emotional well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster care involved • Victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Youth Development • Family Engagement • Unsheltered Homelessness • Individualized and Client-Driven • Social and Community Integration • Coordinated Entry for Youth • Improvement of Data Systems
---	--	---

New Project List

Following are a list of the new project types we aim to see funded through YHDP, likely partners to take on the work, and projected budgets for each project. All budget amounts are contingent upon the award we receive from HUD.

	Project	Action Plan Alignment	Project Type	Partner	Maximum Allocation for Budgeting Purpose
Planning	Provide COC-level planning activities to develop and maintain the activities of the YHDP	Action Step 4Ai Action Step 4Aii Action Step 4Aiii Action Step 4Aiv	Planning	YHDP lead, Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless	\$45,651
Projects Required as Set Aside for YHDP	HMIS Expansion and new position to support HMIS	Action Step 2Bii Action Step 2Biii Action Step 2Biv	HMIS	NPCOC HMIS Lead, Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless	\$81,400
	Hire Youth Coordinator, whose job functions will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach to rural service providers and landlords • System to connect youth to resources • Youth-specific support services • Maintain and grow the YAB • Connect agencies to provide training to providers when needed • Seek out additional funding sources for youth-centered projects • Collaborate with Amy (COC Co-Chair) to create informational materials about available resources for schools 	Action Step 1Aiii Action Step 2Aii Action Step 2Bi Action Step 3Ai: Action Step 3Aii Action Step 3A iii: Action Step 3Aiv Action Step 3Bi Action Step 3Bii Action Step 4Bi Action Step 4Biv	Supportive Services Only	YHDP lead, Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless	\$74,360

Available New Projects	Modify existing coordinated entry points to be more youth-centered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> App or web-based preliminary screening 	Action Step 1Ai	Supportive Services Only-Coordinated Entry	Existing entry points	\$85,500
	Youth-specific case management services	Action Step 1Aii	Supportive Services Only	Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless, other partners can apply	\$85,500
	Develop youth-focused housing and supportive service projects: Rapid Re-Housing, Joint Transitional – Permanent Housing Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing. Projects must provide comprehensive geographic accessibility in all five counties, including rural communities that lack access to shelters or other community support. Acquisition, Rehabilitation, and New Construction costs are ineligible for these project types. Estimated Household Targets per Maximum Allocation Amount <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rapid Re-Housing: Target of 15 households, blend of 1 and 2 bedrooms at FMR for 12 months, including various fees, and security and utility deposits. Joint Transitional Housing – Permanent Housing-Rapid Re-Housing: <u>Transitional Housing Component:</u> Four households at 6 months equals a target of 8 households annually. <u>Rapid Re-Housing Component:</u> Target of 15 households, blend of 1 and 2 bedrooms at FMR for 12 months, including various fees, and security and utility deposits. Permanent Supportive Housing: There is an assumption under PSH that units do 	Action Step 1Bi Action Step 1Bii	Joint Transitional Housing-Permanent Housing Rapid Re-Housing	TBA	Joint TH-PH RRH: \$316,000
					RRH:\$245,000 PSH:\$220,000

	not exceed Fair Market Rent for the county in which they exist. Based on the differential of FMR and unit size, the target is a minimum of 10 households per year.				
--	--	--	--	--	--

Additional Notes on Alignment to YHDP Key Principles

We discussed the four core outcomes ([stable housing](#), [permanent connections](#), [education/employment](#) and [social emotional well-being](#)) and [special populations](#) (LGBTQ+ and gender nonconforming, minors, justice-involved, foster care involved and victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation) at length in the Statement of Need section. In the table below, we have described how our plan addresses the remaining YHDP Key Principles, to help readers better understand how we have integrated those Key Principles throughout the plan. Links go to bookmarks in the above sections of the CCP.

Equity	<p>Equity means that everyone gets what they need. When it comes to racial equity, we know that Black/African American and multiracial youth and young adults are overrepresented in the population of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness in our community. We are proud that our all-age programs have historically demonstrated more successful outcomes for people of color experiencing or at risk of homelessness in our community; however, we must continue to use our annual racial disparities assessment to monitor those outcomes and ensure they are consistent for youth and young adults. See additional information on equity in our section, “What do we know about racial equity for youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness in the Northern Panhandle?”</p> <p>Another way we think about equity in our community is ensuring resources are available for youth and young adults living in <i>all</i> parts of the Northern Panhandle, including our most rural communities. Our Action Plan specifically names that we will develop youth-focused housing and supportive service projects (Rapid Re-Housing, Joint Transitional – Permanent Housing Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing) that must provide comprehensive geographic accessibility in all five counties, including rural communities that lack access to shelters or other community support (Objective 1B).</p>
Trauma-Informed Care	<p>Throughout our focus groups, YAB members articulated the need for mental health support, including trauma-informed care. Those needs are reflected throughout the Statement of Need, most notably in the sections on LGBTQ+ youth, justice-involved youth, and victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation. One of the biggest gaps noted by COC members (including YAB members) during the CCP planning process was the need for mental health support that is trauma-informed. In our Action Plan, we call out the need for trauma-informed care whenever we reference services for youth, in Action Step 1Aiii (supportive services connected to housing), and Action Step 3Bii (training opportunities for local agencies).</p>
Housing First	<p>We know that getting youth into housing is the FIRST step; our mission statement includes securing stable housing for youth without preconditions. Our Action Plan reflects this mission. Our coordinated entry objective will require projects to adopt a housing first model (Action Plan, Action Step 1Ai) and our youth-focused Rapid Re-Housing, Joint Transitional – Permanent Housing Rapid Re-Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing objective requires comprehensive geographic accessibility in all five counties, including rural communities that lack access to shelters or other community support (Action Plan, Action Step 1Bii).</p> <p>The NPCOC ensures projects commit to a Housing First approach through the prioritization of rapid placement and stabilization in permanent housing through monthly Provider Committee meetings of the NPCoC. The NPCoC Provider Committee is a group of direct service providers operating all types of homeless assistance programs in the region who meet monthly to prioritize households for permanent housing placement using the NPCoC’s established prioritization standards. This system-level review of rapid placements into housing during monthly Provider Committee meetings allows the NPCoC to evaluate projects for adherence to a Housing First approach.</p>

Youth Choice	Our Vision grounds us in our belief that youth and young adults be empowered to make decisions about their own lives. In our Action Plan , we call out the need for youth to have agency and choice in their case management services, reflected in Action Step 1Aii. The YAB structure itself is also about youth choice; as part of our governance structure , the YAB has autonomy to approve or deny any YHDP project. Additionally, youth have a choice in housing, as described in Action Step 1Bii .
Positive Youth Development	Our Vision grounds us in our commitment to see youth and young adults as leaders who share the direction of support for youth in the community. To support their development as leaders, our Action Plan calls for the NPCOC Lead Agency to hire a Youth Coordinator. A big part of their job will be positive youth development, assisting youth you are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness navigate the system of care, access the coordinated entry system, build skills for safety and stability, and develop long lasting supports through personal interaction in communal settings to help sustain the YAB and it's activities. Both objectives under Goal 3 are about setting up the infrastructure for that positive youth development, led by the Youth Coordinator.
Family Engagement	We know from youth focus groups that connection to family can make a difference for youth and young adults who experience or are at risk of homelessness. Even though difficult family relationships were sometimes part of the catalyst for youth becoming homeless, young adults often still described a desire for some connection to or relationship with their families. Building positive connections with family, whenever a possible and healthy option, can and should be a part of case management with youth and young adults, which we call out in our Action Plan in Action Step 1Aii. Some youth and young adults also have a family of their own, and in our housing efforts, being able to keep those families together should be a priority.
Unsheltered Homelessness	We know from our conversations with young adults in our youth focus groups that young people in our community have experienced unsheltered homelessness – in fact, that's how some of the YAB members found their way to a coordinated entry point. In our Action Plan , we attend to unsheltered homelessness in two ways. First, we develop youth-centric coordinated entry point (Objective 1A) and then we attend specifically to the needs of youth in rural areas, including unsheltered youth (Objective 1B).
Individualized and Client-Driven	Throughout our focus groups, youth expressed a desire to be better understood by their caseworkers and other service providers. Their desire for individualized and client-driven supports are reflected throughout the Statement of Need , most notably in the quotes youth offered in the section on LGBTQ+ youth. Additionally, when we analyzed both the data available and our systems map of services currently available for the Northern Panhandle, one of the gaps noted by COC members (including YAB members) was the need for services to be differentiated for youth. That's one way we intend to offer more individualized and client-driven services. In our Action Plan , we specifically call out the need for individual and client-driven case management, in Action Step 1Aii
Social and Community Integration	In our vision, we strove to make clear that youth are a vibrant, essential part of our community. Integration into the community is important, and it will be part of the role of the Youth Coordinator to facilitate that community integration. In our Action Plan , we specifically call out community integration in Objective 3A, Action Step 3Aiii. Maintaining the YAB will mean building strong connections in the community, specifically for both the Youth Coordinator but also for members of the YAB. As leaders, we also want to see members of the YAB working with service providers in the area to identify and meet the needs of youth, as they know best what youth might need. Facilitating those connections will also be part of the Youth Coordinator's role.
Coordinated Entry for Youth	In our Action Plan , Objective 1A is specifically about ensuring we have a youth-specific coordinated entry system that includes case management and additional, youth specific services. The Coordinated Entry System for youth, designed through the HMIS expansion, will promote the creation of

	individualized service plans that are driven by youth choice to address their unique service and housing needs, provide assessment for mental health acuity and substance use disorder identification, and provide poignant and direct referrals for treatment.
Improvement of Data Systems	We called out the specific need to improve HMIS in our Action Plan . Objective 2B and its action steps (2Bi, 2Bii, 2Biii, 2Biv) are about using and improving the existing HMIS. We wanted to ensure that it's written into the job description for the Youth Coordinator (2Bi) to use the HMIS; we also wanted to ensure that a Required Set Aside project was created and operated by the existing HMIS Lead to expand the current HMIS to capture all data newly generated by YHDP, (2Bii, 2Biii, 2Biv), which you can also see reflected in the New Projects list.

Governance

Existing NPCOC Structure

As mentioned in the Introduction, the Northern Panhandle Continuum of Care serves as the body that unites the panhandle in its efforts to end homelessness and prevent recidivism. The NPCOC is governed by a board of directors, made up of representatives of local organizations or elected from the NPCOC membership.

The work of the board of directors is performed through committees. The committees are:

- Compliance Committee: responsible for ensuring that the NPCOC complies with various HUD regulations
- Provider Committee: identifies and implements proposed solutions to homelessness
- Governance Committee: responsible for review of and proposing amendments to the board's bylaws
- Nominating Committee: responsible for nominating members of the NPCOC to serve on the board of directors
- Communication, Advocacy, and Outreach Committee: responsible for presenting a clear and uniform message that increases community knowledge about homelessness and the community's efforts, successes and challenges
- Two Regional Committees (Northern and Southern counties): collaborate on goals and objectives of the NPCOC specific to their region
- Participant Advisory Committee: provide feedback as it relates to homeless programs and services offered through HUD-based programs to improve the services and programs addressing homelessness.
- Ad hoc committees convene to meet specific needs, which include:
 - Review and Rank Committee – Convenes annually to review CoC-wide projects against threshold and quality standards to determine which projects will be approved and ranked for funding.
 - Youth Action Board – The Youth Action Board is a committee of the NPCOC and consists of at least 3 youth or young adults, aged 24 or younger. Youth and young adults on the YAB are representatives of the youth adult population experiencing homelessness in the community; therefore at least two-thirds of YAB members have lived experience of homelessness and/or have been served by the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Though convened as part of the process to create this Coordinated Community Plan, the YAB will continue to function as a committee within the NPCOC and will continue to meet at least quarterly. The YAB is currently listed as an Ad Hoc Committee of the NPCOC because the NPCOC By-Laws have not yet undergone a formal amendment. Once the NPCOC By-Laws have undergone amendment, the YAB will be designated as a formal, permanent committee of the NPCOC. One YAB member will also represent the existing seat on the NPCOC Board of Directors designated for a person homeless or formerly homeless. This seat allows the YAB to have voting rights within the NPCOC, particularly on policies that relate to preventing and ending youth homelessness.

The Northern Panhandle Continuum of Care will expand their existing governance structure to administer the YHDP with the Youth Action Board as an Ad Hoc Committee. Part of this expansion includes utilizing the experience of the existing Review and Rank Committee to provide education and guidance to the YAB regarding the process for identifying projects and approving them for submission so they may be fully integrated into the review and rank process long-term.

YHDP Project Identification and Approval

Potential YHDP projects have been identified by community stakeholders, including the YAB, as part of the strategic process to create this Coordinated Community Plan. The NPCoC will use their existing approval process, in partnership with the Youth Action Board, to approve projects for the YHDP.

Three committees contribute to the project approval process for YHDP: the Rank and Review Committee, the Youth Action Board, and the Compliance Committee.



The Review and Rank Committee will, with the support of the YAB, review and rank all YHDP projects. For each project, both committees will work together to rate their application against YHDP requirements and assign a priority-based, quantitative score. Each project applicant shall be responsible for submitting the following information for their specific projects: program narratives, goals, clients to be served, adjunct services, budget information for the funding period, other relevant information and necessary supportive documentation. Rank and Review Committee members are not part of organizations that apply for funding; however, in the event a Review and Rank Committee member or their respective organization would submit a Letter of Interest for YHDP, they would be removed from participating in the YHDP Review and Rank process and be replaced.

The Youth Action Board will work alongside the Review Rank Committee to review and rank all YHDP projects. The Review and Rank Committee will utilize their experience in reviewing and ranking CoC programs to mentor and educate the YAB on the review and rank process so the YAB may develop the skills necessary to participate in annual reviews in the future. All YHDP projects must be approved by YAB in order to receive funding, and YAB members will sign a letter of approval to be submitted along with the project application for HUD.

The Compliance Committee is the lead agency of the NPCoC, the Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless. For the purposes of YHDP, the Compliance Committee will ensure the Rank and Review Committee and the Youth Action Board are clear on the requirements of the YHDP. They'll provide any information needed to the Committee and the YAB to support their rank and review process.


Signature Pages

DocuSign Envelope ID: AC175179-85E8-4088-A107-64547980194F

NPCOC Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness: Signature Page

The signature(s) below attests to the approval and support of the [Northern Panhandle Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness](#). We agree to work collaboratively with our partners to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

Youth Action Board

Name:	Destiny Scrofani	
Title:	Member	
Organization:	Youth Action Board	
Signature	 <small>DocuSigned by: 808352C304CB482</small>	Date 4/25/2022

NPCOC Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness: Signature Page


The signature(s) below attests to the approval and support of the [Northern Panhandle Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness](#). We agree to work collaboratively with our partners to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

Youth Action Board

Name: Kameron Johnson

Title: Youth Action Board Member


Organization: Youth Action Board

Signature:  Date: 4/26/2022

NPCOC Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness: Signature Page

The signature(s) below attests to the approval and support of the [Northern Panhandle Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness](#). We agree to work collaboratively with our partners to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

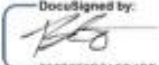
Youth Action Board

Name:	Jesse Pelkey		
Title:	VP		
Organization:	Youth Action Board		
Signature	 <small>DocuSigned by: Jesse Pelkey 9F28432C108C4C6</small>	Date	4/25/2022

NPCOC Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness: Signature Page

The signature(s) below attests to the approval and support of the [Northern Panhandle Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness](#). We agree to work collaboratively with our partners to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

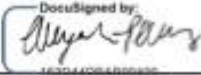
Youth Action Board

Name:	Bee Evans		
Title:	YAB member		
Organization:	Youth Action Board		
Signature	<div><div>DocuSigned by:</div><div>20080F3E24C048B</div></div>	Date	5/1/2022

NPCOC Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness: Signature Page

The signature(s) below attests to the approval and support of the [Northern Panhandle Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness](#). We agree to work collaboratively with our partners to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

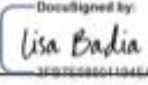
Youth Action Board

Name:	Aliyah Pelley		
Title:	YAB Member		
Organization:	Youth Action Board		
Signature		Date	4/28/2022

NPCOC Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness: Signature Page

The signature(s) below attests to the approval and support of the [Northern Panhandle Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness](#). We agree to work collaboratively with our partners to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

The Continuum of Care

Name:	Lisa Badia		
Title:	Co-chair		
Organization:	The NPCOC and The Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless		
Signature	 DocuSigned by: Lisa Badia 3F07C980C11045A	Date	4/28/2022

NPCOC Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness: Signature Page


The signature(s) below attests to the approval and support of the [Northern Panhandle Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness](#). We agree to work collaboratively with our partners to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

Public Child Welfare Agency

Name: Mark Patee

Title: Community Service Manager

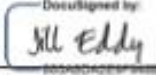
Organization: WV Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Family Assistance

Signature:  DocuSigned by
Mark Patee
AA47D47D83084ED Date: 4/26/2022

NPCOC Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness: Signature Page

The signature(s) below attests to the approval and support of the [Northern Panhandle Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness](#). We agree to work collaboratively with our partners to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

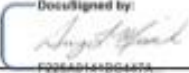
Runaway and Homeless Youth Provider

Name:	Jill Eddy		
Title:	Chief Program Officer		
Organization:	Youth Services System, Inc.		
Signature		Date	4/28/2022

NPCOC Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness: Signature Page

The signature(s) below attests to the approval and support of the [Northern Panhandle Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness](#). We agree to work collaboratively with our partners to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

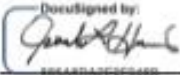
Local Government Agency

Name: <u>Amy Minch</u>	
Title: <u>Attendance Director</u>	
Organization: <u>Ohio County Schools</u>	
Signature: 	Date: <u>4/27/2022</u>

NPCOC Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness: Signature Page

The signature(s) below attests to the approval and support of the [Northern Panhandle Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness](#). We agree to work collaboratively with our partners to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

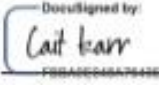
Stakeholder

Name:	Jordan Harris		
Title:	Program Development Specialist		
Organization:	Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless		
Signature		Date	4/28/2022

NPCOC Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness: Signature Page

The signature(s) below attests to the approval and support of the [Northern Panhandle Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness](#). We agree to work collaboratively with our partners to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

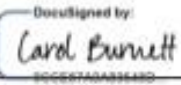
Stakeholder

Name:	Cait Karr		
Title:	Resident Services Coordinator		
Organization:	Wheeling Housing Authority		
Signature	 <small>DocuSigned by: Cait Karr F0B1A0CC40A7642E</small>	Date	4/26/2022

NPCOC Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness: Signature Page

The signature(s) below attests to the approval and support of the [Northern Panhandle Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness](#). We agree to work collaboratively with our partners to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

Stakeholder

Name:	Carol Burnett		
Title:	Public Housing Manager		
Organization:	Wheeling Housing Authority		
Signature	<div>DocuSigned by:  9CCE67A2A35643D</div>	Date	4/27/2022

NPCOC Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness: Signature Page

The signature(s) below attests to the approval and support of the [Northern Panhandle Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness](#). We agree to work collaboratively with our partners to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

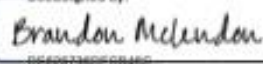
Stakeholder

Name:	Marissa Collett		
Title:	Domestic Violence Prevention Manager		
Organization:	CHANGE, INC.		
Signature	<div><div>DocuSigned by:</div><div><i>Marissa Collett</i></div><div>84FB4B202CC8408</div></div>	Date	4/28/2022

NPCOC Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness: Signature Page

The signature(s) below attests to the approval and support of the [Northern Panhandle Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness](#). We agree to work collaboratively with our partners to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

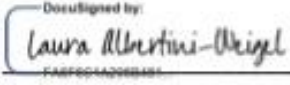
Stakeholder

Name:	Brandon McLendon		
Title:	HMIS Specialist		
Organization:	Greater Wheeling Coalition for the Homeless		
Signature	<div>DocuSigned by:  DocuSigned by: Brandon McLendon</div>	Date	4/28/2022

NPCOC Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness: Signature Page

The signature(s) below attests to the approval and support of the [Northern Panhandle Coordinated Community Plan to End Youth Homelessness](#). We agree to work collaboratively with our partners to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

Stakeholder

Name:	Laura Albertini-Weigel		
Title:	Director WIND YWCA Wheeling		
Organization:	Organization Ywca Wheeling		
Signature	 <small>DocuSigned by: Laura Albertini-Weigel FABFEC1A206B481</small>	Date	5/2/2022