

OPENING DOORS FOR YOUTH

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

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AGENDA

- How & Who: what was the structure and who did we bring to the table?
- Touch on the main elements of CT's "Youth Plan".
- Implementation through systems integration: what are we tackling first, who's at the table, how are we moving forward?

CONNECTICUT

- Small state: approximately 3.6 million people
- Child welfare is legal guardian for about 4000 children/youth
- Child welfare & Juvenile Justice are in same agency
- 2 COC's & 8 Coordinated Access Networks
- 2014/15 School year: 3192 students were identified as homeless

REACHING HOME CAMPAIGN OPENING DOORS CONNECTICUT

Partnership for Strong Communities Campaign to End Homelessness in Connecticut

Steering Committee

Broad coalition crossing boundaries and systems
Informs direction, advances policy changes, oversees work groups, makes connections.
40-50 people meet 4 times per year.

Coordinating Committee

Coordinates campaign, integrates strategies and provides guidance to work groups,
supports and updates Steering Committee. 10-20 people meet monthly.

Opening Doors Connecticut - Work Groups

Recommend and advance strategies. 12-20 people.

Affordable
Supportive
Housing

Economic
Security

Health and
Housing
Stability

Homeless
Youth

Retooling
Crisis
Response

Veterans

HOW WE GOT HERE

- 2013 Invisible No More Study: used findings to galvanize larger group of stakeholders within OD-CT as well as outside stakeholders
- Year long, multi-stakeholder initiative included
 - state agency personnel, providers, advocates, and funders
- 3 subgroups considered
 - stable housing, services and supports, and data collection and integration



WHAT GUIDED US

- Encourage, facilitate and value the involvement of youth and young adults (YYA),
- Build on the USICH framework, and
- Develop, embrace and encourage best practices that cut across and integrate systems and traditional silos.

HOW WE'LL WIN



Five strategies.



HOW WE'LL WIN

Two overarching strategies:

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



Create better tools to identify, screen and refer youth in need.



Expand direct services and support along the housing continuum.



Provide or improve training and technical assistance for providers.



Improve collection and use of data.



Advocate for changes in policy.

FIRST PHASE OF IMPLEMENTATION

- Data: Counting & Integrating
- Coordinating Access to Services
- Funding & Interagency Connections
- Technical Assistance

FIRST PHASE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Data: Counting & Integrating

- First-ever youth count (Jan 2015); plan for bi-annual counts going forward
 - Resurrecting subgroup from planning process
 - Funding contributions from multiple state agencies
- Integrating data across systems
 - Partnering with state Office of Policy & Management (executive branch) to bring in data personnel from appropriate state agencies

FIRST PHASE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Coordinating Access to Services

- Creating an information & referral mechanism
 - Newly created subgroup involving state agency personnel, Coordinated Access Network leads, workgroup members
- Prevention & intervention
- Connect to adult system with youth features
- Youth Action Hub

FIRST PHASE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Funding

- Homeless Youth Program in child welfare legislatively moving to Housing in 2017
- Housing capital funding round for non-time-limited supportive housing for YYA; to be coupled with funding from sister agencies
- Integrating YYA into already existing Interagency Agency funding structure

FIRST PHASE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Technical Assistance

- Both at provider level (ie: TA re best practices with subgroups) and statewide level
- Funding from Education to address abysmal identification of homeless students in schools
- Tool-kits: includes videos depicting rights & webpage (youth-help.org) where can find resources

FIRST PHASE OF IMPLEMENTATION

Challenges

- Funding
- Learning while doing
 - When to wait & when to move forward
- Cross-system education & engagement
 - Keeping everyone on the same path as we move forward
 - Keeping the right level of agency staff at the table

THANK YOU

Opening Doors for Youth Plan was written, funded and convened by:

- Center for Children's Advocacy
- Reaching Home Campaign's Homeless Youth Workgroup Staffed by the Partnership for Strong Communities
- CT Coalition to End Homelessness
- Corporation for Supportive Housing
- The Melville Charitable Trust
- The Tow Foundation
- UCONN, Center for Applied Research in Human Development
- Youth Catalytics

LEARN MORE

Find the full plan at:

[PSCHOUSING.ORG/RUNAWAY-AND-HOMELESS-YOUTH-WORKGROUP](https://pschousing.org/runaway-and-homeless-youth-workgroup)

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