

# 1.08 Pathways to Housing and Stability: Strategies for Addressing Youth and Young Adult Homelessness



**Amara Santos**

San Francisco, California

*Youth Homelessness Advocate*

**Alex Wagaman Ph.D.**

Richmond, Virginia

*Associate Professor, School of Social Work*



**Sarah Berger Gonzalez**

Chicago, Illinois

*Policy Fellow*



**Joi Jackson-Morgan**

San Francisco, California

*Chief Executive Officer*



**Dexter O'Connell**

Venice, California

*Director of Youth Policy & Advocacy*



# 1.08 Pathways to Housing and Stability: Strategies for Addressing Youth and Young Adult Homelessness

Wednesday, February 26<sup>th</sup> 2:30 – 3:45 PM PST

## Session Description:

Youth and young adults, particularly LGBTQ+ youth, are disproportionately represented within the unsheltered homeless population, and often face unique challenges and systemic barriers that hinder their access to stable housing. This session highlights innovative practices from youth homelessness providers that center youth expertise and examines the role of housing vouchers and financial assistance in creating pathways to stability.



# Leveraging Federal Resources for Our Communities: FYI Vouchers

- What is the FYI Voucher?
  - Special type of Section 8 Voucher which serves former foster youth and probation-foster youth.
  - 3 years, with 2 additional years if requirements are met.
  - Provides a meaningful transitional subsidy from Care to Independent Adulthood, much like a parent cosigning a lease on a first apartment.
- Who is Eligible?
  - Basically all youth formerly in foster or probation care, or currently a non-minor dependent.
  - Must be under age 25 and unstably housed or unhoused.

# Leveraging Federal Resources for Our Communities: FYI Vouchers

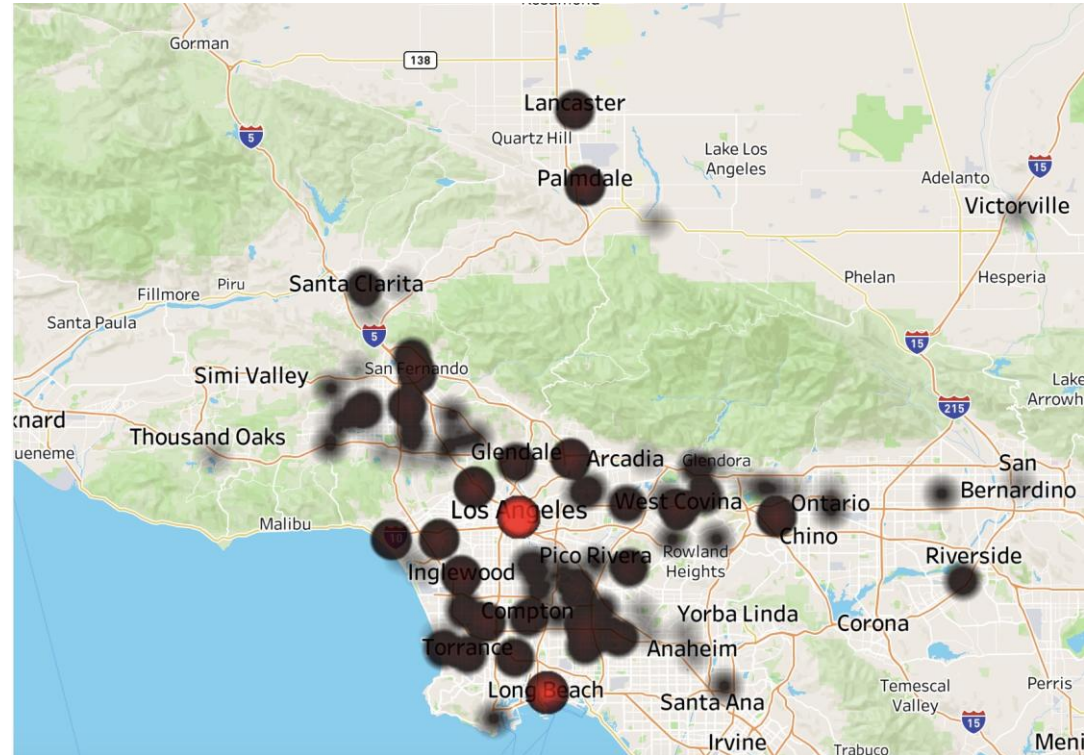
- We are assuming for purposes of this presentation that the federal government will both continue to exist and continue to provide this program.

# Leveraging Federal Resources for Our Communities: FYI Vouchers

- What do you need to do?
  - Every Public Housing Authority in the United States is eligible for up to 50 of these vouchers per federal fiscal year.
  - The PHA needs to make a partnership with the Public Child Welfare Agency in the area they serve.
  - The PHA completes a federal application and receives the vouchers, which are then administered like normal Section 8 Vouchers

# FYI Vouchers: Where Are the Youth?

- They don't neatly align with Housing Authority boundaries
- Lancaster, Palmdale, Santa Clarita are all in the LACDA area
- Los Angeles and Long Beach also disproportionately represented.





# FYI Vouchers: What Did We Do?



- There are 19 Housing Authorities in LA County
- Two regional and 17 single-city
- DCFS had already outreached three of them.
  - Robert Castaneda
- We partnered to outreach the other 16
  - Youth from CYC

# What do we know?

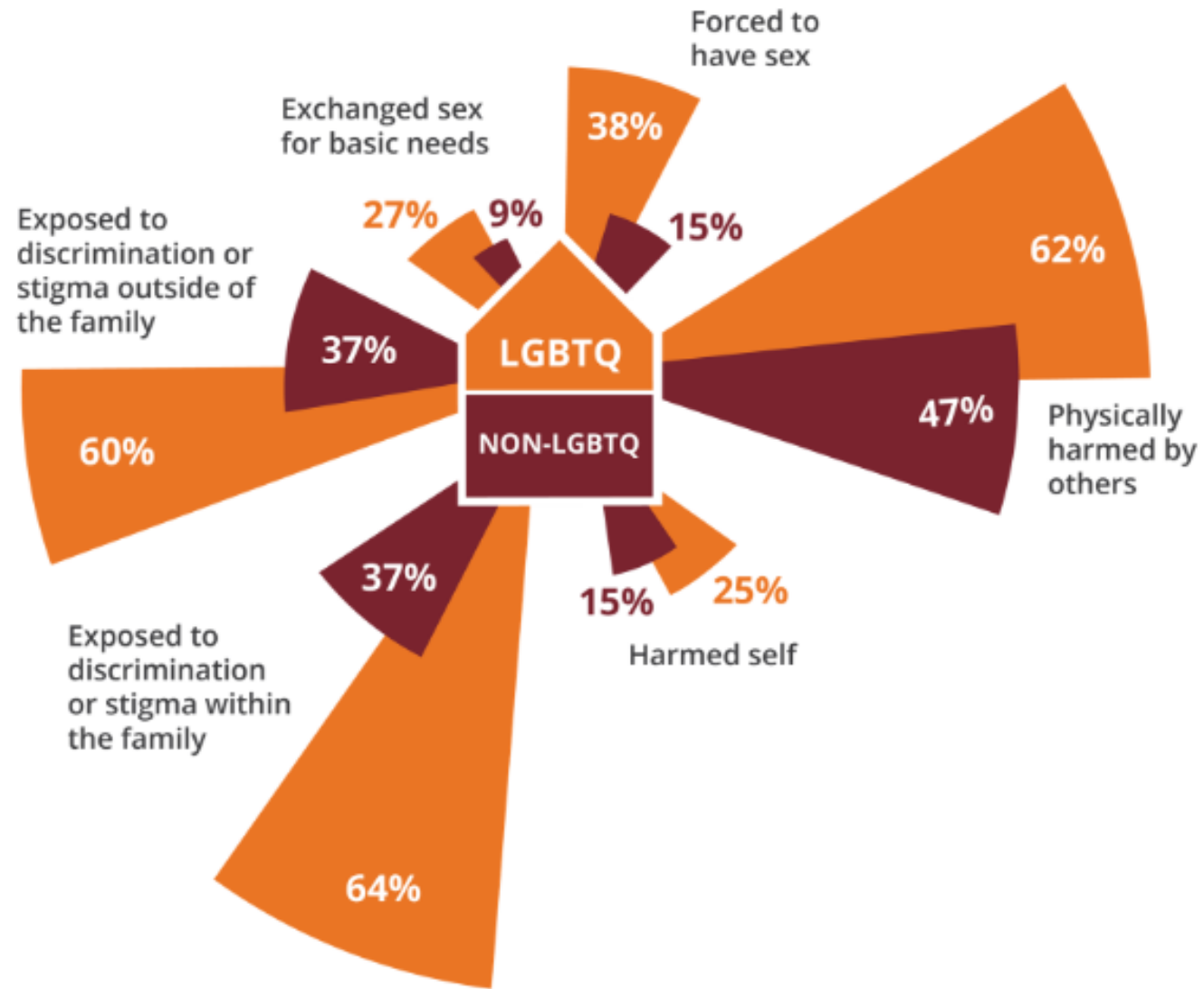
- Many youth – in any given year – are experiencing housing instability and homelessness.
- Structural violence puts certain populations of youth at greater risk, including Black and Indigenous youth, parenting youth, disabled youth.
- LGBTQ+ youth are overrepresented among the population of youth experiencing homelessness.
  - 10% versus up to 40%
  - LGBTQ youth are at more than double the risk of homelessness compared to non-LGBTQ peers (Voices of Youth Count, 2018).
  - Youth who identified as both LGBTQ and black or multiracial had some of the highest rates of homelessness (Voices of Youth Count, 2018).



# What do we know?

- Causes – There are a number of pathways into homelessness that youth experience. Most are linked to structural factors.
  - Anti-trans and racist legislation create hostile climates for youth and their families.
  - Family conflict, exacerbated by the stress of poverty, is a primary cause for LGBTQ+ youth.
  - Structural constraints on access to affordable housing
  - Limited service systems/resources providing youth and identity-affirming care

# Identity shapes experience



(Source: VoYC In-Depth Interviews)

*Bringing People Home.*

# What is needed?

- Good sources of data \*and\* attention to the safety and ethics of data collection
- Trusted, affirming service systems, supports, access points
  - Ex: LGBTQ+ youth - Signaling vs. living into this commitment
- Opportunities for early identification & prevention – avoiding unsheltered homelessness whenever possible
  - Universal screening
  - All youth-serving orgs and systems of care need a housing lens, and vice versa

# What is needed?

- Family interventions, when the conditions are safe
- Natural supports – opportunities for connection & development
  - Identity-based community
- Fast access to safe, stable housing options
- Affordable housing options at the extremely low-income level

# Engaging youth & young adult leadership

- Data/research/evaluation
  - Participatory action research
  - Advise on & engage in data collection
- Youth & young adult decision-making bodies
  - Representation of LGBTQ+ young people, and Black & Indigenous youth
  - Prioritization, system design (NYAG)
  - Advisory board for programming (Marsha & Marian's Neighbors)
- Co-design program & service models

# Promising Models

- Peer support & peer navigation
- Identity-specific programs
  - Marsha & Marian's Neighbors – co-design example
  - Funded by state to engage in planning & co-design
- Housing First 4 Youth – Canadian framework



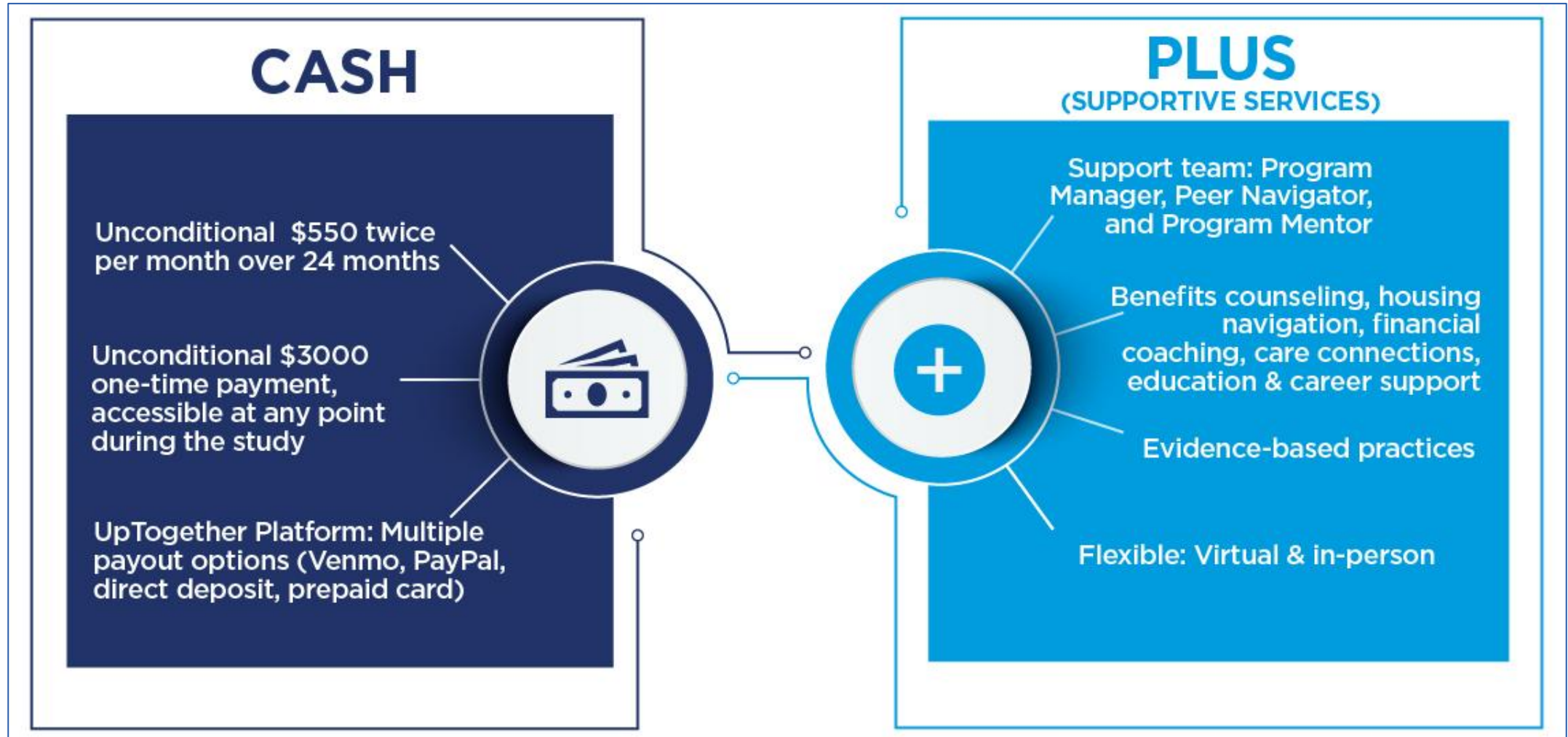
# IMPLEMENTING CASH TRANSFERS FOR YOUNG ADULTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS: EARLY INSIGHTS FROM A NYC PILOT

Sarah Berger Gonzalez, MPP

Amanda M. Griffin, PhD

FEBRUARY 26, 2025

# NYC TRUST YOUTH INITIATIVE



# **NYC Trust Youth Initiative: Impact Evaluation**

# NYC SAMPLE

---

## NYC Pathways Study

- 78 young adults
- Enrolled in March 2022
- Half enrolled from drop-in centers
- Half enrolled from shelters

## Trust Youth Initiative

- 29 of 78 enrolled April 2022

62% Black or African American  
*n*=52

37% Latine  
*n*=29

22% White  
*n*=14

54% LGBTQ+  
*n*=42



# IMPACT EVALUATION RESEARCH QUESTIONS

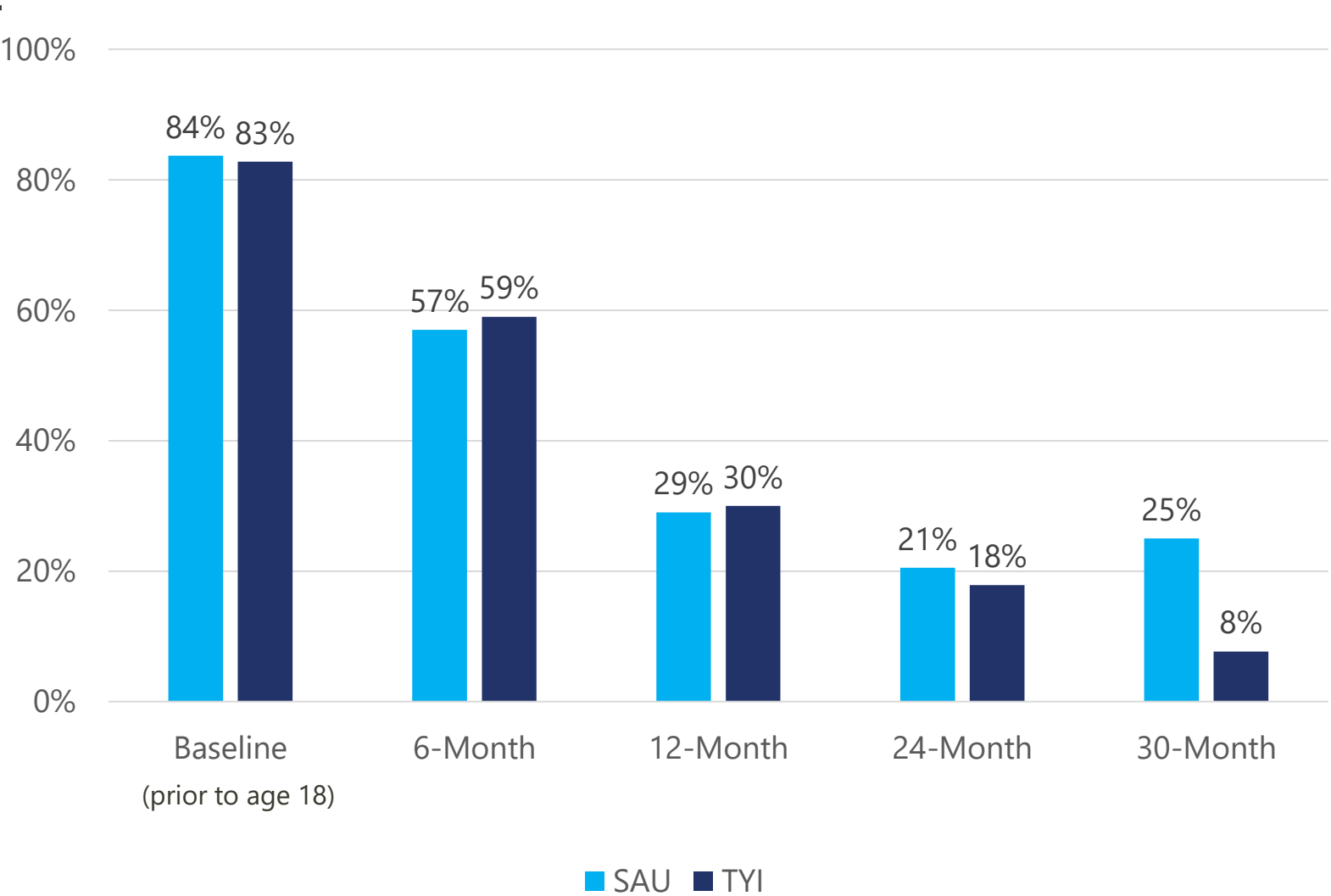
---

How does participating in the Trust Youth Initiative rather than receiving service-as-usual affect key young adult outcomes?

- **Homelessness and housing**
- **Vouchers**
- Food security
- Financial stability

# HOMELESSNESS

(SAU= 49; TYI=29)

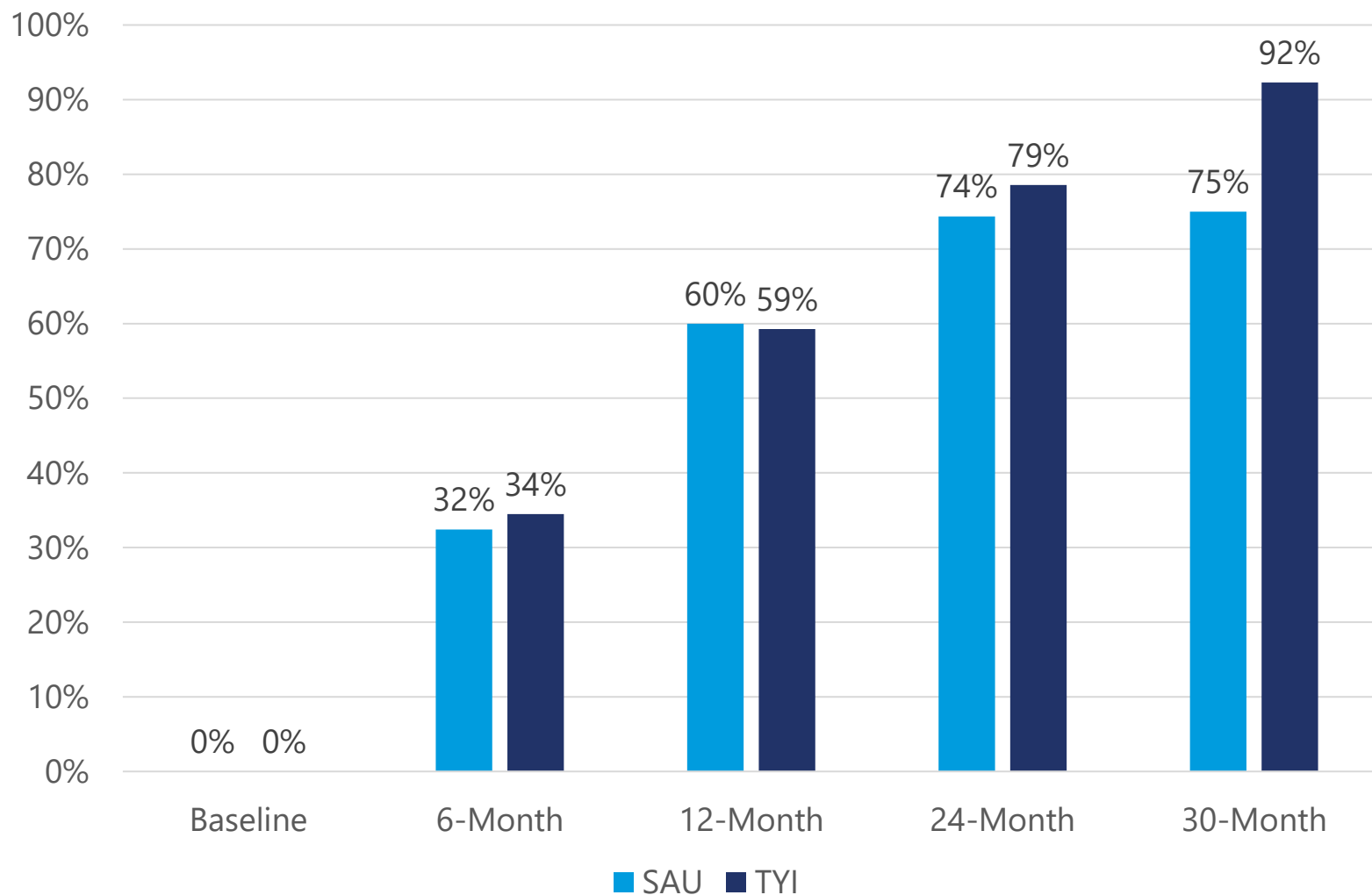


Both groups experienced a reduction in homelessness.



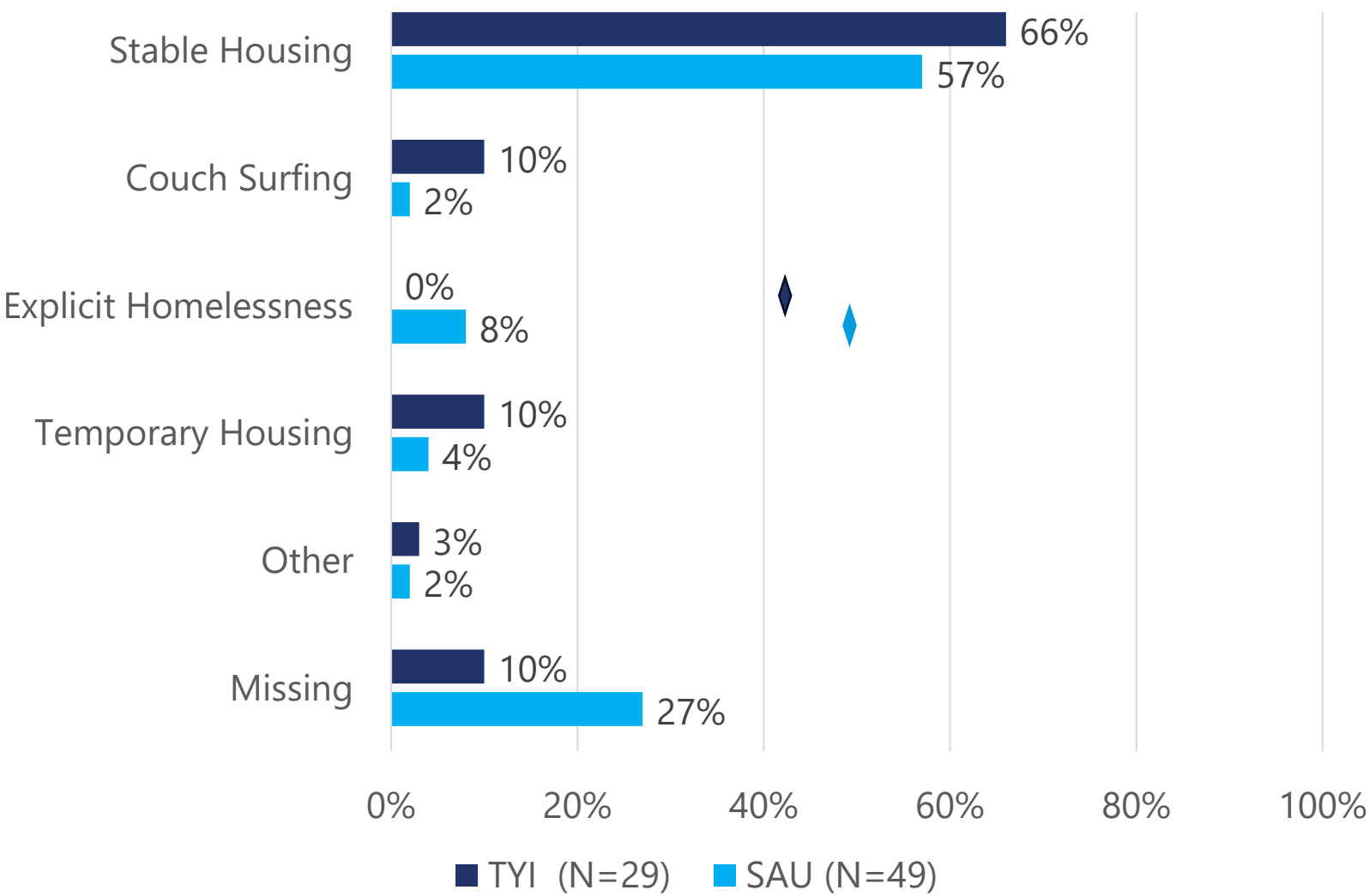
# NO HOMELESS / COUCH SURFING

(SAU= 49; TYI=29)



Young adults enrolled in TYI group were more likely to be neither homeless or couch surfing at month 30 than young adults receiving SAU.

# SPENT THE MOST NIGHTS AT MONTH 30

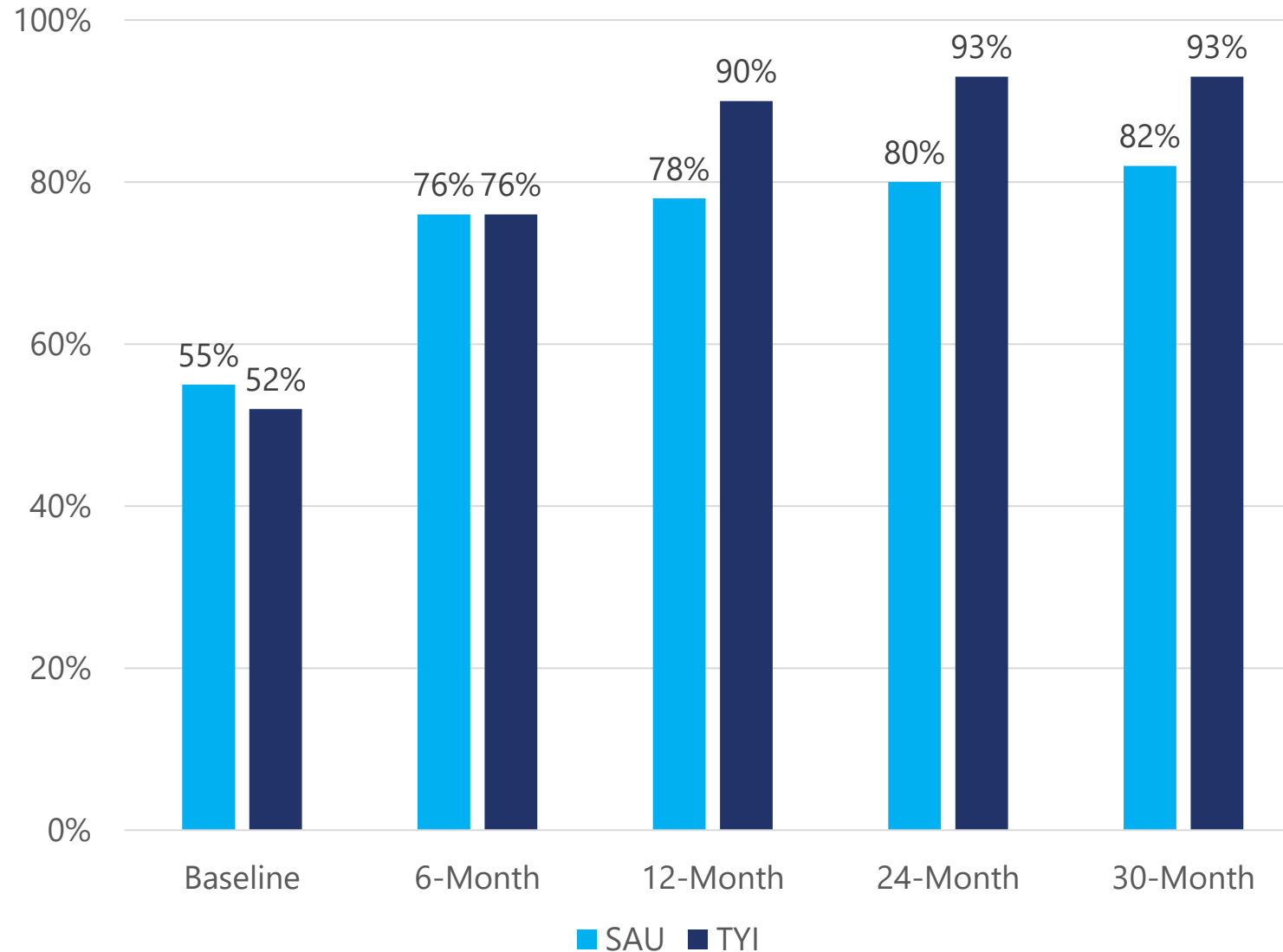


By month 30, young adults enrolled in TYI were more likely to report being stable housing than young adults receiving SAU.

None of young adults enrolled in TYI reported experiencing homelessness.

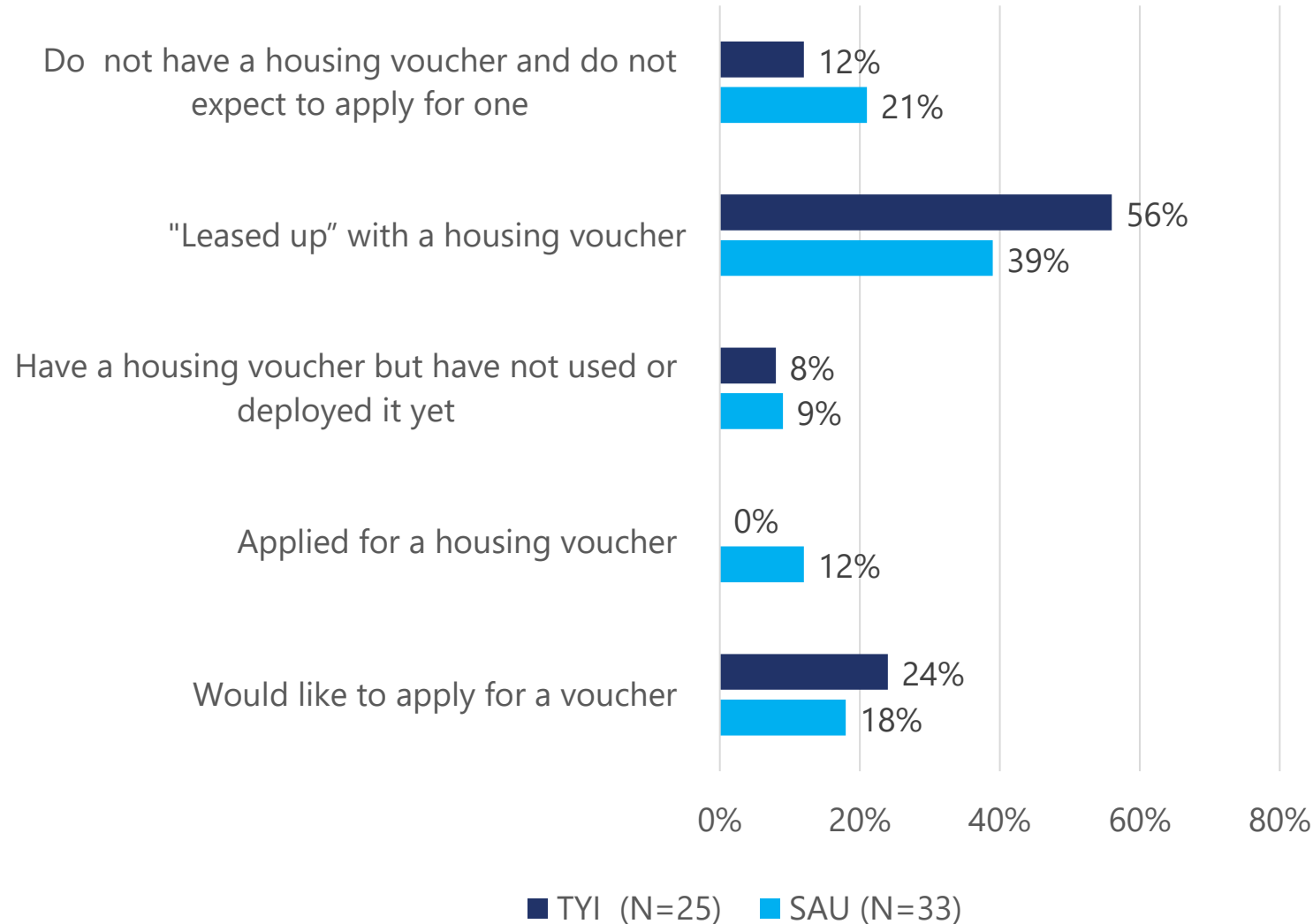
# CUMULATIVE VOUCHER APPLICATION

(SAU= 49; TYI=29)



Young adults enrolled in TYI group applied for vouchers at a higher rate than young adults receiving SAU

# VOUCHER STATUS AT MONTH 30



*"I did get a [housing] voucher through [TYI staff] as well. She helped me apply for the emergency housing voucher. But there's other steps that you have to take. You have to go see apartments and you have to travel and things like that...."*

# EQUITY AND INCLUSION THEMES

## TYI CASE STUDIES AND FOCUS GROUPS



### Support for Participants Without Documentation

*"As a person who does not currently have a work permit... this cash will change my life. It will be a turning point in my life for the better"*



### Empowerment for LGBTQ+ Participants

*"The additional income provided stability I haven't had in my entire life as a disabled trans woman. I have had minimal to no support from my family, and the cash payments have allowed me to pursue my career while also having enough food on the table."*



### Inclusive Options for Participants with Disabilities

*"...just having the money from the [TYI] program means I get breathing room while I study to where I want to be. Then I could take the certifications and start looking for work. Since it'll be a sitting job, it'll be a lot easier for my disability and it will be a lot less stressful."*

## SUMMARY OF IMPACT EVALUATION FINDINGS

- Housing stability increased for both groups, but TYI group experienced less homelessness and more stable housing
- No young adults enrolled in TYI reported staying in a shelter at month 30
- Relatively high uptake of vouchers across groups but TYI group leased up with vouchers at a higher rate; more vouchers available in NYC when TYI launched
- TYI helped non-binary and transgender young adults, young adults with disabilities, and young adults without documentation overcome barriers to housing, education, and employment.



# KEY TAKEAWAYS



- The Cash Plus model has the potential to support housing stability for young people through both the Cash and the Plus.
- Young people in a diversity of situations access resources to increase their housing stability.
- The Plus can offer an opportunity for meaningful and supportive connections that bolster psycho-social well-being.
- We have a particular interest in better understanding how cash can be leveraged in the context of the local homelessness response systems to further improve outcomes and resource allocation.

# CONNECT WITH US

---



Ms. Sarah Berger-Gonzalez, [sgonzalez@chapinhall.org](mailto:sgonzalez@chapinhall.org)

Dr. Amanda Griffin, [agriffin@chapinhall.org](mailto:agriffin@chapinhall.org)

Dr. Forrest Moore, [fmooore@chapinhall.org](mailto:fmooore@chapinhall.org)



ChapinHall.org



@Chapin\_Hall



@ChapinHall



@Chapin\_Hall



@ChapinHallCenter

Thank you!



# 3rd Street Youth Center & Clinic:

## Our Holistic Approach to Youth Inclusion to Housing Programs

Joi Jackson-Morgan, MPH  
Chief Executive Officer  
National Alliance to End Homelessness 2025  
Conference





# History

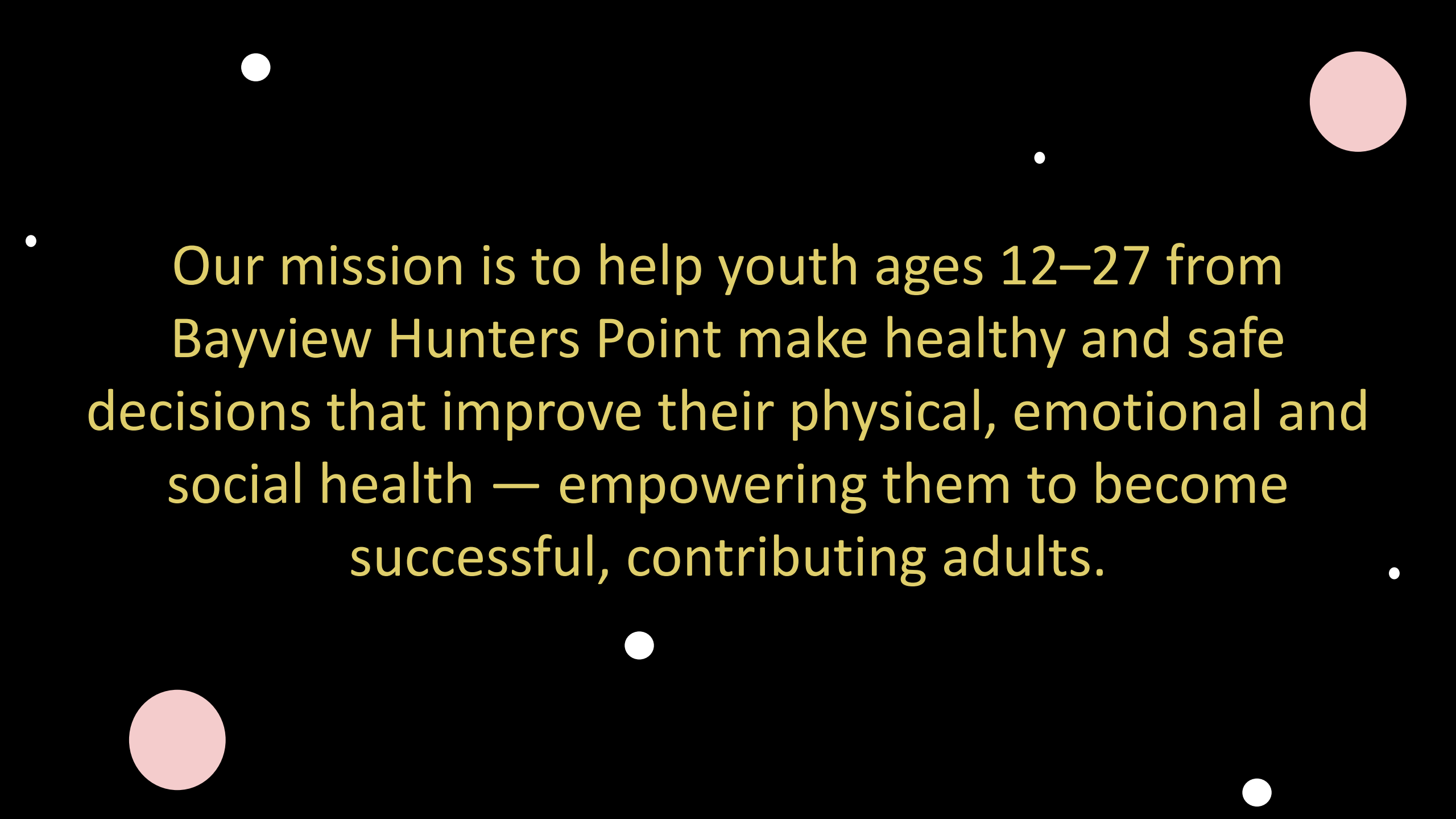
3rd Street was founded in 2005 thanks to the efforts of neighborhood parents, youth and community upstanders who felt Bayview Hunters Point (BVHP) youth deserved the same access to resources and opportunities afforded to youth in other areas of San Francisco.

Early 3rd Street, *formerly known as Bayview Healing Arts*, operated out of a former liquor store and offered health education and arts programming to youth. Today, 3rd Street has 8 total locations including the Youth Center, the Youth Clinic, a housing office, a transitional aged youth (TAY) Navigation Center, along with mental health services sprinkled throughout each space.

Source: 3SYCC, Bayview Historical Society



BVHP is historically ethnically diverse, which continues to this day with many Black families residing in the area since the 1940s. Unfortunately, BHVP is also notoriously neglected in terms of city and state funding for infrastructure, education, job opportunities, etc.

The background is black with several white and pink circles of varying sizes scattered around. A large pink circle is in the top right, a medium pink circle is in the bottom left, and several smaller white circles are positioned around the text.

Our mission is to help youth ages 12–27 from Bayview Hunters Point make healthy and safe decisions that improve their physical, emotional and social health — empowering them to become successful, contributing adults.

## Health & Youth Development

**Health services:** food program, STI prevention, health education, promote Health Eating, Active Living behaviors

**Youth development programs:** afterschool, paid programs that promote healthy behaviors and a sense of agency among youth; college prep service, allied health career prep program

## Housing

**Services:** rapid re-housing, financial assistance, rental subsidies, case management, problem-solving/barrier removal, Rising Up case management, SFSU rapid re-housing

**TAY Navigation Center:** free housing for 18-27 year olds, meals, health & wellness services, education assistance, professional development, personalized support



## Clinic

**Services:** school/sports physicals, pregnancy testing & counseling, birth control, emergency contraception, STI testing & treatment, HIV testing & counseling, sick care for routine illness, vaccinations

**\*\*Run in partnership with Community Health Programs for Youth (CHPY) Branch of SFPDPH**

## Behavioral Health

**Services:** culturally-responsive therapy and counseling services, barrier removal

**“Healthy youth build healthy lives.”**



# Introduction



## Understanding TAY Experiences

Gain insights into the unique challenges and perspectives of Transitional Age Youth (TAY) in San Francisco through their own narratives and lived experiences.



## Holistic Approach to Support

Recognize the multifaceted needs of TAY, including mental health, education, employment, and social integration, and develop comprehensive support systems.



## Collaborative Program Design

Engage TAY as active participants in the design and implementation of housing programs, ensuring their needs and preferences are at the forefront.



## Community Empowerment

Empower TAY to become leaders in their communities, advocating for changes and influencing policymakers to drive meaningful and lasting impact.

By centering youth voices, we can create housing programs that truly address the unique needs and aspirations of Transitional Age Youth in San Francisco, fostering their successful transition to independent adulthood.

# YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN SAN FRANCISCO



## Unsheltered Youth Homelessness Decreased

The unsheltered homeless youth population decreased 9% between 2022 and 2024.



## Sheltered Youth Homelessness Increased

The number of sheltered homeless youth increased 76% between 2022 and 2024, reflecting an increase in shelter capacity and utilization.



## LGBTQ+ Representation Among Homeless Youth

38% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ+, up from 33% in 2022.



## Youth Connectedness Improving

63% of homeless youth are in school or employed, up from 49% in 2022. 28% of youth are employed, up from 22% in 2022.

The data suggests that San Francisco is making progress in supporting homeless youth, with more youth being sheltered and connected to education and employment opportunities. However, LGBTQ+ youth continue to be overrepresented among the homeless population and require targeted support.

# LGBTQ+ YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

## Overrepresentation of LGBTQ+ Youth

38% of homeless youth in San Francisco identify as LGBTQ+, up from 33% in 2022, indicating a continued overrepresentation of LGBTQ+ individuals in the youth homeless population.

## Unique Needs of LGBTQ+ Youth

LGBTQ+ homeless youth often face additional challenges, such as family rejection, discrimination, and higher rates of mental health issues, that require specialized services and support.

## City Initiatives for LGBTQ+ Youth

The City has implemented targeted outreach, gender-affirming shelters, and LGBTQ-inclusive case management to better address the unique needs of LGBTQ+ homeless youth.

# Prioritizing and Centering Youth Voice



## Understanding the Unique Challenges Faced by Youth

Young people experiencing homelessness often face additional barriers, such as limited access to support systems and employment opportunities, that can make it more difficult for them to transition out of homelessness.



## Leveraging Youth Perspectives and Innovative Solutions

Youth who have experienced homelessness firsthand can provide valuable insights into the most effective ways to address the issue, and can play a key role in developing and implementing innovative, community-driven solutions.



## Empowering Youth to Lead the Change

Involving youth in the decision-making process and providing them with the resources and support they need to actively participate in addressing homelessness and housing issues can help to ensure that the solutions being implemented are truly responsive to the needs of the community.

By highlighting the unique experiences and perspectives of youth, and empowering them to play a central role in addressing homelessness and housing issues, we can develop more effective and sustainable solutions that truly meet the needs of the San Francisco community.

# The Importance of Youth Engagement

## Fresh Ideas

Youth often have innovative and unconventional ideas that challenge traditional approaches to homelessness and housing programs.

## Lived Experiences

Young people who have experienced homelessness or housing instability can provide valuable insights that inform more empathetic and effective program design.

## Digital Fluency

Youth's familiarity with technology can help design programs that leverage digital tools and platforms to reach and support the homeless population.

## Adaptability

Young people are often more adaptable to change, allowing them to quickly respond to evolving needs and pilot new program initiatives.



Case Study:

HomePoint  
2017



# HomePoint Design Process 2017



```
graph LR; A[Staff Brainstorm] --> B[Kelvina]; B --> C[Prototyping];
```

**Staff Brainstorm**

**Kelvina**

**Prototyping**

# HomePoint Design Process 2017





## Shakeyla & Kelvina



# Centering Youth Voice: Best Practices

## Needs Assessment

Conduct comprehensive needs assessments to understand the unique needs, preferences, and priorities of youth in the TAY housing program.

## Co-Design Approach

Engage youth in the design and development of TAY housing programs through a co-design process, ensuring their perspectives and ideas are incorporated.

## Youth Advisory Board

Establish a youth advisory board to provide continuous feedback, guidance, and oversight on the program's implementation and improvement.

## Flexible Programming

Offer flexible and adaptable programming that can be tailored to the evolving needs and preferences of the youth participants.

## Empowerment and Autonomy

Empower youth to make decisions, take on leadership roles, and exercise autonomy within the TAY housing program.

## Peer-to-Peer Support

Facilitate peer-to-peer support networks and mentorship opportunities to encourage youth engagement and community building.

Thank you!

- [www.3rdstyouth.org](http://www.3rdstyouth.org)
- Joi Jackson-Morgan, MPH, CEO
  - [joi@3rdstyouth.org](mailto:joi@3rdstyouth.org)



# 1.08 Pathways to Housing and Stability: Strategies for Addressing Youth and Young Adult Homelessness



**Amara Santos**

San Francisco, California

*Youth Homelessness Advocate*

**Alex Wagaman Ph.D.**

Richmond, Virginia

*Associate Professor, School of Social Work*



**Sarah Berger Gonzalez**

Chicago, Illinois

*Policy Fellow*



**Joi Jackson-Morgan**

San Francisco, California

*Chief Executive Officer*



**Dexter O'Connell**

Venice, California

*Director of Youth Policy & Advocacy*

