



YHDP COORDINATED COMMUNITY PLAN
GRAND RAPIDS/WYOMING/KENT COUNTY –
MI-506 CONTINUUM OF CARE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

YOUTH ACTION BOARD

MEMBERS

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YHDP CORE PLANNING TEAM

Youth Action Board
AYA Youth Collective
Arbor Circle
Grand Rapids Area Coalition to End Homelessness/MI-506 CoC

KENT COUNTY COC YOUTH COMMITTEE

Bethany Christian Services
Community Rebuilders
Covenant House
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
Family Promise
Grand Rapids Public Schools
ICCF
Kent County Housing Commission

Kent Intermediate School District
Mel Trotter Ministries
Network180
The Salvation Army
YWCA
Grace's Table
Safe Haven Ministries
Grand Rapids Public Library

ADDITIONAL PARTNER AGENCIES

Heart of West Michigan United Way
City of Grand Rapids
Kent County Government
City of Grand Rapids

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDERS

Monique Jackson, Corporation for Supportive Housing
Jane Moretta-Miller, Corporation for Supportive Housing
JB Burton, True Colors United

ACRONYMS LIST

CCP: Coordinated Community Plan

CE: Coordinated Entry

CoC: Continuum of Care

HUD: US Department of Housing and Urban Development

TA: Technical Assistance

YAB: Youth Action Board

YHDP: Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program

YYA: Youth and Young Adults

Definition: For the purposes of YHDP, this group encompasses youth and young adults aged 16 to 24 years old who are unaccompanied by a parent or caregiver over the age of 24. It is inclusive of youth and young adults who are parents or caregivers for children, youth and young adults who are partnered but not parenting, and youth and young adults who are surviving independently.

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

MISSION AND VISION

We are committed to youth-led solutions to end homelessness. We envision a collaborative network of providers and services to increase viable housing options, eliminate barriers, apply equitable standards of care and make homelessness scarce among youth. Honoring the time it takes for relationships to be built, we trust youth to be the experts of their own experience.

We aim to bring together multiple disciplines and youth leadership to dismantle barriers that contribute to the cycle of homelessness. We believe housing is a basic human right and that every youth deserves access to safe, stable and affordable housing. We recognize that homelessness in our community is compounded by multiple factors including systems of oppression that have disproportionately affected marginalized youth including LGBTQIA+, Black Indigenous People of Color, Pregnant and Parenting Youth, those Fleeing Violence and Survivors of Violence, Refugees, Youth in the criminal justice system and those aging out of foster care.

We believe in gathering behind youth and young people to foster a homeless system that:

- Has a centralized resource chart.*
- Prioritizes trust building, transparency and has accountability measures in place for when trust is violated.*
- Provides equal access to resources equivalent to housed peers.*

- *Offers programs, each of which centers around the emotional needs of its participants and has staff that is equipped with emotional intelligence to serve young people in crisis.*
- *Prioritizes organizations that are youth-centered.*
- *Ends the stigma that education is superior to lived experience.*
- *Prioritizes awareness-building around the issue of youth homelessness.*
- *Assesses gaps and creates resources to fill them.*
- *Works alongside youth to build trust and foster relationships rooted in healthy power dynamics and equity.*

Kent County Youth Homelessness Committee believes in a world where every youth has stable housing. We will accomplish this using a community-based, trauma-informed approach led by youth and young adults.

SECTION 2 - STATEMENT OF NEED

Kent County, MI encompasses an area of 872 square miles on the west side of the state with a population of 657,974. It is the largest county outside of the Detroit area and its county seat is Grand Rapids with 14 municipalities total located within the county. The population has grown by 14.6% since the year 2000.

In recent years, the CoC has dedicated resources to better understand the needs and scope of youth experiencing homelessness in the county. The Youth Action Board, facilitated by AYA Youth Collective and Arbor Circle, and members of the CoC Youth Committee (30 members and 12 agencies) developed an assessment process conducted in 2021. Similarly, a Youth PIT Count/Needs assessment was conducted in 2018 with the support of the YAB and the CoC's Youth Committee. YAB members worked with CoC staff and the youth lead agency at the time to determine what questions they felt were needed in order to better assess and understand the experience of youth homelessness in Kent County. They also determine the methodology to conduct the assessment, which was online, and where to conduct outreach efforts to increase overall survey participation. Members passed out flyers and used various social media platforms to raise awareness of the assessment.

The assessment found the following: Of the youth engaged in the system in 2021, 51% identify as male, 43% as female, 6% as non-binary/trans/other, and 74% are people of color. Furthermore, 34% identify as LGBTQ+ upon first meeting (compared to 10% of the national population) and nearly 40% have engaged with the foster care system, and 36% have been involved with criminal justice system. Youth involved in the development of the survey opted to not include disclosure of health information, such as HIV/AIDS status. Key findings demonstrate that there are a total of 169 youth-specific units. (28 emergency shelter, 34 permanent supportive housing, 68 rapid rehousing, & 39 transitional housing) and there are between 101 and 200 youth on the byname list at any given time based on trends within the past year. Youth identified that they are seeking support with resource navigation, emotional and social wellbeing, and additional financial resources.

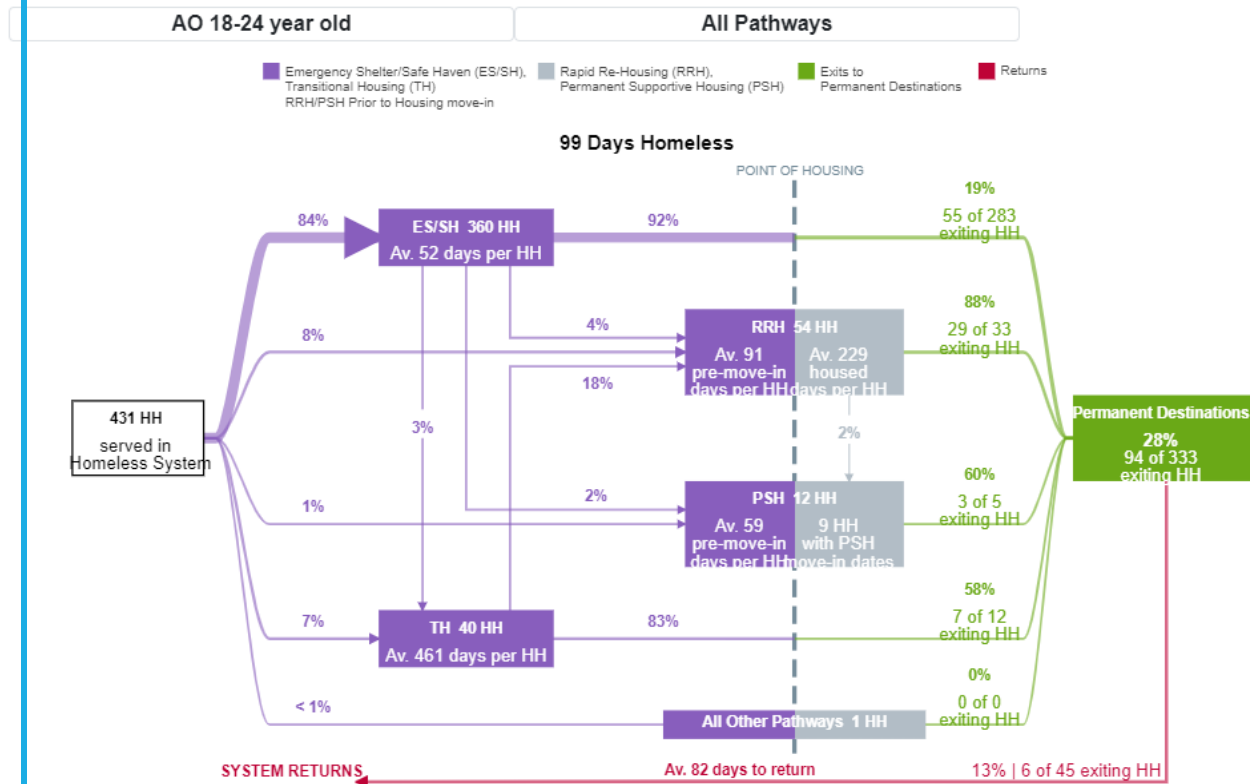
YHDP funding from HUD will allow for youth needs to be better addressed.

DATA AND NEEDS

The system performance map from HUD's Stella Performance Module uses the CoC's LSA data to highlight the various paths households experience as they move through the homeless response system. The map below provides information about how **YYA without children experienced homelessness** within the system between the period of 10/1/2021-9/30/2022. There were 431 households with the average length of time homeless at 99 days. 360 were in emergency shelter, 40 in transitional housing, 54 in rapid re-housing, and 12 in permanent supportive housing. The overall average rate of exits to permanent housing was 28% with 13% returning to the system in an average of 82 days.

System Performance Map

Households use different combinations of project types during the time they are served in the homeless system. These project type combinations are referred to as pathways. Each pathway has different average cumulative days homeless, exits to permanent housing and returns to the homeless system. The system map shows performance for the main project types in the homeless system and can be filtered to show performance for the main pathways.

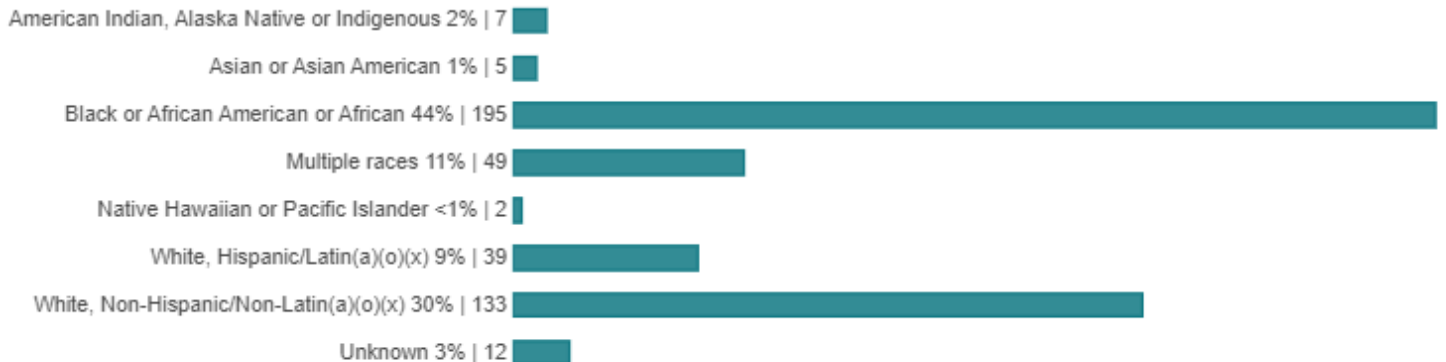


Gender of HoH and Adults



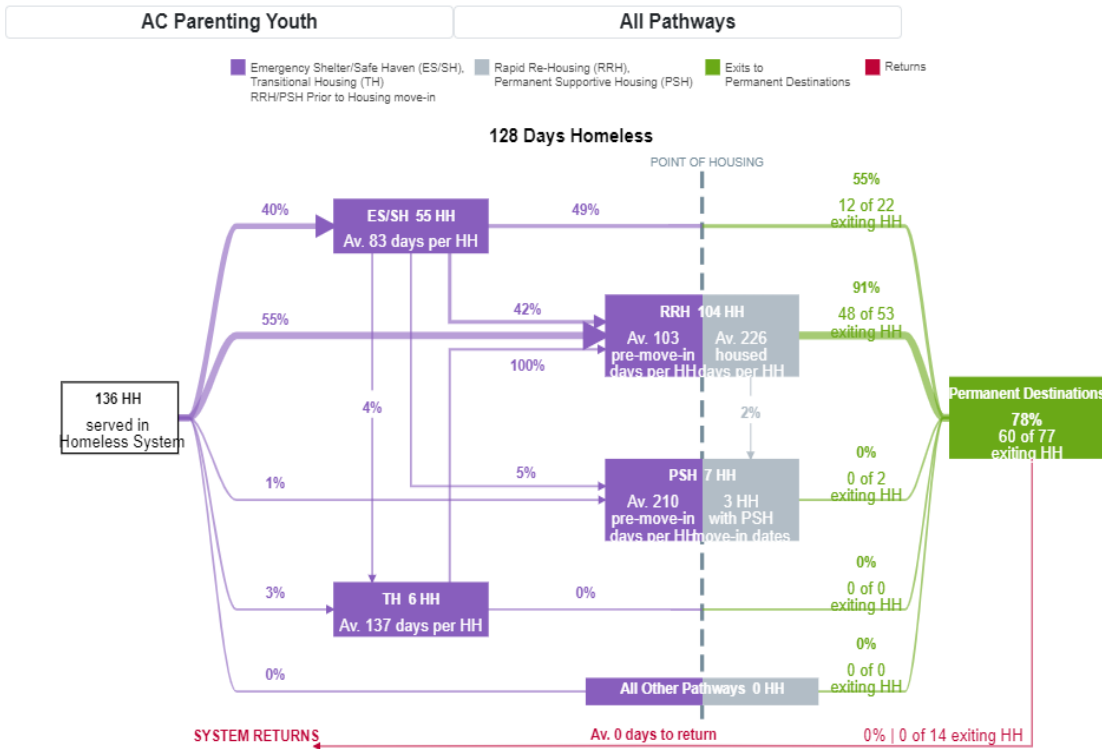
Additional data through the LSA shows the demographic breakdown, in which there is an overrepresentation of people of color and males. Also, 12% (54) were experiencing chronic homelessness with a disabling condition, 62% (272) came to the system for the first time and 23% (102) were continuously homeless.

Race and Ethnicity of HoH and Adults



System Performance Map

Households use different combinations of project types during the time they are served in the homeless system. These project type combinations are referred to as pathways. Each pathway has different average cumulative days homeless, exits to permanent housing and returns to the homeless system. The system map shows performance for the main project types in the homeless system and can be filtered to show performance for the main pathways.



The second system performance map provides information about how ***pregnant and parenting youth experienced homelessness*** within the system during the same period. There was a total of 136 youth-led households with an average length of time homeless at 128 days. 55 households were in emergency shelter, 6 in transitional housing, 104 in rapid re-housing, and 7 in permanent supportive housing. The overall average rate of exits to permanent housing was 78% with none returning.

Race and Ethnicity of HoH and Adults



Age of All Persons in Household



Gender of HoH and Adults



The demographic breakdown highlights a significant overrepresentation of women (88%) and Black/African Americans (70%). Additionally, 54% of the households' makeup were young children ages 0-5. 78% (113) of households were comprised of a single adult with 1-2 children, 4% (7) were experiencing chronic homelessness with a disabling condition, 47% (68) were first time homeless in the system and 47% (68) were continuously homeless.

At the moment, there are no systems set up to identify the number of **YYA unaccompanied, pregnant, and parenting at-risk of homelessness**. However, we can defer to HMIS data that show **35 unaccompanied pregnant and parenting YYA** and **15 single YYA only households** who accessed Homeless Prevention funds in 2022. The demographic breakdown of these households is as follows:

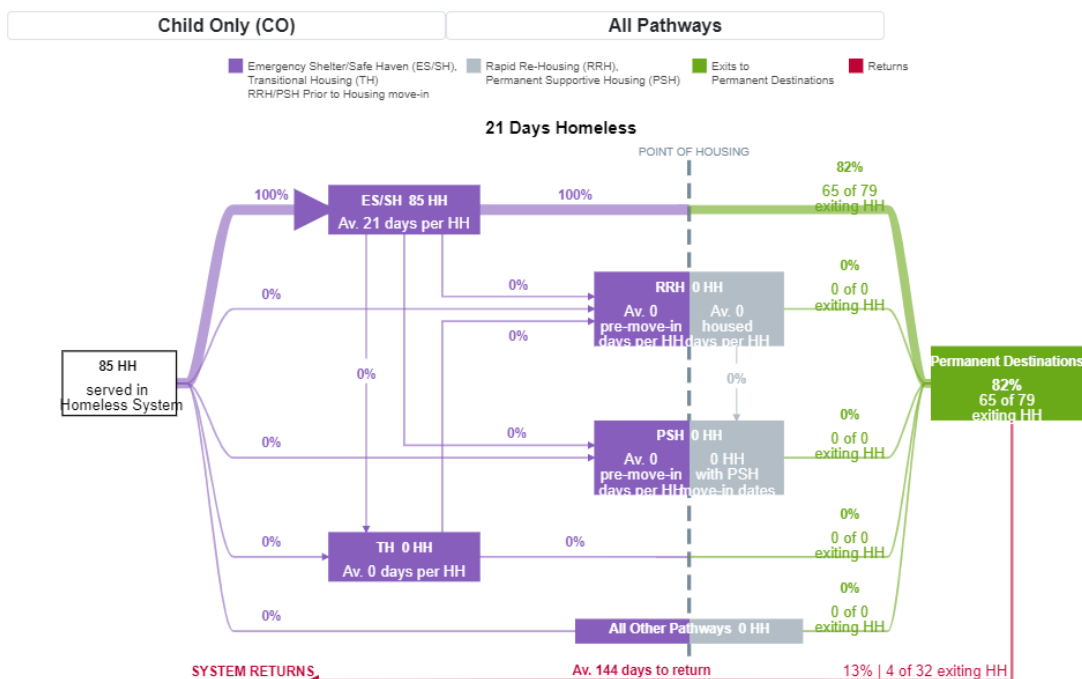
- 66% female
- 33% male
- 71% Black/African American/African

- 19% White
- 12% Hispanic/Latinx

Minors (under the age of 18 years)

System Performance Map

Households use different combinations of project types during the time they are served in the homeless system. These project type combinations are referred to as pathways. Each pathway has different average cumulative days homeless, exits to permanent housing and returns to the homeless system. The system map shows performance for the main project types in the homeless system and can be filtered to show performance for the main pathways.



The above system performance map shows that between October 1, 2021 and September 30, 2022, there were 85 minors who experienced homelessness and came through the system. 89% (76) were experiencing homelessness for the first time and 7% (6) were returning. 82% (65 of 79) of Child Only households exited to a permanent housing destination.

The race and ethnicity breakdown is as follows:

- 1% (1) American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous
- 32% (27) Black or African American
- 21% (18) Multiple races
- 1% (1) Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- 6% (5) Hispanic/Latinx
- 33% (28) Not Hispanic/Latinx

Additional data from Kent Intermediate School Districts shows there were a total of 145 unaccompanied homeless youth.

According to the Michigan School Data for Kent County, 855 students were doubled-up, 373 students lived in a hotel/motel, accounting for a total of 1,228 students in Kent County who were ***at risk of category 1 homelessness***.

STAKEHOLDERS

The stakeholders involved with the development and community-wide implementation of the CCP include the following:

Youth Action Board

The YAB comprises up to 12 YYA with lived experience of homelessness. The group is facilitated by partner agencies, AYA Youth Collective and Arbor Circle.

Youth Service Providers and Community Agencies

Arbor Circle – Runaway and homeless youth provider, mental health services, youth street outreach, and housing services

AYA Youth Collective – youth drop-in center, non-time limited supportive housing, direct cash transfers, youth street outreach

Mel Trotter Ministries – local shelter

Network180 – mental health and SUD services

ICCF – housing developer, housing services provider, shelter

Community Rebuilders – housing services provider

City of Grand Rapids – local city government and funder

Grace's Table – programming for pregnant and parenting teens

Covenant House – shelter and transitional housing for youth

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

Kent County – county government, including community action agency and Kent County Housing Commission

Kent Intermediate School District – local education agency

Kent School Services Network – community schools and social services

Grand Rapids Public Library

Safe Haven Ministries – DV services

YWCA – DV services

Hope Network – social services, housing services

Grand Rapids Public Schools

Family Promise – family shelter and housing services

The Salvation Army – CE service provider, housing services, prevention

Heart of West Michigan United Way – fiduciary and employer of record for CoC

Gaps

The community recognizes that the existing partnership alone will not be sufficient to end youth homelessness in Kent County and will require the intentional engagement of additional stakeholders to ensure sufficient funding, equitable service delivery, and system capacity. The Grand Rapids/Wyoming/Kent County CoC is committed to developing partnerships with the following:

- Private philanthropic organizations support the funding needs to end youth homelessness
- Justice-related agencies
- LGBTQIA+ specific organizations
- Increased coordination with service providers for youth to ensure access to supports for survivors of domestic violence, sex & human trafficking, and sexual assault
- BIPOC-led organizations
- Connections to other youth-led organizations
- Other Youth Action Boards/Youth Committees in other organizations
- Agencies and resources in rural areas of the county
- Landlords
- Disability advocates
- Community Colleges, higher education institutions
- Medical providers/community medical providers/health department
- Faith-based institutions (churches, temples, mosques)

PRINCIPLES

This document is designed to meet both the needs of our community and our HUD partners.

This section outlines the HUD principals that must be integrated into the Coordinated Community Plan to build a shared community understanding of the values embedded in the planning and implementing of YHDP.

Four Core Outcomes

The coordinated community plan must demonstrate a commitment to the principles of the USICH Youth Framework to End Youth Homelessness Four Core Outcomes:

Stable housing includes a safe and reliable place to call home;

Permanent connections include ongoing attachments to families, communities, schools, and other positive social networks;

Education/employment includes high performance in and completion of educational and training activities, especially for younger youth, and starting and maintaining adequate and stable employment, particularly for older youth; and

Social-emotional well-being includes the development of key competencies, attitudes, and behaviors that equip a young person to succeed across multiple domains of daily life, including school, work, relationships, and community;

Special Populations

USICH has identified special populations of youth experiencing homelessness that are particularly vulnerable in how they experience homelessness.

The coordinated community plan must identify and address the local impact of homelessness on these special populations and include identification and engagement strategies, infrastructure considerations, and housing and service-delivery approaches that are responsive to the specific needs of:

- **youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ)**
- **youth who are gender non-conforming**

- **minors (under the age of 18)**
- **youth involved with juvenile justice and child welfare systems**
- **victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation**

Equity

The coordinated community plan must address how the community will measure and consider racial inequities and other disparities in the risks for, and experiences of YYA experiencing homelessness in Kent County.

Positive Youth Development

The coordinated community plan must address how Positive Youth Development (PYD) will be incorporated into all aspects of the youth crisis response system, including at the system and project levels.

Positive Youth Development is based on a body of research suggesting that certain "protective factors," or positive influences, can help young people succeed and keep them from having problems.

PYD favors leadership and skill-building opportunities under the guidance of caring adults. It looks at youth as assets to be developed and gives them the means to build successful futures.

Trauma-Informed Care

The coordinated community plan must address how Trauma-Informed care (TIC) will be incorporated into all aspects of the youth crisis response system, including at the system and project levels. Trauma informed programs will understand the prevalence and impact of trauma among their YYA experiencing homelessness and within the workforce.

- **Safety:** Policy and practice reflect a commitment to provide physical and emotional safety for service recipients and staff.
- **Choice & Empowerment:** to facilitate healing and avoid re- traumatization, choice and empowerment are part of trauma informed service delivery, for both service recipients and staff.
- **Strengths Based:** With a focus on strength and resilience, service recipients and staff build skills that will help them move in a positive direction.

Family Engagement

Coordinated community plans must address family engagement strategies and services designed to strengthen, stabilize, and reunify families.

Potential services includes family counseling, conflict resolution, parenting supports, relative or kinship caregiver resources, targeted substance abuse and mental health treatment, etc.

Unsheltered Homelessness

The coordinated community plan must address how the projects will address and decrease unsheltered youth homelessness in the community.

Youth choice

The capacity for self-determination may be a critical factor in obtaining many positive outcomes for Transition Age Youth. Allowing youth to exercise self-determination is a youth centered approach that values youths' expressed needs, self-awareness, and community knowledge.

Social and community integration

The goal of youth homelessness services should be a successful transition to adulthood, including the successful integration into a community as a positive contributing community member.

Housing First

The Housing First approach focuses on quickly connecting people experiencing a housing crisis to permanent housing without preconditions and barriers to entry (e.g., sobriety, treatment, or service participation requirements) while also providing necessary supports to help maintain housing and prevent a return to homelessness. Supportive services are offered based on assessed needs but are not required.

- **Immediate access to permanent housing with no preconditions:** Youth should be provided with access to safe and secure permanent housing that meets their needs as quickly as possible.
- **Youth choice and self-determination:** Housing First is a person-centered approach that promotes choice regarding housing and service options, while maintaining high expectations for youth.
- **Individualized and youth-driven supports:** All youth are different. Once housed, the level of service offered will depend on the unique needs and

choices of the youth. Non-time limited supports provide a practical, person-centered approach that assists in helping youth maintain their housing independently.

Individualized and client-driven supports

The coordinated community plan must acknowledge that the needs of the young people to be served will be unique.

Housing and support packages that help prevent and end homelessness among youth must recognize and respond to individual differences across individuals to serve them appropriately and efficiently.

Communities must design the system flexibly to accommodate individuals with both high and low service needs, as well as the need for short-term or long-term supports.

The coordinated community plan must address how the youth crisis response system will provide individualized and client-driven supports.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR COMMUNITY PLAN

GOAL #1: IDENTIFICATION

THE COMMUNITY IDENTIFIES ALL UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

OBJECTIVE 1: CREATE A STREAMLINED APPROACH FOR THE YOUTH BY NAME LIST

Action Items:

1. Increase membership of youth serving organizations at the Youth Functional Zero meetings to 90% of Kent County youth providers in attendance.
Responsible entity: CoC Staff and Youth Committee
Timeframe: In process
2. Identify missing data and determine collection methods for gaps.
Responsible entity: CoC Staff – HMIS Administrator
Timeframe: Completed
3. Establish a universal process to add youth to by-name list.
Responsible entity: CoC Staff – HMIS Administrator and CE Program Manager
Timeframe: Completed
4. Train all youth serving organizations on the process to add youth to the by name list.
Responsible entity: CoC Staff – HMIS Administrator and CE Program Manager
Timeframe: Completed

OBJECTIVE 2: ESTABLISH PUBLIC ACCESS POINTS AND INCREASE AWARENESS OF HOW TO CONNECT TO CE ACCESS.

Action Items:

1. Recruit peer navigators to support in educating the community and spreading awareness.
Responsible entity: Youth Committee and YAB
Timeframe: Completed
2. Create flyers with CE access points contact information and place them in various locations around the community.
Responsible entity: YAB and Youth Committee

Timeframe: Completed

3. Conduct youth rallies, events, and resource tabling to connect youth and young adults to YYA serving organizations

Responsible entity: YAB and Youth Committee

Timeframe: In process/ongoing

4. Increase outreach and drop-in staffing capacity and hours.

Responsible entity: YAB and Youth Committee

Timeframe: In process/ongoing

OBJECTIVE 3: INCREASE AWARENESS OF EXPERIENCE OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES.

Action Items:

1. Educate the community on youth needs, experiences, and behaviors.

Responsible entity: YAB

Timeframe: Ongoing

2. Provide training modules and resources to aid in trauma informed care and positive youth development.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

3. Create a no wrong door process that connects youth to resources via referral.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff, CE Committee

Timeframe: Completed

4. Identify gaps (geographic and demographic).

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

5. Increase outreach to identified gaps.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Providers,

Timeframe: TBD

6. Provide training for community partners on how to identify youth experiencing homelessness and how to connect them to CE.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

GOAL #2: PREVENTION AND DIVERSION

THE COMMUNITY USES PREVENTION AND DIVERSION STRATEGIES WHENEVER POSSIBLE, AND

OTHERWISE PROVIDES IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO LOW-BARRIER CRISIS HOUSING AND SERVICES TO ANY YOUTH WHO NEEDS AND WANTS IT.

OBJECTIVE 1: CREATE LOW-BARRIER WAYS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO ACCESS SUPPORTS THROUGH IN PERSON, TELEPHONE, AND VIRTUAL FORMATS

Action Items:

1. Increase knowledge of what resources are available and where to find them.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: Ongoing

2. Utilize diverse advertising strategies (social media, traditional media, billboards/buses, QR codes, pull-tabs).

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: In process

3. Decrease overall time to access CE system.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: In process

4. Increase options for how youth access CE system (phone, in person, website).

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff, CE Committee
Timeframe: In process

OBJECTIVE 2: STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS AMONGST ORGANIZATIONS.

Action Items:

1. Create standard workflows for partnerships to promote shared knowledge, relationships, and connections.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff, CE Committee
Timeframe: Completed

2. Create a service provider directory that includes the contact information for the agency's identified lead person in youth services.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: TBD

3. Minimize silos to allow for a streamlined referral process.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff, CE Committee

Timeframe: In process

OBJECTIVE 3: PROVIDE DIRECT CASH TRANSFERS (DCT) AND FLEXIBLE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

Action Items:

1. Secure funding for DCT and flexible financial assistance.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

2. Create a DCT policy and share it with youth serving organizations.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

3. Invite youth serving agencies to case conferencing to collaborate on distributing the funds.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

4. Provide education and training for DCT to providers.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

OBJECTIVE 4: PROVIDE EQUITABLE SERVICES THAT DO NOT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST OR DISQUALIFY A YOUTH FROM RECEIVING SERVICES BASED ON BIAS, ASSUMPTIONS, OR INEXPERIENCE WITH THE POPULATION.

Action Items:

1. Engage with adjacent systems – foster care, juvenile justice, education, healthcare, mental health, kinship care, law enforcement – to create awareness on youth homelessness and the impact on YYA and how homelessness intersects with those systems .

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: Ongoing

2. Provide opportunities for adjacent systems - foster care, juvenile justice, education, healthcare, mental health, kinship care, law enforcement - to become involved with the YHDP and ending youth homelessness, including the development of plans that prevent YYA from exiting any one system into homelessness.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: Ongoing

3. Educate and provide resources to youth serving organizations to promote trauma informed care and positive youth development.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: Ongoing

4. Ensure diverse representation amongst leadership and staff.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: Ongoing

GOAL #3: COORDINATION

THE COMMUNITY USES COORDINATED ASSESSMENT PROCESSES TO EFFECTIVELY LINK ALL YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS TO HOUSING AND SERVICES SOLUTIONS THAT ARE TAILORED TO THEIR NEEDS.

OBJECTIVE 1: EXPAND ACCESS TO AND UTILIZATION OF THE COORDINATED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM BY UNHOUSED YOUTH.

Action Items:

1. Build partnerships with youth serving agencies not historically involved with the CoC. Increase Youth Committee membership and attendance by 50%

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: In process

2. Expand/increase services in rural areas, including street outreach to identify unsheltered YYA and add CE access points.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: In process

OBJECTIVE 2: ENSURE ALL YOUTH SERVING ORGANIZATIONS ARE USING THE COMMUNITY HOUSING CONNECT (CE PLATFORM) AND ASSISTING YOUTH AS NEEDED WITH THE PROCESS.

Action Items:

1. Identify which YYA serving organizations are not using the coordinated entry platform and connect them.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: In process

2. Provide training to ensure high quality data entry.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: Ongoing

3. Ensure youth have the option of accessing a peer navigator as they engage with service providers.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee
Timeframe: In process

OBJECTIVE 3: ENSURE DECISIONS REGARDING COORDINATED ENTRY ARE INCLUSIVE OF YYA NEEDS AND WANTS.

Action Items:

1. Include youth in discussions about CE updates and implementation of processes.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff, CE Committee
Timeframe: Ongoing

2. Ensure diverse representation on the CE implementation team.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff, CE Committee
Timeframe: Ongoing

GOAL #4: ACCESS

THE COMMUNITY ACTS WITH URGENCY TO SWIFTLY ASSIST YOUTH TO MOVE INTO PERMANENT OR NON-TIME LIMITED HOUSING OPTIONS WITH APPROPRIATE SERVICES AND SUPPORTS.

OBJECTIVE 1: CREATE AND EXPAND TARGETED HOUSING PROGRAMS THAT MEET THE SPECIFIC NEEDS OF YOUTH.

Action Items:

1. Identify flexible funding sources to create new and expanded housing programs for YYA.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: TBD

2. Create a list of service providers with non-time limited housing options.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

3. Provide case management and after care post move in.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

OBJECTIVE 2: INCREASE STAFFING CAPACITY TO ASSIST WITH THE URGENT NEED OF YYA EXPERIENCING HOUSING INSTABILITY.

Action Items:

1. Hire at least one additional outreach staff focused on youth.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee

Timeframe: Completed

2. Hire at least one youth housing peer navigator.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee

Timeframe: Completed

OBJECTIVE 3: PROMOTE EQUITABLE ACCESS FOR YOUTH ACROSS ALL PLATFORMS.

Action Item:

1. Review the data and determine if disparities exist among those being housed and those who are not connected to housing resources.

Responsible entity: CoC staff

Timeframe: Ongoing

2. Reduce barriers to access by ensuring all programs are housing first and low barrier.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: Ongoing

3. Develop demographically reflective and culturally competent supportive services.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: Ongoing

4. Develop youth grievance procedure.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff, CE Committee

Timeframe: TBD

OBJECTIVE 4: CREATE AND EXPAND OUTREACH PROGRAMS ROOTED IN RELATIONSHIP BUILDING AND YOUTH CHOICE TO BRIDGE ACCESS AND ENTRY INTO SERVICES AND PROMOTE LONG-TERM STABILITY.

Action Items:

1. Increase youth outreach funding.
Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee
Timeframe: Completed
2. Develop provider capacity to conduct youth-focused outreach.
Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: Completed
3. Hire peer outreach staff with lived experience of housing instability.
Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee
Timeframe: Completed

GOAL #5: BUILDING SYSTEM CAPACITY

THE COMMUNITY HAS RESOURCES, PLANS, AND SYSTEM CAPACITY IN PLACE TO PREVENT AND QUICKLY END FUTURE EXPERIENCES OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG YOUTH.

OBJECTIVE 1: INCREASE STAFFING CAPACITY AND SERVICE HOURS FOR AFTERHOURS ACCESS, DROP-IN CENTERS, CASE MANAGEMENT SUPPORTS - INCLUDING PEER NAVIGATION AND OUTREACH.

Action Items:

1. Agencies commit to provide a livable thriving wage to mitigate turnover.
Responsible entity: Youth Committee
Timeframe: TBD
2. Secure funding to support increased capacity.
Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee

Timeframe: TBD

OBJECTIVE 2: DETERMINE STAFFING NEEDS ACROSS THE SYSTEM.

Action Item:

1. Conduct system scan and identify gaps with youth and providers.

Responsible entity: CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

OBJECTIVE 3: SECURE FLEXIBLE FUNDING FOR NON-TIME LIMITED HOUSING.

Action Items:

1. Community organizations work together to identify and apply for flexible funding opportunities.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

2. Develop strong partnerships with private funders.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 4: CONNECT YOUTH TO SERVICES AND PROGRAMS THAT ENSURE LONG-TERM STABILITY AND PREVENT RETURNS TO THE SYSTEM.

Action Items:

1. Promote programs that offer life skills training and provide meaningful opportunities for participation in community activities through social and community integration.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

2. Provide individualized and client-driven support to youth who are housed post move in.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

GOAL #6: YOUTH-CENTERED APPROACH

THE COMMUNITY COMMITS TO A YOUTH-CENTERED APPROACH AND INCORPORATING YOUTH VOICE IN ALL DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THEM.

OBJECTIVE 1: ENSURE THAT YOUTH HAVE VOTING POWER AT DECISION-MAKING TABLES.

Action Items:

1. Establish a process that includes the Youth Action Board in all committees relevant to youth.
Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: TBD
2. Create a held seat on the CoC Funding Review Committee for a YAB member.
Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: TBD

OBJECTIVE 2: AGENCIES ELEVATE YOUTH CHOICE AND YOUTH VOICE.

Action Items:

1. Provide adultism and youth voice training to youth serving organizations and community leaders.
Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: TBD
2. Service providers commit to hiring youth with lived experience.
Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: Ongoing

OBJECTIVE 3: INCORPORATE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND TRAINING IN PROGRAMMING.

Action Items:

1. Provide self-advocacy and leadership training to youth.
2. Providers commit to including youth in all discussions about anything that impacts them.

GOAL #7: EDUCATION AND INCOME

THE COMMUNITY RECOGNIZES THAT LACK OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES IS ONE OF THE LEADING CAUSES OF HOUSING INSTABILITY AND COMMITS TO INCREASING EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND INCOME GENERATION AMONG YYA.

OBJECTIVE 1: EXPAND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES THAT PROVIDE A LIVING WAGE AND SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE EXITS FROM HOMELESSNESS AND/OR PREVENT EPISODES OF HOMELESSNESS.

Action Items:

1. Elevate partnerships with local workforce agencies to expand program referrals.
Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: TBD
2. Identify and support current programs that train YYA in high wage, high demand pathways.
Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: TBD
3. Strengthen relationships for YYA to access workforce development programs.
Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: TBD
4. Build partnership with Chamber of Commerce and local workforce partners to elevate flexible, paid employment opportunities.
Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: In process
5. Provide opportunities for access to youth-centered financial foundations/literacy workshops.
Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: TBD

OBJECTIVE 2: CONNECT PREGNANT AND PARENTING YYA WITH CHILDCARE OPTIONS TO INCREASE THEIR ABILITY TO FOCUS ON EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT GOALS.

Action Items:

1. Convene stakeholders Opportunity for All, First Steps Kent, Head Start, Great Start, and other affordable childcare providers to connect to resources for pregnant and parenting YYA.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: TBD

2. Advocate for increased childcare resources specifically for pregnant and parenting YYA.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: TBD

OBJECTIVE 3: CONNECT YYA IN SECONDARY AND POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS WITH HOUSING SERVICES TO INCREASE THEIR ABILITY TO FOCUS ON EDUCATIONAL GOALS.

Action Items:

1. Advocate to hire peer support navigators in secondary and postsecondary institutions who are specialized in identifying YYA experiencing housing instability and connecting them to housing and community resources.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: TBD

2. Partner with postsecondary institutions to: formalize warm handoffs between youth serving organizations and on campus resources; increase awareness of on campus supports among youth and service providers; and ensure unhoused students have access to housing and community resources.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: TBD

GOAL #8: EQUITY AND INCLUSION

THE COMMUNITY IS COMMITTED TO SERVICE DELIVERY THAT IS EQUITABLE, INCLUSIVE, AND UNBIASED AS DEFINED BY THE YAB.

OBJECTIVE 1: DEVELOP POLICIES AND PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE EQUITY.

Action Item:

1. Utilize the True Colors United Equity Hub. The Equity Hub from True Colors United makes it easy to build your skills and knowledge for addressing the unique needs of LGBTQIA+ youth experiencing homelessness. The free trainings are grounded in intersectionality and racial equity; designed to meet users where they are, providing certificates, badges, and learning opportunities without assumptions or judgment.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: REVISIT ACTION ITEM

OBJECTIVE 2: DISMANTLE RACIST ASSUMPTIONS AND UNFAIR PRACTICES.

Action Items:

1. Acknowledge white supremacy and the impact it continues to have in Kent County, especially as it relates to the Black community.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: Ongoing

2. Be open to hard conversations and call each other in.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: Ongoing

3. Analyze youth providers' DEI policies and practices and provide feedback to improve.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVE DIVERSE REPRESENTATION AT LEADERSHIP LEVELS.

Action Items:

1. Include youth and young adults in the hiring process of open positions.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: Ongoing

2. Post open positions with BIPOC and LGTBQIA+ led organizations

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: Ongoing

3. Conduct DEI analysis of staffing within agencies.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

4. Create applications that use wording which intentionally identifies the agency is seeking BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ candidates for open positions.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

OBJECTIVE 4: ESTABLISH AND CONDUCT A RANGE OF DEI TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.

Action Items:

1. Youth and young adults identify trainings for youth providers.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

2. Provide quarterly trainings to community.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

OBJECTIVE 5: ENSURE POSITIVE HOUSING OUTCOMES ARE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EXISTING DISPARITIES OF THE FRONT DOOR OF THE HOMELESS RESPONSE SYSTEM. A POSITIVE HOUSING OUTCOME IS DEFINED AS STABILIZED IN HOUSING FOR A PERIOD OF MORE THAN 12 MONTHS.

Action Items:

1. Create a prioritization strategy that reflects the disproportionate rates at which BIPOC YYA experience homelessness.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

2. Increase utilization of supportive services (financial literacy, life skills development classes, educational resources, increase job training opportunities).

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

3. Increase income through connection.

Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff

Timeframe: TBD

OBJECTIVE 6: INCREASE RESOURCE CAPACITY FOR PREGNANT AND PARENTING YOUTH.

Action Items:

1. Fund and implement additional low barrier housing programs designed for pregnant and parenting YYA with varied types of housing options.
Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: TBD
2. Develop relationships with existing programs and promote housing first model for this particular subpopulation.
Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: TBD
3. Increase number of CoC providers that support pregnant and parenting YYA.
Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: TBD
4. Increase HMIS utilization of providers that support pregnant and parenting YYA.
Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: Ongoing
5. Advocate for resources that center parenting fathers and/or do not limit access based on gender. This includes increasing resources available and fostering connections to existing resources.
Responsible entity: YAB, Youth Committee, CoC staff
Timeframe: Ongoing

SECTION 5 - GOVERNANCE

The following governance structure outlines relationships between the main entities involved in the YHDP planning process. The structure for YHDP governance and ongoing oversight is as follows.

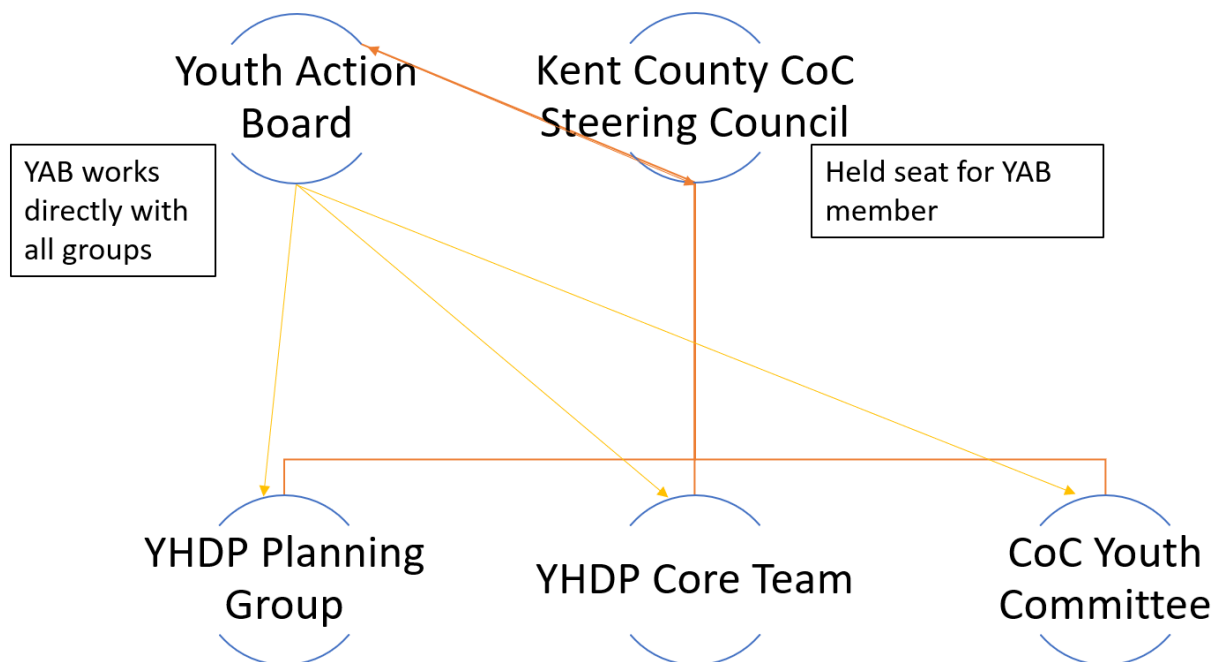
CoC Steering Council – The CoC Steering Council will endorse the CCP before submittal to HUD and subsequent funding decisions. The Steering Council works in partnership with the YAB to support the CCP and other youth-led initiatives and has a designated seat for a youth or young adult with lived experience of homelessness.

YAB – The Youth Action Board is an independent entity composed of YYA with lived experience of homelessness and housing instability. The YAB provides feedback to older adult partners, collaborates with the YHDP Coordination Team and Planning Team on CCP development and updates, and approves the CCP before submission to HUD. The YAB will help develop and approve the YHDP project review process, selection criteria, and funding decisions. YAB members are compensated at a rate

of \$35/hour. The youth action board is capped at 12 members and self-determines which members attend community meetings. The budget for YAB is incorporated into the overall budget of the CoC.

YHDP Core Team – The YHDP Coordination Team is composed of Grand Rapids Area Coalition to End Homelessness/CoC staff, technical assistance (TA) providers, support staff from AYA Youth Collective and Arbor Circle, and YAB members. This team works in collaboration with the YAB throughout the YHDP planning and implementation process and seeks the input of YYA in the community.

YHDP Planning Group – The YHDP Planning Group is composed of YAB members, the YHDP Coordination Team, and community stakeholders who work in youth-serving programs and organizations. Planning Group members represent a diverse range of public sector organizations such as education, the juvenile legal system, service providers serving unhoused YYA, behavioral health providers, and child welfare. The Planning Group participated in the community planning process and system modeling sessions and will be involved in development of the YHDP selection criteria.



Decision Making Process: The process for decision making regarding approval of the CCP, project development and implementation, and ongoing work is outlined below:

Community members and stakeholders, including YYA, are invited to provide input through various community planning sessions, youth action board meetings, and system modeling retreats.

The YHDP Planning Group develops and makes recommendations for the CCP based on community input and youth leadership from the YAB. The YAB then adds or subtracts recommendations from the YHDP Planning Group to amend the contents of the CCP. The Planning Group may add but not take away contributions that youth have decided to include in the plan. In order to approve the CCP, the YAB will engage in an iterative process with the YHDP Planning Group to make any other changes prior to submission and commencement of the project application phase of YHDP.

The YAB develop the ranking and rating to use during the request for proposal process. They are responsible for the review and ranking of all YHDP projects in consort with the CoC Funding Review Committee. The recommendations from YAB then go to the CoC Steering Council for final approval. Once projects have been selected, the YAB will continue to work with providers during implementation.

SECTION 6 - NEW PROJECT LIST

Permanent Housing Projects	
Project Type	Transitional Housing - Rapid Rehousing Joint Component Type- short to medium term assistance (up to 36 months)
Summary of Project and Supportive Services Description	<p>This project prioritizes a quick transition out of homelessness and into permanent housing by providing up to 36 months (with a special YHDP activity) of housing and supportive services. Our CoC anticipates funding multiple TH-RRH programs through the NOFO process. These programs may vary on design but will follow the key principles described in this project description. TH- RRH will offer housing either with the young person as the leaseholder or with the agency as the lease holder in a master lease.</p> <p>TH-RRH services can be project-based or scattered site housing. Projects can also incorporate shared housing to help youth sustain housing after assistance ends or according to each individual youth's needs. Assistance for youth households (individuals and families) will be provided by helping them locate and move into permanent housing using financial assistance and housing focused services.</p> <p>While youth are in TH-RRH, they receive supportive services, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance addressing or clearing criminal background • Connection to education and training resources, including connection to financial assistance • Connection to employment • Connection to community activities or groups
Target population and number served	Youth between the ages of 18-24. Projected to serve approximately 50 youth households annually/100 for 2-year grant.
Target number of housing units	Approximately 50 1–2-bedroom units annually. Rental assistance will last between 12-36 months, depending on the needs of the youth.
Staffing	Projects should have adequate staffing, including case management and peer navigation. Staff to client ratio should be a maximum of 1:20
Projected Cost	\$1,600,000 for 2-year grant.

Outreach and Peer Navigator Supportive Services

HUD CoC Project Type	Supportive Services Only
Project summary	<p>The YHDP has created an opportunity for communities to develop new Supportive Services Only (SSO) projects dedicated to meeting the needs of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. SSO projects provide critical support within the homeless response system. These services should be closely connected with the youth specific coordinated entry system. Projects would provide street outreach to unsheltered YYA and peer housing navigation with the goals of connecting YYA with community supports and identifying YYA not connected to the homeless response system.</p> <p>Innovative strategies to be built into implementation include: peer support, youth led development of programs, paid YYA with lived experience staffing, culturally responsive service providers.</p>
Needs met	Increase the amount available and geographic distribution throughout the CoC of supportive services for youth. Identification of unsheltered youth and connection to housing.
Target Population	Youth 16 to 24 years of age and unaccompanied minors
Target number of youth served	Based on needs identified through the CCP process, projects should serve at least 75 youth annually. This number can be distributed to multiple project recipients if no applicant has the ability to serve the entire geographic area. Ideal project will have CoC wide coverage to serve regardless of youth location
Staffing	Projects will include adult and peer outreach staff and housing navigators who will directly assist youth and make connections with the homeless response system and other resources in the community. At least 1 FTE for outreach and 1 FTE for a peer navigator.
Projected cost	\$360,000 for 2-year grant for both projects

Host Homes	
HUD CoC Project Type	Supportive Services Only
Project summary	<p>Host homes are a growing, global, short-term housing intervention for young people experiencing homelessness. Host homes provide young people experiencing housing instability with affirming, stable, short-term housing for 1-6 months, wrap-around case management services, and peer support.</p> <p>The goal of short-term host homes is to provide a safe, temporary, welcoming space for up to six months where young people have time to repair their relationships with self-identified and chosen family and/or make decisions about other housing options with the support of a caring housing case manager and affirming adult mentor.</p> <p>Youth will receive support to remain stabilized in housing through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short-term placements for that provide time and space apart from families • Family mediation (referrals) • Family or individualized counseling • Youth will receive supports to stabilize and build skills to smoothly transition into other long-term housing options through: • Access to resource referrals to meet immediate, basic needs • Individualized counseling • Strong connection to education and employment supports • Prioritized referrals to child care for pregnant and parenting YYA • Peer support services • Social engagement opportunities with peers in other Host Homes
Needs met	Increase the amount available and geographic distribution throughout the CoC of supportive services for youth.
Target Population	Minors ages 11-17 who are literally homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness; and youth ages 18-24, including all special populations
Target number of youth served	Approximately 10 YYA annually.
Projected cost	\$250,000 for 2-year grant

Project Design Expectations

YYA who are unhoused face diverse barriers to housing stability and social-emotional well-being rooted in economic and social causes and shaped by personal experiences. Each participant must have access to support and resources targeted to the specific barriers and needs they identify.

YHDP projects must be prepared to identify and provide support and resources as needed, based on participant-identified housing barriers. These supports may be provided by the YHDP project itself, or they may be provided through partnership or referral.

Key areas of support include:

- Housing location
- Housing stability case management and supports
- Life skills for independent living
- Peer support & community building
- Education
- Career development for long-term economic stability
- Social-emotional well-being
- Behavioral health care
- Medical care
- Legal services
- Childcare
- Transportation

Projects must include the following key design elements:

- Services and design are tailored to the unique experiences and barriers of young adults.
- Young adult leadership is centered in design and implementation.
- Hiring prioritizes peer support, including young adults with experience being unhoused.
- Case management and services are client-centered and strengths-based.
- Project staff support participants with respect, authenticity, and a focus on relationship building.
- Staff to participant ratio is low.

- Staff receive ongoing training and support to best support young adult participants.
- Resources and strategies are in place for landlord identification, engagement, and mediation.
- Design and implementation align with Housing First principles.
- Design and implementation align with Positive Youth Development principles.
- Project design and services are trauma-informed, which is supported by ongoing staff training.

Addressing Institutional and Societal Barriers

As described in the Statement of Community Need, specific identities and experiences can shape the unique institutional and societal obstacles to housing stability and wellbeing that YYA face. The YAB and the YHDP Planning Group have identified the following identities and experiences as being underserved within the current system and/or as benefitting from targeted or explicitly affirming project design:

- Black, Indigenous, and other youth of color
- LGBTQIA+ YYA
- Pregnant and parenting YYA
- YYA with disabilities
- YYA with experience in foster care
- YYA with experience in the juvenile legal system
- YYA with experience of criminal sexual exploitation
- YYA who are undocumented or refugees

YHDP-funded projects must be prepared and equipped to assist all YYA with respect, cultural humility, and appropriate resources. YHDP projects that are targeted to or explicitly affirming of a specific subpopulation must reflect that capacity in the design and implementation of the project. Examples of targeted design include:

- Staff with lived experience of homelessness that reflects the subpopulation, including both peer support and other staff roles;
- Staff training specific to the barriers, experiences, and potential unique challenges faced by the subpopulation;
- Specific language capacity;

- Internal capacity or partnerships to provide population-specific services (e.g. gender-affirming medical care, targeted legal services, trauma recovery, etc.)

In addition, the CoC fiduciary, Heart of West Michigan United Way, will utilize \$100,000 for a planning grant to fund a Youth Homelessness Coordinator position and support YAB stipends only during the planning and implementation phases of the YHDP. YAB stipends will continue to be supported beyond YHDP through the CoC budget.

The community also recognizes that the projects listed above alone cannot end youth homelessness. YAB members voiced their desire for increased drop-in center services and hours, more wraparound supports, and peer navigators. As such, we commit to working with local funders and agencies to ensure the needs YYA have identified are met.

SIGNATURES

The signatures below attest to the approval and support of Grand Rapids/Wyoming/Kent County's Coordinated Community Plan to end youth homelessness. We agree to work collaboratively with our partners to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

Continuum of Care

Name: Casey Gordon
Title: Chairperson
Organization: Grand Rapids/Wyoming/Kent County MI-506 Continuum of Care

X

Casey Gordon

Runaway Youth and Homeless Youth Provider

Name: Kristin Gietzen
Title: President/CEO
Organization: Arbor Circle

X

Kristin Gietzen

Local Government

Name: Gustavo Perez
Title: Director of Kent County Community Action Agency
Organization: Kent County

X

Gustavo Perez

Public Child Welfare

Name: Tracey Silas
Title: Kent County Child Welfare Director
Organization: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

X

Tracey Silas

Youth Action Board

Name: King Johnson
Title: YAB Member

X

King Johnson

Youth Action Board

Name: Cassandra Clover
Title: YAB Member

X

Cassandra Clover