Show me that
there is love in
the world.
And in return, I shall
take off my mask.

SOUTHERN NEVADA
plan to end youth
homelessness

#bethemovement
to end youth homelessness in Southern Nevada
www.nphy.org/themovement

To showcase diverse youth voices throughout the Plan, Young Adults in Charge (YAC), Southern Nevada's Youth Action Board, held art and essay contests for young people with lived experiences of homelessness. The art contest's winning submission is featured on the Plan's cover, while the essay contest's two winning submissions are printed in full inside. All three winners were awarded scholarships for their efforts. Quotes from additional submitted youth essays and art pieces are also featured throughout the Plan. The Movement thanks all the young people who participated in the art and essay contests for their time, bravery, and creativity!

Cover Art courtesy of Xerian Knite (age 20):

"Here you will observe a young lady. Stripped of one of her wings and most of her colors, she has been tainted by the harshness of the world. Her mask she wears is to protect her from love. She walks along a garden of happiness in fresco, waiting for someone to teach her to love again because she knows in her heart of hearts that is what she truly is wants. In a way the girl is me, I was kicked out at 13 when I came out as FTM and gay. So I relate to this character a lot. My objective here is simple: by loving and being loved by others we will make this world a better place."

SOUTHERN NEVADA
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Artwork courtesy of TH, Age 19, Las Vegas

executive summary

With the third-highest prevalence of youth homelessness in the nation, Southern Nevada is experiencing a startling crisis that demands immediate action. The Southern Nevada Homeless Continuum of Care (SNH CoC), a group of local stakeholders committed to addressing homelessness in the community, counted 2,096 unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness — nearly a third of the entire homeless population in the area — in its annual Point-in-Time (PIT) count in 2017. Even more alarming is that 93 percent of these youth are sleeping either outside or in places not meant for human habitation, like their car or an abandoned building.

Federal leaders and communities across the country now recognize that youth experiencing homelessness require a response that accounts for their specific situations and stage of life. Without such tailored interventions, youth will remain in the homeless system without the necessary supports to exit, and will become our future population of adults experiencing chronic homelessness.

Thanks to the creative collaboration of a diverse group of funders, national experts, community stakeholders, and youth and young adults who have themselves experienced homelessness, the Southern Nevada Plan to End Youth Homelessness is in our hands. This Plan will serve as a roadmap for the many partners working together to prevent and end youth homelessness in Southern Nevada.

CREATING THE PLAN

This Plan is the result of a collaborative community effort by individuals and organizations, led by the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth (NPHY); Las Vegas Sands; Clark County Social Service, the SNH CoC collaborative applicant; the SNH CoC Planning Working Group, represented by the City of Las Vegas; the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Greenspun College of Urban Affairs; and Young Adults in Charge (YAC), Southern Nevada's Youth Action Board.

In November 2017, our community came together for the first annual Southern Nevada Youth Homelessness Summit, presented by NPHY and Las Vegas Sands. This community-wide event served as a kickoff to the Movement to End Youth Homelessness in Southern Nevada (the Movement), an initiative to build a focused and sustained effort to end youth homelessness in the region. The Movement was tasked with producing the first-ever Southern Nevada Plan to End Youth Homelessness.

The Movement's decision-making structure was based on four core teams working in coordination. **Young Adults in Charge** was established to ensure that voices of youth led the drafting of the Plan from the very beginning. This group began by meeting monthly, and then elected to meet weekly as its membership grew. YAC representatives also participated in meetings of the **Joint Decision-Making Team** (JDMT), which was comprised of Movement leaders, including Plan funders, and was tasked with reviewing all Plan components and making final determinations about what content to include. The **Planning Team**, made up of key community stakeholders and youth-serving providers, acted as the driver of the Plan throughout much of the process, synthesizing and packaging all information and recommendations for JDMT to consider. Finally, an expanded version of the **SNH CoC Youth Working Group** (YWG+) was made up of members of the SNH CoC's existing Youth Working Group and newly invited subject matter experts. This group provided community input throughout the process, along with others who were brought in to address specific topics.
To keep up with progress on the Plan, visit the Movement at *www.nphy.org/themovement*.

OUR VISION FOR SUCCESS

We will know the Plan has succeeded when our community's coordinated response system can ensure that homelessness among unaccompanied youth is rare, brief, one-time, and equitably addressed.

These criteria are modeled on federal standards that define homelessness among youth as **rare** when homelessness does not occur often, and when youth and young adults do not exit our public systems into unstable housing conditions. Homelessness among youth is **brief** when, if a young person does experience homelessness, their experience in the homeless services system lasts only a short time. Homelessness among youth is **one-time** when after exiting the homeless services system into housing, youth remain stably housed and do not return to homelessness. Homelessness among youth is **equitably addressed** when all youth experiencing homelessness, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity, gain equitable access to our system and its services and have equitable exits to safe and stable housing. Six principles, described in detail in the Plan, will guide our efforts as we make the changes necessary to meet these standards. Our system to end youth homelessness will…

… be person-centered.
… be accessible and equitable.
… provide comprehensive wraparound housing and support.
… promote accountability.
… be as efficient as possible.
… be collaboration-focused.

GOALS

As the convener of federal bodies addressing the issue of homelessness, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has published criteria and benchmarks on ending youth homelessness. After discussion, the decision-making groups in the Movement decided that USICH criteria would form the best framework for the goals of our own Plan, and would help propel our community towards the vision of making youth homelessness rare, brief, one-time, and equitably addressed.

Our goals outline in broad terms what the community hopes to achieve. In the Plan, each of these goals is defined by specific objectives and supported by metrics that will keep us accountable to our vision and make our work transparent to all stakeholders.

Goal One
The community identifies all unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness.

Goal Two
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.

Goal Three
The community uses coordinated entry processes to effectively link all youth experiencing homelessness to housing and services that are tailored to their needs.

Goal Four
The community acts with urgency to swiftly assist youth to move into permanent or non-time-limited housing options with appropriate services and supports.

Goal Five
The community has resources, plans, and system capacity in place to continue to prevent and quickly end future experiences of homelessness among youth.

STRATEGY FOCUS AREAS
There is no one-size-fits-all approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness, and our goals will not be achieved if we focus all of our efforts in one area alone. Instead, a variety of strategies have been identified that each align with one or more of the following focus areas: Legislative/Policy, Fundraising, Public-Private Partnerships, Housing & Services, and Systems Intersectionality. The strategies will serve as active steps toward achieving each of the five goals of the Plan. Aligning each strategy with one or more of these focus areas will help diverse partners and stakeholders to institutionalize and amplify our successful innovations.

NEXT STEPS
Now the hard work of implementation begins. To succeed, we need the voices and energy of policymakers, service providers, businesses, and community stakeholders. Much like the heavily collaborative planning process, implementation must also be carried out with an all-hands-on-deck approach. Southern Nevada is rich with subject matter experts and systems leaders whose participation will be essential as we move forward. Youth and young adults with lived experience of homelessness will continue to play a central role. Together, we will use the Plan to transform our existing systems and create a sustainable end to youth homelessness in Southern Nevada.

> "THE NECESSITIES OF HOMELESS YOUTH ARE MATERIALS SUCH AS CLOTHING, INCOME AND STABILITY. THESE ARE THE KEY FACTORS IN PRODUCING AND MAINTAINING A QUALITY LIFE."
> – AE, age 22

letter from clark county commission chair

STEVE SISOLAK
Commissioner

Board of County Commissioners

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Dear Friends,

Southern Nevada is facing one of the worst youth homelessness crises in the nation. Not only does our community have one of the highest incidences of unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness, but we also have one of the highest rates of these youth living unsheltered on our streets, without adequate community resources to provide for their safety, stability, or well-being.

Together, we can change this. Now, thanks to the Southern Nevada Plan to End Youth Homelessness, we have a roadmap to end this crisis here in our community.

The first annual Southern Nevada Youth Homelessness Summit, presented by Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth and Las Vegas Sands, kicked off the community-wide Movement to End Youth Homelessness in Southern Nevada in late 2017. Throughout 2018, the Movement convened a wide range of diverse stakeholders in an intensive multi-level planning process to create the Southern Nevada Plan to End Youth Homelessness.

This is a comprehensive, holistic umbrella Plan that comes at the issue of youth homelessness from all angles. Youth homelessness requires its own distinct approach and this Plan represents the first coordinated, regional response plan dedicated to youth homelessness in Clark County. This Plan was created out of Southern Nevada's unique landscape, but is aligned with federal criteria, helping our community to support federal efforts while serving as a nationwide leader in the fight to end youth homelessness.

On behalf of the Clark County Commission, I want to commend all of the organizations and individuals who devoted hundreds of hours of time and dedication to building this Plan, and express Clark County's full support of the Southern Nevada Plan to End Youth Homelessness.

Addressing youth homelessness affects all of us: when we get young people off the streets sustainably, we prevent further negative outcomes from occurring and save our community significant long-term costs. But, none of us can do this alone.

Now, the hard work of implementation begins. I urge all of you to read this Plan, understand its urgency, and come together from all sectors of society to implement its strategies. I am proud of what the Southern Nevada community has already accomplished in building this Plan: now please join me in making the Southern Nevada Plan to End Youth Homelessness a reality.

Sincerely,

Steve Sisolak
Chairman
Clark County Commission

#BETHEMOVEMENT — MY STORY

JS, Age 20, Las Vegas

Sunday, March 22, 1998…It was just around lunch time that I came into this world. A beautiful little girl with bright orange peach fuzz on the top of my little, newborn head. I was nothing more than an innocent soul, not yet tainted by the cruel ways of this world. Well…it started off that way, at least. But before I even attended my first day of kindergarten, my life was already a tragedy. My parents weren't really parents at all. My mother was consumed by the darkness of the Las Vegas streets, and my dad was no more than a trailer park drug dealer. It was only a matter of time before me and my 2 siblings were tossed into the foster care system, which opened the door to some of the scariest years of my life.

My 2 siblings and I were adopted in 2005, after an unfortunately disappointing string of foster homes. Each from which we left a little more broken and traumatized. Our new parents were pretty nice, and for a bit we began to feel like a family again. Then it all came crashing down. What should have the happiest years of my life were instead, flooded with harsh words, emotional manipulation and the constant sting of my father's heavy hand across my face. Life was not very pretty for me. Year after year I cried a little harder on my birthday, feeling as if this pain would never end. The closer I got to turning 18, the more I thought of leaving…just running far, far away and never looking back. So that's what I did.

The day I turned 18, I moved out of my parents' house and began my life as a young adult in this big city. Things were good at first. I had my own apartment and a job, life was great for me. I was 18 and way more naïve than I would admit. Soon enough, things weren't going so well for me anymore. I was so consumed by the need to take care of others that I trusted the wrong person and then it all fell apart. After a series of lies and one of the most painful acts of betrayal I have ever experienced, I found myself in the streets.

After losing my apartment, I had no idea what to do. I was constantly looking, asking everyone I knew for a couch to sleep on. I just wanted a roof over my head for the night. I was living my life recklessly, day-by-day with no idea where I was headed. Little did I know that the path I was traveling down, would take me nowhere but straight down. Before I knew it, I was hooked on drugs and constantly doing things I deeply regret, just for a shower and place to lay my head at night.

I remember my first day walking into Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth. I was a wreck, in every sense of the word. But something changed the second I walked through those front doors. I was greeted with open arms and a feeling of acceptance that I never expected to encounter, not after everything I had been through. I met so many other kids, beautiful souls who have been pushed aside all their lives, just like me. I stumbled upon the greatest support system for a homeless teenager that I could have ever asked for. These people have helped me accomplish so much in the time I've been involved with the program. If I didn't come across NPHY in September of 2016, I would probably still be on drugs. I would have never finished high school and received my diploma. Without the support of NPHY staff and all the friends I've made along the way, I don't think I would have found the strength or determination to become the woman I am today.

So many teens and young adults are walking the streets of this city, broken and lost. Young women are selling their bodies, just so they can make enough to feed themselves and in a lot of cases, their children. With the lack of positive influences in their lives, the young homeless male population is beginning to flood the city jails because they get busted for committing crimes, just so they can score a couple of bucks. So much love and so many dreams, thrown away with every pill that these kids swallow. Without knowledge of his potential, a young entrepreneur sits in an alley searching for his next fix. Unaware of the bright future that lies just beyond her reach, a teenaged girl walks out of a cheap motel after her last appointment for the night. "Hopefully tomorrow I can get my baby diapers after I pay the rent," she thinks to herself after counting her money on the bus. As unbelievable as it sounds, this has become a very harsh everyday reality for over 10,000 youth in our city.

A lot of people want to help, but don't know how and I just want to let you all know that it's actually pretty simple. Old clothes, school supplies, canned food, hygiene items….these are all things that you can use to help contribute to ending youth homelessness in Las Vegas. Simply showing these kids that somebody out there cares also helps tons. Help these lost teens find their path to success and watch them grow into the strong, confident adults they are meant to be.

AN ENDANGERED FUTURE: *THE NECESSITY OF HOMELESS YOUTH HAVING A VOICE*

TH, Age 19, Las Vegas

The adolescent years are primarily tasked to be the period of finding one's self. This is an incredibly important time for development and yet there are youth experiencing homelessness at alarming rates. Our false sense of security is ripped away from us as we find ourselves couchsurfing, living out of motels and shelters, struggling on the streets, and doing anything we can to stay alive. Upon experiencing this firsthand, I've learned that it is a constant state of disbelief and panic. I'm burdened with the task of calculating how much I can carry physically and emotionally as the knowledge that anything can happen becomes more tangible. However daunting it may be, I still believe that homelessness can be eradicated and a large part of the solution lies within our community.

The issue of youth homelessness is a growing epidemic that should not be ignored for various reasons. The absence of stability is traumatic and we begin to lack a valuable member in society as youth turn to anything that will fill that gap. Due to this, the health and safety of our community is jeopardized as medical conditions go untreated, drug abuse is amplified and sex trafficking becomes more prominent. Youth homelessness doesn't just impact the quality of our community, it reflects it as well. Young people are homeless as a result of running away from an abusive household, being forced out because of their sexual orientation or gender identity and financial reasons amongst other countless factors. With the increasing amount of youth running away and being put out on the streets it's important to realize that the way our community reacts to youth is part of the problem.

In like manner, the support for homeless youth is underwhelming. In order to aid those that come up against homelessness, it needs to be destigmatized. The shame placed on us is discouraging and for many it's cause to not come forward. This leads to them not gaining access to the services and programs they need, causing their situation to worsen. In addition to eliminating the reproach surrounding homelessness, youth should also be provided with a platform to speak out about our unique experiences. Every decision made on behalf of youth affects us directly and the majority of them are determined without our input. Having a seat at the table is imperative because no one knows what we need more than us. With a safe place to utilize our voices, we'll be able to help people understand that homelessness isn't a faceless entity. It affects youth on a daily basis which is why raising awareness is important.

Public awareness is one of the most crucial parts of the solution to ending youth homelessness because one cannot fix what they know little to nothing about. Raising public awareness can teach our community that homelessness itself is a problem not necessarily the youth experiencing it. Instead of considering us delinquents, it may bring about empathy and the realization that youth are a part of the community. Public awareness can also lead to public action. For instance, people might be more inclined to donate to non-profit homeless youth providers after learning about what they do and where they are. However, the concept of public awareness can easily be watered down to that of lip service. While it's important to keep the conversation going about what youth homelessness is, oversaturating the public with why it's a problem can make them less liable to do something about it. Public awareness is a stepping stone and the best way to utilize it is to tell people not only what they can do but also what's being done.

All things considered, ending youth homelessness isn't an impossible feat. It can be done with the help and support of our community. Turning a blind eye to this issue will not solve it and the key to understanding and moving forward is giving us a voice to not only allow us to be heard, but to allow the community to listen. The youth are the future. We will be the ones you pass the baton to and we deserve to be there to receive it.

acknowledgments

introduction

The Southern Nevada Plan to End Youth Homelessness represents the work of a diverse and dedicated group of stakeholders who came together with the vision of addressing the issue of youth homelessness.

But why is there a need to focus specifically on youth, when our community is already making a coordinated effort to address homelessness in general?

Young people experiencing homelessness are distinct from other homeless populations not just in their ages, but in their circumstances, mindsets, and needs; young people require distinct resources to sustainably end their homelessness. Without stable housing, young people are held back from taking critical steps toward adult independence, such as pursuing education and employment. Furthermore, in order to meet their basic needs, youth and young adults who become homeless often resort to survival strategies that are both dangerous and detrimental to their health. To ensure that youth who are currently homeless — or at risk of becoming so — do not become our community's future long-term homeless population, tailored solutions are needed.

Leading first and foremost with the voices of young people themselves, this Plan is a roadmap to reach a sustainable end to youth homelessness in Southern Nevada.

YOUTH DEFINITIONS IN THIS PLAN

Youth are under 18 years of age.

Young Adults are between 18 and 24 years old.

Unaccompanied Youth are under 25 years of age, are not part of a family with children, and are not accompanied by a parent or legal guardian during their episode of homelessness.

Pregnant or Parenting Youth are under 25 years of age and are pregnant or are the parents/ legal guardians of one or more children who are present with or sleeping in the same place as the youth parent.

HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

In November of 2017, the community came together to participate in and support the inaugural Southern Nevada Youth Homelessness Summit. The Summit, presented by the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth (NPHY) and Las Vegas Sands, both heightened the sense of urgency and provided an opportunity for local organizations and community members to collectively address the unique needs of this population. The Summit served as a kickoff to the Movement to End Youth Homelessness (the Movement) in Southern Nevada, an initiative to build a focused, sustained, community-wide effort to end youth homelessness in the region. The Movement was tasked with producing the first-ever Southern Nevada Plan to End Youth Homelessness.

In March of 2018, the Movement issued a national request for proposals seeking an outside organization to facilitate the creation of the Plan, and after an intensive review process, selected the Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC). Funding for TAC's role was provided by NPHY, Las Vegas Sands, and the Southern Nevada Homeless Continuum of Care (SNH CoC) Planning Working Group. Starting with TAC's first on-site visit in April, Southern Nevada's Youth Action Board, Young Adults in Charge (YAC), youth providers, funders, and other community stakeholders have worked energetically to create this Plan.

DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURE

A decision-making structure was established consisting of the Joint Decision-Making Team (JDMT), the Planning Team, YAC, and an expanded SNH CoC Youth Working Group (YWG+). The JDMT was composed of Movement leaders, Plan funders, and members of YAC, ensuring from the beginning that the voices of youth led the drafting of the Plan. The group was tasked with reviewing all Plan components and making final determinations about what would be included in the Plan. YAC began by meeting monthly, and then elected to meet weekly as its membership grew. The Planning Team, made up of key community stakeholders and youth-serving providers, acted as the driver of the Plan throughout much of the process, synthesizing and packaging all information and recommendations for JDMT to consider. The YWG+

included both members of the SNH CoC's existing Youth Working Group and newly invited subject matter experts. This group provided community input throughout the process, along with others who were brought in to address specific topics. The graphic below shows how the decision-making structure worked in action.

JOINT DECISION MAKING-TEAM: Decision Maker

Reps from YWG+, YAC, SNH CoC Planning Working Group, Las Vegas Sands, UNLV, SNH CoC Collaborative Applicant
Meets every other week

YOUNG ADULTS IN CHARGE:
Work Group

Youth and young adults with lived experience of homelessness
Meets weekly

PLANNING TEAM: Work Group

NPHY, Clark County Step Up, Clark County Social Service, HELP of Southern Nevada, St. Jude's, Southern Nevada Children First, Nevada Homeless Alliance, CCSD Title I HOPE, UNLV
Meets weekly

EXPANDED CoC YOUTH WORKING GROUP:
Advisory Group

SNH CoC Youth Working Group members and additional key stakeholders
Meets monthly

LARGER GROUP OF STAKEHOLDERS

Examples: Adult homeless providers, mental health and health care providers, law enforcement
Bring in as needed on specific topics

During the subsequent months, the community moved through four phases of planning, guided by TAC: 1) Analysis of the Current System; 2) Community Brainstorming of Strategies; 3) Fine-tune and Synthesize; and 4) Finalize Plan for Summit Debut.

PHASES OF PLANNING

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	PHASE 4
ANALYSIS OF CURRENT SYSTEM	**COMMUNITY BRAINSTORMING OF STRATEGIES**	**FINE-TUNE AND SYNTHESIZE**	**FINALIZE THE PLAN FOR THE SUMMIT DEBUT**
TAC reviewed all available community data, records, and reports and offered a synthesis to the community as a foundation for the Plan. TAC worked with the community to launch the three decision-making bodies (JDMT, Planning Team, and YAC), with a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, membership, meeting schedules, and approval authority.	Once the decision-making groups were established, a large community meeting, "Dream Big," was facilitated by TAC to brainstorm innovative strategies to address youth homelessness. During this all-day event, stakeholders were invited to brainstorm solutions which produced a number of strategies to address youth homelessness that were exciting to the community.	Before finalizing strategies for inclusion in the Plan, the decision-making groups met again with TAC to develop action-oriented goals and objectives, using the data as a lens to focus the Plan. YWG+ and the Planning Team also established goals and a framework for continuous quality improvement.	Once the goals and objectives were finalized, the decision makers met again with TAC to identify which community-endorsed strategies from "Dream Big" would best address the gaps and needs of youth experiencing homelessness in Southern Nevada. In addition to the four on-site meetings with TAC, JDMT, the Planning Team, and YAC continued to meet diligently to ensure progress on the Plan.
APRIL 2018	**MAY 2018**	**JUNE 2018**	**JULY-AUGUST 2018**

INTRODUCING OUR VISION FOR SUCCESS

Early on in the process, the Plan's decision-making groups defined the plan's vision for success. **We will know the Plan has succeeded when our community's coordinated response system can ensure that homelessness among unaccompanied youth is rare, brief, one-time, and equitably addressed.** This vision is central to the structure of this document and serves as the foundation of the Plan.

These criteria are modeled on federal standards that define homelessness among youth as **rare** when homelessness does not occur often, and when youth and young adults do not exit our public systems into unstable housing conditions. Homelessness among youth is **brief** when, if a young person does experience homelessness, their experience in the homeless services system lasts only a short time. Homelessness among youth is **one-time** when after exiting the homeless services system into housing, youth remain stably housed and do not return to homelessness. Homelessness among youth is **equitably addressed** when all youth experiencing homelessness, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity, gain equitable access to our system and its services and have equitable exits to safe and stable housing.

background

UNDERSTANDING YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Before examining youth homelessness in Southern Nevada, it is important to acknowledge the national scope of this issue. Causes, consequences, and high-risk subpopulations in youth homelessness are shared in communities throughout the United States. Basic knowledge of the national data is a lens through which youth homelessness at the local level can be better understood.

While youth homelessness is not a new challenge, a spotlight on the issue in recent years has illuminated the staggering numbers of youth and young adults experiencing housing instability in the United States. According to the Voices of Youth Count national survey from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, one in ten young adults ages 18 to 25 experience some form of homelessness in a given year.[1] Similarly, this research shows that one out of every 30 minors between the ages of 13 and 17 experience some form of homelessness, unaccompanied by an adult, in a given year. Interestingly, these numbers do not differ widely between urban and rural communities.[2]

Homelessness among youth takes many different forms. Some youth stay in shelters or transitional living programs, while others remain unsheltered, sleeping on the street or in places not meant for human habitation. Many are also doubled up, or "couch surfing," making it even more difficult to discern just how many young people are experiencing homelessness at a given moment. Youth and young adults who are unaccompanied and bouncing between the homes of friends may not necessarily seek help from homeless service providers or even identify as homeless, despite lacking a regular, safe place to spend each night. Youth homelessness is often referred to as "hidden in plain sight" for this very reason.

1 Chapin Hall research includes young adults 18 to 25, while federal definitions only go up to age 24.
2 Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. http://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ChapinHall_VoYC_NationalReport_Final.pdf

DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS OF HOMELESSNESS

This Plan relies on the broad definition of homelessness set forth in the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. According to that definition, youth are homeless if they "lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence."

Federal agencies that interact with youth experiencing homelessness have differing definitions:

The Department of Housing and Urban Development, in its Final Definition of Homelessness, established four categories: Literally Homeless, At Imminent Risk of Homelessness, Homeless Under Another Federal Definition, and Fleeing or Attempting to Flee Domestic Violence.

The Department of Education follows the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act definition.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Program addresses individuals who are "not more than 21 years of age…for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative and who have no other safe alternative living arrangement." This definition includes only those youth who are unaccompanied by families or caregivers.

More detailed federal definitions of homelessness are included in the ***Appendix (see page 37)***.

It is important to note that one of the biggest obstacles to coordinating a precise federal response to youth homelessness has been the lack of cohesive data. Contributing to this problem is the fact that key federal stakeholders maintain differing definitions of youth homelessness, leading to variation among annual counts of youth experiencing homelessness. For instance, the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) 2016 Point-in-Time (PIT) count estimated 40,799 unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness, while the Department of Education estimates that 111,753 unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness were enrolled in public schools in the 2015–2016 school year (the most recent year for which data was available).[3] [4]

In addition to different ways of determining the number of youth experiencing homelessness, there are also a wide variety of factors linked to the causes of youth homelessness today. Though every youth experiencing homelessness has a unique story, there are often common threads throughout each one. For example, the Voices of Youth Count found that Black or African American youth had an 83 percent increased risk of having experienced homelessness compared to youth of other races.[5] The National Network for Youth, a public education and policy advocacy organization, identifies four primary reasons for homelessness among individuals under the age of 25:

1. *Family Dysfunction, Rejection, and Conflict:* Many youth experiencing homelessness report having dealt with some level of family instability such as child abuse, neglect, domestic violence, parental substance use, or family conflict. It is important to emphasize that most youth who experience homelessness are not doing so by choice. Youth may run away from a family situation as a means for survival or may be thrown out of the home by a parent or guardian.[6]

   Family rejection is particularly prevalent among youth experiencing homelessness who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ). LGBTQ youth have a much higher risk of becoming homeless than their straight and cisgender peers, often as a result of rejection related to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Nearly 40 percent of youth experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQ, compared to an estimated 7 percent of the general U.S. youth population.[7] Over half of all youth who come out to their families are met with a negative reaction, and the ensuing conflict leads to one in four such youth being thrown out of their homes.[8]

2. *Child Welfare System Involvement:* "Aging out" of the foster care system occurs when youth between the ages of 18 and 21 exit the system of care and are expected to establish independence.

   Youth face a number of challenges during this period of transition. They are expected to find housing, obtain employment, and refine the life skills necessary for adulthood, often without any stability or support from biological or foster families. More than 25 percent of former foster children become homeless within two to four years of leaving the system.[9]

   Youth aging out of foster care are less likely to graduate from high school or receive a General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Not completing one's high school education often stunts any further educational attainment and leads to limited employment opportunities, prompting financial instability.[10]

3. *Juvenile Justice System Involvement:* Homelessness and involvement in the juvenile justice system are often interrelated. Not only are youth who have touched the juvenile justice system more likely to experience homelessness, but youth who experience homelessness are also more likely to have some involvement with the juvenile justice system. Interviews with more than 600 youth in 11 U.S. cities who had run away or were experiencing homelessness

3 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2017). HUD 2017 Continuum of Care homeless assistance programs homeless populations and subpopulations. https://www.hudex-change.info/resource/reportmanagement/published/CoC_PopSub_NatlTerrDC_2017.pdf
4 National Center for Homeless Education: National Overview web page. http://profiles.nche.seiservices.com/ConsolidatedStateProfile.aspx
5 Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. http://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ChapinHall_VoYC_NationalReport_Final.pdf
6 Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) Report FY 2010–2013. acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/afcars
7 Choi, S.K., Wilson, B.D.M., Shelton, J., & Gates, G. (2015). Serving our youth 2015: The needs and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth experiencing homelessness. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund. https://truecolorsfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Serving-Our-Youth-June-2015.pdf
8 Ibid.
9 Dworsky, A., Napolitano, L., & Courtney, M. (2013). Homelessness during the transition from foster care to adulthood. American Journal of Public Health, 103(2), 318-323.
10 Ford Shah, M., Liu, Q., Mancuso, D., Marshall, D., Felver, B.E.M., Lucenko, B., & Huber, A. (2015). Youth at risk of homelessness: Identifying key predictive factors among youth aging out of foster care in Washington State (RDA Report 7.106). Washington State Department of Social and Health Services. https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/SESA/rda/documents/research-7-106.pdf

showed that 44 percent had stayed in a jail, prison, or detention facility; nearly 62 percent had been arrested at some point; and 78 percent had had at least one interaction with the police.[11]

Youth who are dually enrolled in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems also have a significantly higher risk of homelessness. Foster care placements for older youth can be difficult to obtain, particularly for youth with previous or ongoing involvement with the justice system. Half of all dually enrolled adolescents aging out of the foster care and juvenile justice systems experience homelessness within six months because they are unprepared to live independently and have limited education and social support.[12]

Youth experiencing homelessness may engage in survival strategies that lead to contact with law enforcement such as trespassing or theft. They may also experience commercial sexual exploitation or trafficking. Youth exiting the juvenile justice system may fall into homelessness as a result of family rejection or housing barriers related to their criminal background.[13] For instance, if their family lives in subsidized housing that prohibits household members with certain criminal backgrounds, young people may be forced into homelessness so that the rest of the family can remain housed.

4. **Economic Hardship:** Residential instability, extreme disconnection, and other economic hardships are often underlying causal factors for homelessness among youth. A lack of stable and affordable housing coupled with unemployment or lack of a living wage can make families unable to provide for their children. These youth are at risk of becoming disconnected from other potential supports such as education, the workforce, and social networks, which in turn harms their chances to achieve self-sufficiency and economic stability.[14] Analysis from Voices of Youth Count indicates that young adults lacking a high school diploma or GED were 4.5 times more likely to experience homelessness than their peers who completed high school.[15]

THE IMPACT OF HOMELESSNESS ON PREGNANT AND PARENTING YOUTH

Percentage of Pregnant and Parenting Youth Experiencing Homelessness

FEMALES AGES 13-17	10%
FEMALES AGES 18-25	44%
MALES AGES 13-17	3%
MALES AGES 18-25	18%
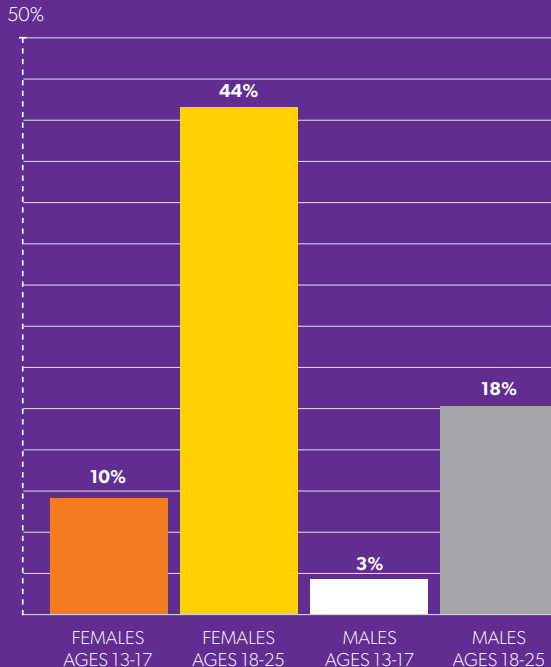
As shown here, according to Voices of Youth Count, a large percentage of pregnant and parenting youth experience homelessness. Pregnancy is one of the most vulnerable times in a person's life, and experiencing homelessness at the same time exacerbates that vulnerability. Pregnant youth and young parents may have no experience living on their own, may be unprepared for the responsibilities of being a parent, and may have difficulties meeting other challenges in their lives.

Source: Dworsky, A., Morton, M. H., Samuels, G. M. (2018). Missed opportunities: Pregnant and parenting youth experiencing homelessness in America. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

11 Pilnik, L. (2017). Addressing the intersections of juvenile justice involvement and youth homelessness: Principles for change. https://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Principles_FINAL.pdf
12 Covenant House: Teen homelessness statistics. Accessed October 10, 2018. https://www.covenanthouse.org/homeless-teen-issues/statistics
13 Pilnik, L. (2017). Addressing the intersections of juvenile justice involvement and youth homelessness: Principles for change. https://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Principles_FINAL.pdf
14 Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) Report FY 2010-2013. acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/afcars
15 Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. http://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ChapinHall_VoYC_NationalReport_Final.pdf

The Consequences of Youth Homelessness

It is imperative that communities work to prevent homelessness among youth whenever possible, as its effects can be devastating. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has found that youth who experience prolonged homelessness are at an elevated risk of substance use and mental health challenges.[16] Over 50 percent of youth experiencing homelessness report mental health problems over their lifetime.[17] The National Network for Youth has found that 30 to 40 percent of youth experiencing homelessness report alcohol problems in their lifetime, and 40 to 50 percent report drug problems.[18] As a result of experiencing homelessness, these young people are not afforded the opportunity to heal from whatever life events or factors put them at greater risk to begin with. Instead, stressors are often exacerbated by the lack of support and stable housing.

The effects that homelessness or housing instability can have on a young person are striking. Indeed, experiencing homelessness prior to the age of 24 may wholly alter the trajectory of an individual's future. Many of the youth and young adults at elevated risk of experiencing homelessness have already endured trauma. To allow these young people to then languish without a safe and stable place to call home should weigh heavily on the conscience of any community.

By identifying the primary causes, we can begin strategizing to prevent and end homelessness and housing instability among youth and young adults. Such varied factors as family dysfunction and conflict, child welfare involvement, juvenile justice involvement, and economic hardship cannot be addressed with a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, this Plan offers strategies that incorporate policy and legislation, fundraising, private/public partnerships, systems intersectionality, and innovative housing and services solutions. Southern Nevada enjoys a wealth of community members who have relevant expertise and play leadership roles in each of these areas. We must call on those partners and other stakeholders to identify what part they may play in the implementation of this Plan and in creating a sustainable end to youth homelessness in Southern Nevada. Much like the heavily collaborative planning process, implementation must be carried out with an all-hands-on-deck approach. Southern Nevada has an obligation to ensure the safety and well-being of its youth and young adults and we must all participate in assuming that responsibility.

THE PICTURE OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN SOUTHERN NEVADA

Progress to Date

The Southern Nevada community has proven itself to be both a leader and an innovator in addressing youth homelessness, with initiatives that are both CoC-specific and beyond.

Before the process of developing this Plan began, the SNH CoC had already introduced structures specifically designed for youth experiencing homelessness.

COORDINATED ENTRY FOR YOUTH

The Youth Coordinated Entry System (YCES) is a process by which the Southern Nevada Homeless CoC assesses the needs of youth (ages 12 to 24) experiencing homelessness and connects them to appropriate housing using a four-step process:

1. **Access**
   Youth are first connected to a Youth Access Site to receive services and a housing assessment. The Southern Nevada YCES uses a multi-site model and has four youth access site providers. These providers connect youth to services and emergency shelter as needed.

2. **Assessment**
   At each Youth Access Site, youth undergo a housing assessment to evaluate their current housing situation and level of vulnerability.

3. **Prioritization and Matching**
   Once youth complete the housing assessment, their information is collected and placed in the community queue. Youth are prioritized based on their vulnerability and matched to appropriate housing placements via care coordination meetings.

4. **Referral**
   Following the matching process, youth are contacted and connected to appropriate housing placements based on their needs and program eligibility.

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16 U.S. Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (2017). Factors associated with prolonged youth homelessness. https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/257806/RiskFactorsAssociatedProlongedHomelessness.pdf
17 Ibid.
18 National Network for Youth. Consequences of youth homelessness. (Issue Fact Sheet). https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/IssueBrief_Youth_Homelessness.pdf

HIGHLIGHTS OF COMMUNITY MILESTONES

2017

Launch of Southern Nevada's *youth-specific coordinated entry* process, which includes a youth-specific assessment tool and specialized Youth Access Sites.

Formation of *"Young Adults in Charge"* (YAC), Southern Nevada's Youth Action Board, a subgroup of the Youth Working Group made up of young people ages 12 to 24 with lived experience of homelessness.

The inaugural *Southern Nevada Youth Homelessness Summit*, which brought together service providers, civic leaders, government officials, and members of the business community to launch the Movement to End Youth Homelessness in Southern Nevada.

2014

Formalization of the *Youth Working Group* (YWG) in the governance structure of the SNH CoC; YWG is a subgroup of the Planning Working Group that is dedicated to addressing youth homelessness.

2011

Passage of *Nevada Assembly Bill 350*, which allows youth aging out of foster care to choose to remain under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court and be eligible for pro bono legal services and monetary payments from their child welfare agency until age 21.

2001

Passage of the *Right to Shelter Law*, a Nevada law that breaks down barriers to enable unaccompanied minors who are homeless to access survival services.

Passage of *Nevada Assembly Bill 94*, which created and funds an account for former foster youth.

2002

Establishment of the *National Safe Place program* in Southern Nevada, providing homeless and at-risk young people through age 18 with 24/7/365 entry points to services at virtually every street corner in the region.

2012

Award of a competitive *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Transitional Living Program/Maternity Group Home grant* to Southern Nevada for the first time, through an innovative public-private partnership between Clark County Social Service and two nonprofits to create eight new transitional housing/maternity group home beds for homeless youth.

2016

Launch of *UNLV HOPE Scholars program*, a partnership between the University of Nevada-Las Vegas (UNLV), the Clark County School District's Title I HOPE office, and the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth (NPHY). This program assists between four and ten homeless students each year with year-round housing, academic and financial support, employment, and counseling while attending UNLV.

Creation of *the Harbor*, the Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice's juvenile assessment and triage center, which houses numerous community providers under one roof to meet youths' varied needs and divert them from systems involvement.
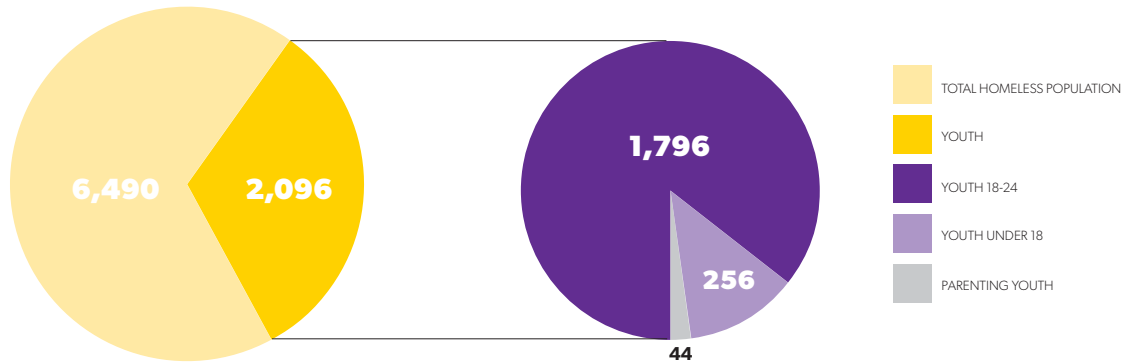
Launch of the Southern Nevada *"Power ON!" Collaborative Mentoring Project*, the region's first mentorship project designed to serve survivors and minors at risk of commercial sexual exploitation and domestic minor sex trafficking, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice.

WHERE SOUTHERN NEVADA IS TODAY

Snapshot of Youth Homelessness

According to the 2017 PIT count, summarized in the Southern Nevada Homeless Census and Survey Comprehensive Report, there are 6,490 persons experiencing homelessness in Southern Nevada, including 2,096 youth and young adults. As shown below, youth and young adults are more than a third of that total population. This is a stunning number, giving the SNH CoC the third highest number of youth experiencing homelessness in the nation, behind only CoCs in Los Angeles and San José.[19]

Southern Nevada's Homeless Population in 2017

6,490   2,096   1,796   256   44

- TOTAL HOMELESS POPULATION
- YOUTH
- YOUTH 18-24
- YOUTH UNDER 18
- PARENTING YOUTH

Source: Southern Nevada Homeless Census and Survey Comprehensive Report, 2017

Notably, the 2017 Census identified that 93 percent of Southern Nevada's youth experiencing homelessness were sleeping in unsheltered locations. Twenty-two percent of all parenting youth counted in the Census were among those who were unsheltered, meaning that their young children were also living on the street.[20] The fact that most youth sleep in unsheltered locations could be due to insufficient shelter options for youth in the community, a disconnect between the shelter available and the type of setting that youth would seek out, or both. As shown below, the SNH CoC has a limited number of youth-dedicated crisis beds, and the utilization rate — especially for emergency shelter — remains low.

Southern Nevada's Dedicated Beds for Homeless Youth, 2017
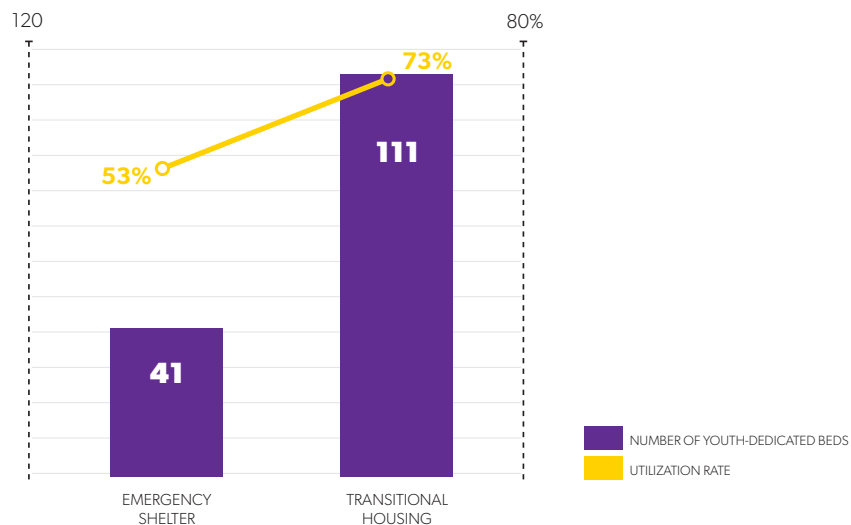
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing
Number of youth-dedicated beds	41	111
Utilization rate	53%	73%

- NUMBER OF YOUTH-DEDICATED BEDS
- UTILIZATION RATE

Source: Southern Nevada Homeless Continuum of Care: Homeless Management Information System.
Included in this illustration is the utilization rate for youth-dedicated projects

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19 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (2017). The 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress. https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/2017-AHAR-Part-1.pdf Note: The Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) is an annual report developed by HUD for Congress on the state of homelessness in the nation.
20 Clark County Social Service & Bitfocus (2017). 2017 Southern Nevada census and survey comprehensive report. http://helphopehome.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2017-S-Nevada-Census-and-Survey-for-posting.pdf
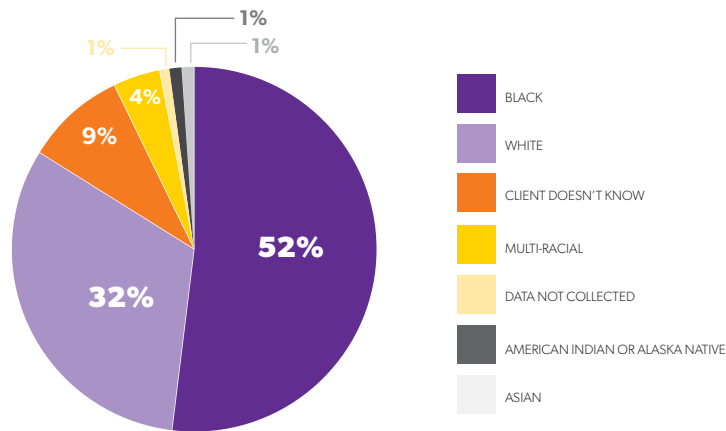
The demographics of this population reflect diversity in gender, race, and ethnicity.

Southern Nevada's Youth Experiencing Homelessness, 2017: Gender
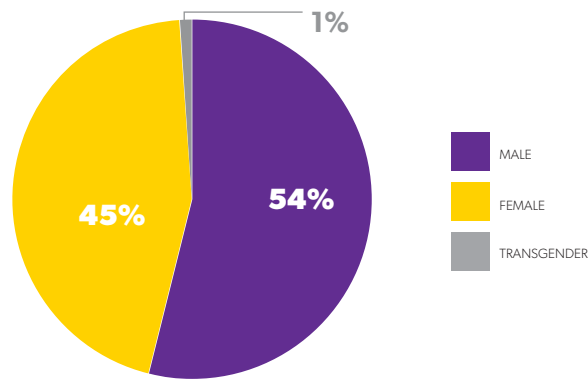
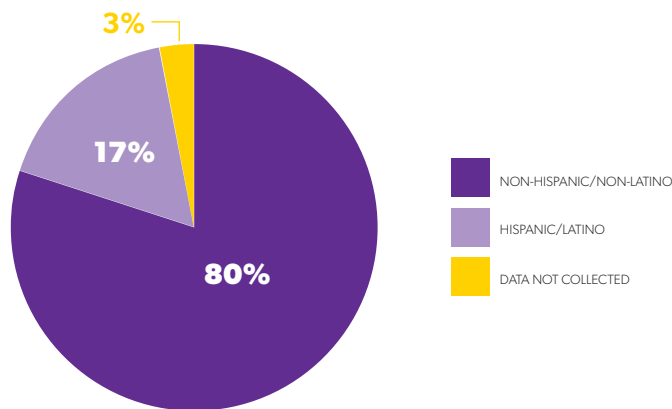
- MALE — 54%
- FEMALE — 45%
- TRANSGENDER — 1%

Source: Southern Nevada Homeless Continuum of Care: Homeless Management Information System. Included in this illustration are unique youth households (age 24 years and younger) served in emergency shelter, street outreach, transitional housing, and homelessness prevention.

Southern Nevada's Youth Experiencing Homelessness, 2017: Race

- BLACK — 52%
- WHITE — 32%
- CLIENT DOESN'T KNOW — 9%
- MULTI-RACIAL — 4%
- DATA NOT COLLECTED — 1%
- AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE — 1%
- ASIAN — 1%

Source: Southern Nevada Homeless Continuum of Care: Homeless Management Information System. Included in this illustration are unique youth households (age 24 years and younger) served in emergency shelter, street outreach, transitional housing, and homelessness prevention.

Southern Nevada's Youth Experiencing Homelessness, 2017: Ethnicity

- NON-HISPANIC/NON-LATINO — 80%
- HISPANIC/LATINO — 17%
- DATA NOT COLLECTED — 3%

Source: Southern Nevada Homeless Continuum of Care: Homeless Management Information System. Included in this illustration are unique youth households (age 24 years and younger) served in emergency shelter, street outreach, transitional housing, and homelessness prevention.

At this time, local data collection does not accurately capture the sexual orientation of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. The majority of youth and young adults (85 percent) who accessed the homeless system in 2017 did not have data collected on their sexual orientation. To improve the completeness of this data element, the SNH CoC's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Working Group recently made the decision to require programs to ask about a participant's sexual orientation when participants enter any program in the SNH CoC.

Based on this understanding of youth homelessness in our community, the current system should be considered from the perspective of how to make youth homelessness rare, brief, one-time, and equitably addressed.

Youth Involved with Other Systems of Care

Some public systems of care, most notably public school systems, report students as homeless when they are living in shelters or in unstable housing situations such as being doubled up or couch-surfing. Schools are a source of meaningful data for a community looking to prevent youth from becoming homeless. The Clark County School District (CCSD) reported that according to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act definition of homelessness, 14,659 youth experienced homelessness in the 2017–2018 school year, with the majority doubled up (78 percent). This number includes youth who are homeless with their families, while the PIT includes only unaccompanied youth who are homeless. The chart below focuses on youth who are enrolled in high school in CCSD and who are not living with their legal guardian. As shown, students in higher grade levels had a greater incidence of housing instability. More students find themselves unsheltered, in shelters, or doubled up in 12th grade than in any other grade. This instability comes at a significant time, when youth are transitioning to young adulthood and considering next steps in their development, such as further education or employment and moving out on their own.

WHERE DOES THE DATA COME FROM?

To inform the Southern Nevada Plan to End Youth Homelessness, several data sources were reviewed, including the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) and Point-in-Time count results.

The annual Point-in-Time count tallies people experiencing homelessness on a given night in January, and is required by HUD.

The local HMIS is used to collect client-level data, including information about housing and services provided to individuals and families who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

JDMT decided on HMIS as the data source for the Plan because it is widely utilized by a variety of organizations to capture information about the populations they serve, making it a robust and stable data source.

For this Plan, we focused on data from calendar year 2017 because it was the most widely and readily available. For future updates, the Southern Nevada Homeless CoC expects to continue using the most recent year's data.

Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness in Clark County, NV (Grades 9-12), 2017
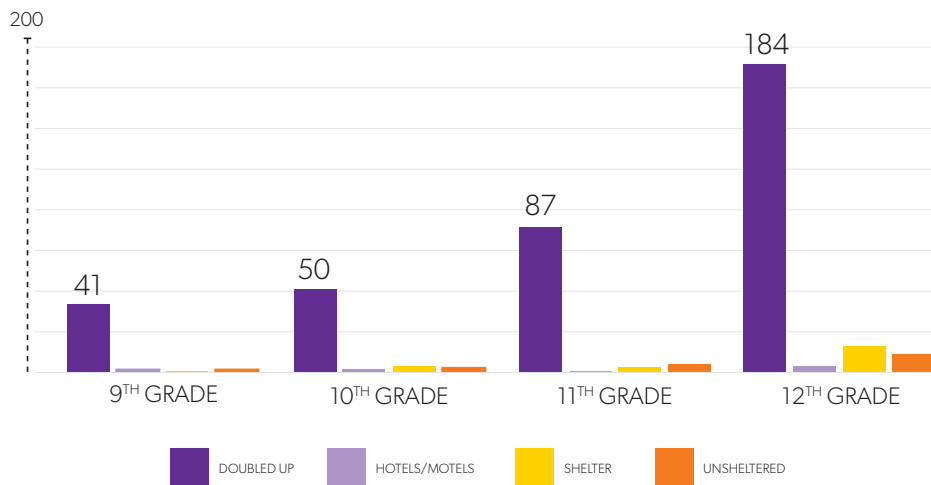

Source: Clark County (NV) School District Title I HOPE (Homeless Outreach Program for Education) program

Exiting from the child welfare system is another point at which a young person is at great risk for experiencing homelessness. According to Clark County Social Service (CCSS), 106 youth aged out of foster care in 2017.[21] CCSS operates the Clark County Step Up program, which is funded through county recorder fees that are administered from a statewide account. Step Up provides extended services to youth who age out of foster care, until their 21st birthday. A total of 400 young adults participated in this voluntary program in 2017, receiving a monthly living fund of $773.13 (the standard monthly rate of foster care) to aid in their transition out of foster care.

In 2017, of the 128 young adults who exited Step Up, 76 percent exited to permanent housing; 8.5 percent exited to temporary housing; and 15.5 percent exited to "unknown status or unenrolled." While the majority of exits to permanent housing is notable, there is limited follow-up with these young adults so it is difficult to gauge their long-term housing stability. Approximately 20 percent of youth who complete a youth housing assessment through the coordinated entry system in Clark County self-report having aged out of the foster care system.[22]

Young adults who are involved with the juvenile justice system are another subpopulation at risk of homelessness. The homeless system and juvenile justice system are frequently interconnected because homelessness can lead to juvenile justice involvement through pathways such as truancy or trespassing, and because young people can be forced into homelessness if they are unable to return home because of their criminal record. In Nevada, a young adult charged with a crime remains in the juvenile justice system until age 21, with the exception of certain crimes. As shown below, in 2017 there were over 300 bookings of young adults in the Clark County juvenile justice system, of whom 46 percent were Black or African American. This racial breakout is similar for minors booked in Clark County. Additionally, there were approximately 650 young people on probation as of August 24, 2018.[23]

2017 Bookings of Youth in Clark County, NV

BLACK 45%
HISPANIC 30%
WHITE 18%
OTHER 5%
ASIAN 2%
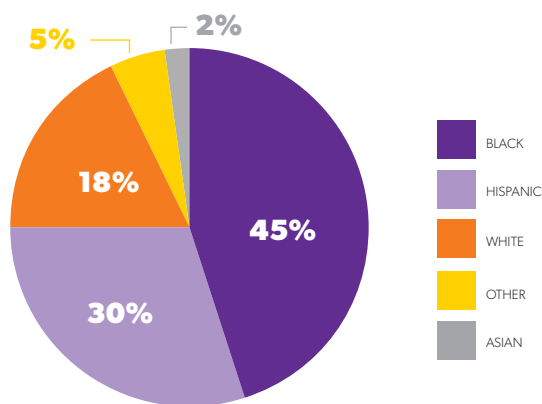
Source: Clark County (NV) Department of Juvenile Justice Services

2017 Bookings of Young Adults in Clark County, NV

BLACK 46%
HISPANIC 28%
WHITE 21%
OTHER 5%
ASIAN 1%
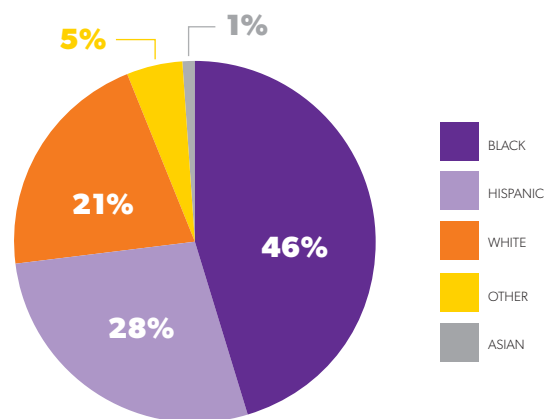
Source: Clark County (NV) Department of Juvenile Justice Services

Finally, youth who are fleeing unsafe homes or foster care placements or are experiencing homelessness are at an elevated risk of commercial sexual exploitation. In 2016, Nevada was ranked 11th in the nation for the number of human trafficking cases reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline. In the same year, the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department documented about 140 child sex trafficking victims, or approximately a dozen a month. In Clark County there is a Specialty Juvenile Court for commercially sexually exploited children. This court is meant to be a problem-solving court that meets weekly to adjudicate all delinquency cases for sexually exploited children. This court had 606 hearings in 2017 involving 156 youth.[24] This particular population overlaps with child welfare, as 81 percent of those youth who were from Nevada were in the child protection information system.[25]

21 Southern Nevada Homeless Continuum of Care: Homeless Management Information System
22 Southern Nevada Homeless Continuum of Care: Homeless Management Information System. Data of the total number of youth who completed a youth assessment during coordinated entry who answered yes to the assessment question "Have you aged out of the foster care system?" from 10/1/17-4/10/18
23 Email from Clark County Department of Juvenile Justice Services to NPHY on September 20, 2018
24 Kennedy, A. (2017). CSEC fast facts 2017. University of Nevada, Las Vegas Center for Crime and Justice Policy. http://alexiskennedy.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2017-CSEC-Fast-Facts-Final-2.pdf
25 Ibid.

Youth in the Homeless Services System

The Southern Nevada Annual Flow infographic reflects the most recently available data for the community's youth homeless services. Key terms:

- **Inflow:** The number of youth and young adults who entered any program in the SNH CoC who identified as homeless during 2017.
- **Currently homeless:** The number of youth and young adults identified during the 2017 PIT count.
- **Outflow:** The number of youth and young adults who exited the homeless system in 2017, including:
  - » Placed in permanent housing[26]
  - » Self-resolved [27]
  - » Exit unknown[28]
- **Interventions:** Methods to solve a young person's housing crisis such as case management, family reunification and mediation, six months of rental assistance, or a brick-and-mortar unit.

A look at the number of youth who are moving through the homeless system relative to the system's ability to intervene in their housing crises with its current capacity shows an annual gap of approximately 1,300 interventions. In order to achieve a system with sufficient capacity to ensure that youth homelessness is rare, brief, and one-time, the SNH CoC must have enough resources to reach each young person who enters and remains in the homeless system.

The SNH CoC does not currently have enough resources to permanently house all youth experiencing homelessness. With a total of only 151 youth-dedicated permanent housing units in rapid re-housing and permanent supportive housing combined in 2017, youth are often on the coordinated entry waiting list for extended periods of time before they are referred to a permanent housing placement. For youth under 25 who have been placed on the coordinated entry queue since October 1, 2017, there has been an average wait time of 233 days.[29] The SNH CoC is not alone in this shortage of permanent housing options; recent research from Chapin Hall found that nationally, half of youth experiencing homelessness had to wait at least four months before being placed in a permanent housing destination. Furthermore, extended waiting periods increased a young person's chance of returning to homelessness after being housed.[30]

SNAPSHOT OF TAY-VI-SPDAT

The Southern Nevada Homeless CoC (SNH CoC) has adopted the Transition Age Youth Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (TAY-VI-SPDAT) to assess the vulnerability of youth and young adults who enter the homeless system. The tool helps providers to understand each person's current vulnerabilities and risks to future housing stability.

The SNH CoC has a number of youth-specific entry points for its homeless system, where a young person would be assessed using the TAY-VI-SPDAT, and then placed in the queue for a potential housing placement.

The assessment asks a series of questions on topics such as the young person's history of housing and homelessness, risks, socialization and daily functioning, and wellness.

At the end, an assessment of vulnerability is given. Households with lower vulnerability are more likely to be able to self-resolve their episode of housing instability, while households with higher vulnerability may need housing supports.

> "I AM HOMELESS AND SLEEP COUCH TO COUCH AT 20 YEARS OLD AND IT'S NOT EASY I HAVE TWO DAUGHTERS AND ITS HARD SO I KNOW THE PEOPLE WHO ARE ON THE STREETS WITH NOWHERE TO LAY [THEIR] HEAD BUT THE GROUND. I START THANKING GOD FOR PROVIDING FOR ME AND MY KIDS, SO TO KEEP BLESSINGS COMING MY WAY I HELP WHENEVER I CAN HELP."
>
> – RE, age 20

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26 Permanent Housing Destinations include a unit owned by the client (with or without subsidy), a unit rented by the client (with or without subsidy), and staying with friends or family.
27 Self-Resolved includes those who resolve their housing crisis without intervention.
28 Exit Unknown includes those who exit the system to unknown destinations.
29 Southern Nevada Homeless Continuum of Care: Homeless Management Information System.
30 Morton, M.H, Rice, E., Blondin, M., Hsu, H., & Kull, M. (2018). Getting to smarter coordinated entry for youth experiencing homelessness: Analyzing risk and making better decisions with limited resources. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

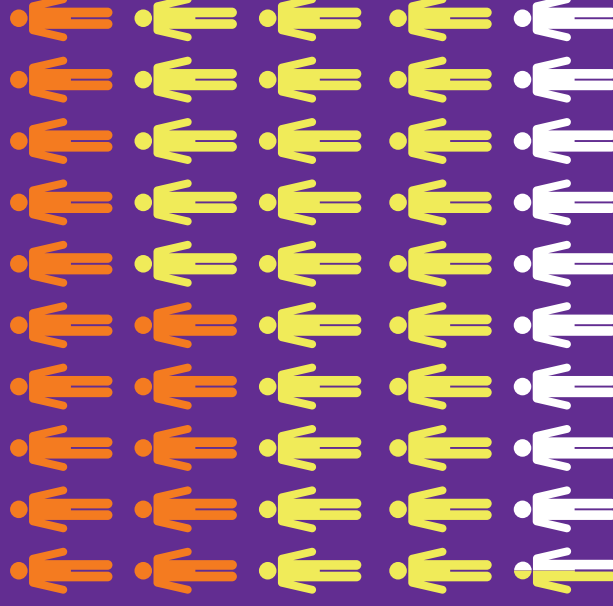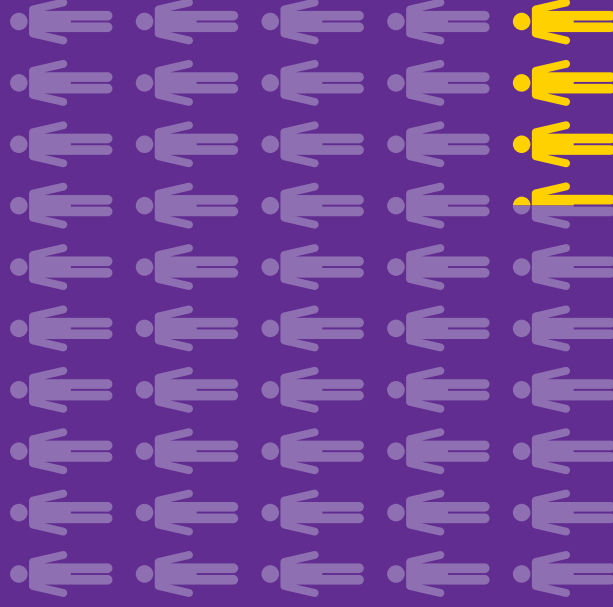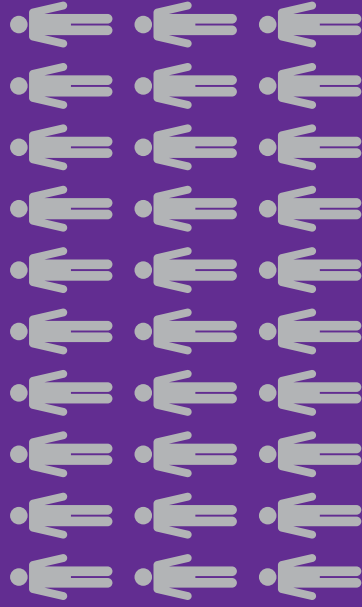# SOUTHERN NEVADA ANNUAL FLOW IN 2017

= 40 YOUTH

INFLOW (1,165)

CURRENTLY HOMELESS (2,096)

OUTFLOW (1,950)

609 PLACED IN PERMANENT HOUSING
978 SELF-RESOLVE
363 EXIT UNKNOWN

1,906 UNSHELTERED
190 SHELTERED

INFLOW + CURRENTLY HOMELESS -
OUTFLOW = *POTENTIAL NEED*

1,165 + 2,096 - 1,950 = *1,311*

EXISTING YOUTH-DEDICATED HOUSING STOCK

EMERGENCY SHELTER
40 EXISTING UNITS
AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY: 25 DAYS
UTILIZATION RATE: 53%

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING
111 EXISTING UNITS
AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY: 194 DAYS
UTILIZATION RATE: 73%

RAPID RE-HOUSING
40 EXISTING UNITS
AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY: 260 DAYS
UTILIZATION RATE: 54%

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING
11 EXISTING UNITS
AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY: 385 DAYS
UTILIZATION RATE: 61%

Sources: HMIS data pull for Calendar Year 2017; PIT count Calendar Year 2017

SOUTHERN NEVADA PLAN TO END YOUTH HOMELESSNESS 2018

Utilizing "matching reports," the SNH CoC's youth matchers determine referrals to housing interventions for each household. Based on these reports from January to March 2018, over a third of youth who took an assessment registered in the range of low to no vulnerability, meaning they would be more likely to self-resolve, or that their homelessness could be resolved with light-touch diversion services. According to research, 66 percent of youth who score four or lower on the TAY-VI-SPDAT self-resolve or return home, while only three percent return to homelessness.[31] Rapid re-housing can be an effective solution for youth who score up to a 10, but more research is needed on using this strategy with higher-scoring youth.[32]

Distribution of Vulnerability Level (Sample Day)

37%	29%	19%	15%

- LOW-NO VULNERABILITY (5 AND UNDER)
- MEDIUM VULNERABILITY (8-6)
- VULNERABLE (9-10)
- HIGHLY VULNERABLE (11-15)

100%
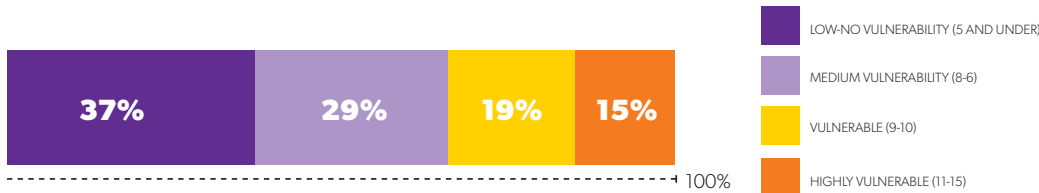
Source: Southern Nevada Homeless Continuum of Care: Monthly Matching Reports, January–March 2018

It should be noted that this data is a potentially incomplete picture of the acuity of youth who are experiencing homelessness in Southern Nevada. Currently an average of 90 youth and young adults are in the coordinated entry queue on any given day; these are individuals who have been assessed with the TAY-VI-SPDAT and are awaiting a housing placement. This number is a small fraction of the total population of youth experiencing homelessness. The reason for this gap in assessments needs to be further explored; the SNH CoC is unsure whether the cause is a lack of accessibility or awareness of assessments, or a lack of trust in, or understanding of, the system.

Youth Who Have Exited the Homeless Services System

Many youth experience ongoing housing instability after exiting homeless service programs. As shown in the chart below, of 609 permanent housing placements for youth in 2017, 62 percent were with family or friends; of these youth, almost a quarter returned to homelessness in three to four months. Many of these youth are likely cycling back and forth between family and friends and the homeless system. Of the 942 youth and young adults who reported that their residence prior to entry into the homeless system was staying with a family member, almost half (47 percent) exited to a family member's home. This trend is mirrored by youth and young adults who stay with friends, almost 45 percent of whom return to living with a friend upon exiting the homeless system.

There is also housing instability in other permanent housing placements. Twenty-five percent of youth who were placed in subsidized housing returned to homelessness in four to five months.

Permanent Housing Destinations for Youth Exiting the Southern Nevada Homeless System, 2017
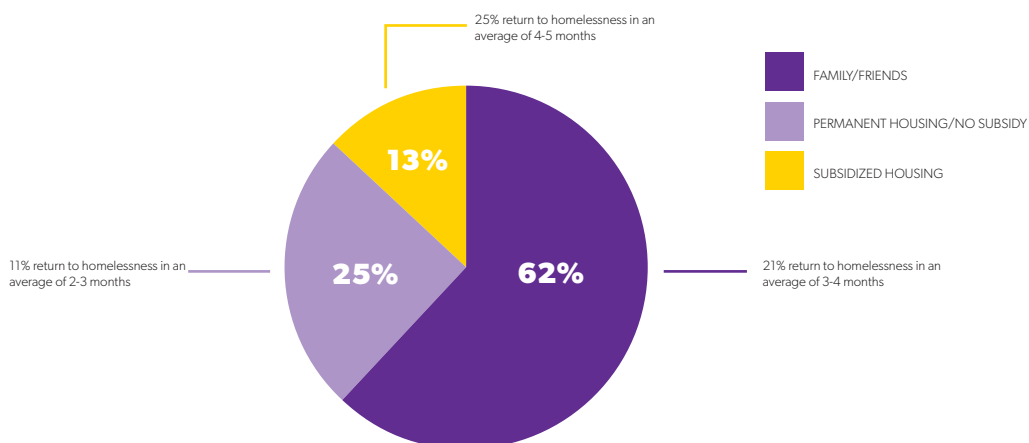
25% return to homelessness in an average of 4-5 months

- FAMILY/FRIENDS
- PERMANENT HOUSING/NO SUBSIDY
- SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

13%

11% return to homelessness in an average of 2-3 months

25%

62%

21% return to homelessness in an average of 3-4 months

Source: Southern Nevada Homeless Continuum of Care: Homeless Management Information System. Included in this illustration is the number of youth (age 24 years and younger) head of households who exited to a permanent housing destination in Calendar Year 2017
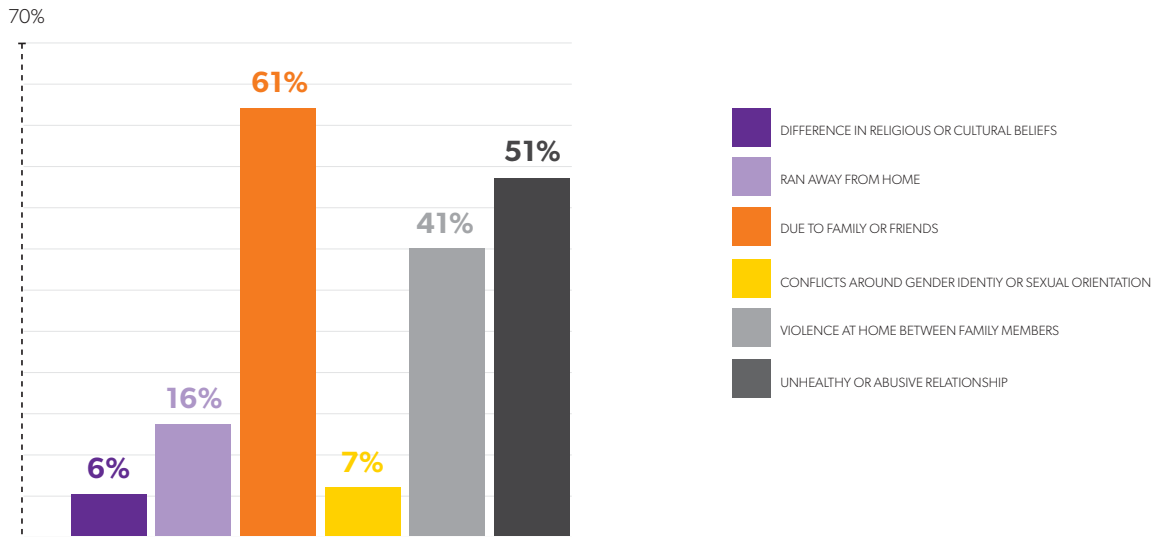
31 Rice, E. Linking assessment tools to housing and outcomes for youth. University of Southern California Center for Artificial Intelligence in Society. https://www.cais.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Rice-Assessments-and-Outcomes.pdf
32 Ibid.

Furthermore, youth point to the interpersonal conflicts listed in the chart below as their reasons for homelessness. When asked during their TAY-VI-SPDAT assessment, the majority of young people said their homelessness was due to "family or friends" and/or to "an unhealthy or abusive relationship."

Reasons for Homelessness Reported by Southern Nevada Youth

Bar chart data:
- 70% (y-axis maximum)
- Difference in religious or cultural beliefs: 6%
- Ran away from home: 16%
- Due to family or friends: 61%
- Conflicts around gender identity or sexual orientation: 7%
- Violence at home between family members: 41%
- Unhealthy or abusive relationship: 51%

Legend:
- DIFFERENCE IN RELIGIOUS OR CULTURAL BELIEFS
- RAN AWAY FROM HOME
- DUE TO FAMILY OR FRIENDS
- CONFLICTS AROUND GENDER IDENTIY OR SEXUAL ORIENTATION
- VIOLENCE AT HOME BETWEEN FAMILY MEMBERS
- UNHEALTHY OR ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP

Source: Southern Nevada Homeless Continuum of Care: Homeless Management Information System. Included in this illustration are individuals who completed a youth assessment within coordinated entry from 10/1/17 to 4/10/18

Throughout the creation of this Plan, the community's data was central. This data displayed a picture of youth and young adults who need more intervention as they attempt to resolve their housing crises to move on with their lives. Youth who enrolled in other systems of care need additional assistance as they progress out of those systems to prepare them for the next stage of their lives. Those systems, which are currently overwhelmed, need mechanisms to flag the youth at greatest risk for housing instability. Once homeless, youth in the community need more safe places to go both during the day and at night. Young people who are able to resolve their housing crises, either through a subsidy or by returning to family or friends, need more assistance to maintain those housing solutions. Finally, the current system is one that does not affect all youth equally, but rather traps youth of color at disproportionate levels. As the decision makers built the following goals, objectives, and strategies, this reality was what they were seeking to address.

"FACED WITH ALL THE INTERNAL EFFECTS THAT OUR SOCIETY HAS ON OUR YOUTH AND MINORS [IT] IS REALLY HARD FOR THOSE TO SPEAK ON THINGS THAT ARE REALLY HURTING THEM ON THE INSIDE. SO IT WOULD BE NICE FOR ONCE TO HAVE SOMEONE OR SOMEBODY(S) WITH ENOUGH COURAGE TO REACH OUT AND TAKE THE TIME FOR ALL THOSE IN SORROW."

– AF, age 19

plan overview

The vision of success and guiding principles of the Plan serve as its foundation, and ensure that the collaborations and investments that come out of this Plan are ultimately serving to achieve this vision and adhere to these guiding principles.

OUR VISION FOR SUCCESS

We will know the Plan has succeeded when our community's coordinated response system can ensure that homelessness among unaccompanied youth is **rare, brief, one-time,** and **equitably addressed.**

These criteria are modeled on federal standards that define homelessness among youth as **rare** when homelessness does not occur often, and when youth and young adults do not exit our public systems into unstable housing conditions. Homelessness among youth is **brief** when, if a young person does experience homelessness, their experience in the homeless services system lasts only a short time. Homelessness among youth is **one-time** when after exiting the homeless services system into housing, youth remain stably housed and do not return to homelessness. Homelessness among youth is **equitably addressed** when all youth experiencing homelessness, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity, gain equitable access to our system and its services and have equitable exits to safe and stable housing.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. *Person-Centered:* The system to end youth homelessness will ensure that all system staff are trained in key principles, such as cultural competency and trauma-informed care, to ensure that the system is as welcoming, comfortable, and empowering as possible for every youth who interacts with it. Regardless of where they interact with the system, each youth should feel safety, security, and trust with each and every person.
2. *Accessible & Equitable:* The system to end youth homelessness will use a Housing First orientation in all housing and services to ensure low- or no-barrier access for all young people. Additionally, the system will obtain input from youth and the community to design and evaluate access to interventions for all youth, as well as high-risk subpopulations, to ensure access and equity are achieved.
3. *Comprehensive Wraparound Housing and Support for Young People:* The system to end youth homelessness will ensure that every young person who experiences homelessness receives opportunities to tap into permanent housing options and natural support systems, and/or to create new support systems to exit homelessness as quickly as possible. Wraparound housing and support for young people may include housing and service options that a youth has identified as contributing to personal self-sufficiency goals.
4. *Accountable:* The system to end youth homelessness will promote accountability in all of its activities. Key components will include the establishment of performance measures that are clear to all community stakeholders; continuous improvement mechanisms that are rigorously used and shared across stakeholders; and regular updates to stakeholders on the use of funds and corresponding results.
5. *Efficient:* The system to end youth homelessness will be as efficient as possible. Examples of key efficiencies the system may strive for include ensuring that access to the system is as fast as possible; the alignment or de-duplication of funding to create results; the creation of seamless, streamlined, de-duplicated communication flows between service providers and system partners; and the use of demonstrated promising practices when considering strategies to implement.
6. *Collaboration-Focused:* The system to end youth homelessness will pursue innovative collaborations to increase resources to end youth homelessness; create an adaptable system for young people using flexible funds; and promote seamless implementation of those resources. Examples of partnerships may include deep partnerships between service providers and systems of care; corporate sponsorships; private funding; public-private sector partnerships; and federal partners.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, AND METRICS

In order to ensure a sustainable end to youth homelessness in this community, our Plan must be action-oriented. Our goals outline in broad terms what the community hopes to achieve. Each one is further defined by specific "objectives" and supported by metrics that will keep us accountable to our vision and make our work transparent to all stakeholders. As the convener of federal bodies addressing the issue of homelessness, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has published criteria and benchmarks on ending youth homelessness. Through discussions, it was decided that USICH's criteria formed the best framework for the goals of our own Plan, and would best propel our community towards the vision of making youth homelessness rare, brief, one-time, and equitably addressed.

The objectives and strategies define the steps to achieve the five goals and are designed to be both measurable and specific. These elements of the Plan were developed by the community at "Dream Big" or by the Planning Team or Young Adults in Charge (YAC) at their bi-weekly meetings, and vetted and approved by the Joint Decision-Making Team (JDMT). Our objectives and strategies are deliberately aligned with existing best practices in the field of youth homelessness and with the Plan's vision and guiding principles, and are intended to address gaps that became apparent in our data review and brainstorming events. To highlight YAC's role, the strategies created by this group are noted with an asterisk in the "Goals, Objectives, and Strategies" table.

The metrics of success described below reflect current outcome data from federal funders such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Runaway and Homeless Youth program, the USICH benchmarks on ending youth homelessness, and research on youth homelessness. These metrics are the community's ultimate indicators that the system can respond to any experience of youth homelessness. In subsequent Plan updates, the community will work toward establishing incremental indicators to track progress towards each goal.

STRATEGY FOCUS AREAS

Proposed during the planning process, the following focus areas were used as a framework for the development of the strategies included in the Plan. As youth homelessness is a complex issue affected by a confluence of factors and systems, this Plan seeks to address youth homelessness from all angles.

1. *Legislative/Policy* solutions require either a change in legislation at the local or state level or a change in how a program is implemented by a provider.
2. *Fundraising* solutions increase the money available to fund efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness.
3. *Public-Private Partnerships* solutions require public systems such as local government entities to work with nonprofits, businesses, or other private sector partners.
4. *Housing and Services* solutions focus on preventing homelessness, increasing housing stock, changing the way we operate a current housing intervention, or offering wraparound services to help youth obtain or maintain housing.
5. *Systems Intersectionality* solutions address the different ways that youth interact with youth-serving systems, such as child welfare, juvenile justice, and education.

From the outset, the community wanted this Plan to be truly comprehensive, addressing all aspects of youth homelessness and not simply a lack of housing. The variety of strategies represented here is a reflection of that priority.

> "NEVER ONCE DID I CRY I FEEL LIKE AT THIS POINT I AM INCAPABLE OF CRYING BECAUSE I HAVE TO STAY STRONG FOR MY MOM, FOR MY BROTHER, FOR ME SO I BURIED MY FEELINGS SO DEEP THAT I COULDN'T CRY EVEN IF I WANTED TO."
>
> – Anonymous, age 17

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

FOCUS AREAS

- POLICY/LEGISLATIVE
- PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS
- SYSTEMS INTERSECTIONALITY
- INNOVATIVE HOUSING AND SERVICES
- FUNDRAISING

to make youth homelessness in Southern Nevada rare, brief, one-time, and equitably addressed.

GOAL ONE: THE COMMUNITY IDENTIFIES ALL UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?

- Reduction in unsheltered youth and young adults to zero
- Multiple data sources (HMIS, schools, child welfare, juvenile justice) contribute to a youth-focused list

Objective	Strategy	Focus Area
Create a community-wide identification and crisis response system covering the entire CoC. *BRIEF*	Create comprehensive youth-dedicated outreach with staff who are trained to respond to youth with complex needs	(Policy/Legislative)
	Connect the coordinated entry system more intimately with the crisis response system (via system design and easy-to-access transportation)	(Policy/Legislative)
Enumerate and collect data on all youth experiencing homelessness and/or who are unsafe or at risk of homelessness under any federal definition. *RARE, BRIEF*	Create a framework to house, keep, and manage data	(Systems Intersectionality)
	Look into means of obtaining youth client-level data from the Harbor, CCSD, Nevada System of Higher Education, providers working with pregnant and parenting youth, providers working with commercially sexually exploited children, and other youth service providers beyond homeless service providers	(Systems Intersectionality)
	Improve the youth component of the annual Southern Nevada Homeless Census	(Public-Private Partnerships)
	Conduct an annual count of all youth experiencing homelessness under any federal definition (including Chapin Hall-style randomized sample surveys to collect better data on unstably housed youth, working with other systems, etc.)	(Public-Private Partnerships)
Ensure outreach and in-reach efforts are tailored to the unique needs of vulnerable youth, including pregnant and parenting youth, LGBTQ youth, minors, youth involved with the juvenile justice or foster care systems, commercially sexually exploited children, and youth with mental health or substance use issues. *BRIEF, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED*	Train all community outreach teams in current best practices for interacting with vulnerable youth*	(Policy/Legislative)
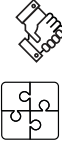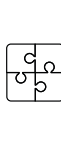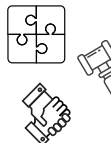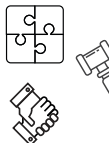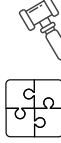
Strategy developed by Young Adults in Charge

GOAL TWO: 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.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?

- No youth or young adult is exited into homelessness from other systems of care
- Reduction of inflow of youth into the homeless services system
- Zero turnaways or denials from shelters or transitional housing unless the person can be successfully diverted to a safe living environment of their choosing
- Reduction in the number of youth who are experiencing homelessness for the first time

Objective	Strategy	Focus Area
Help youth reunify with or return home to their given or chosen families, as desired.	Increase family engagement, counseling, and reunification services	
	Create support groups for youth experiencing homelessness, families experiencing homelessness, and reunified families*	
	Partner with schools of social work and counseling assistance to support family reunification efforts	
RARE, BRIEF		
Standardize screening and assessment of youth at imminent risk of homelessness who are referred from other systems to ensure an equitable and quick connection to available services.	Create transition plans for youth who may be enrolled in multiple systems to ensure exit to stable housing	
	Implement a standardized tool to measure the likelihood of housing instability (i.e. those at risk of homelessness) that can be administered upon exit from child welfare, juvenile justice, and other systems	
RARE, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED		
Offer all youth experiencing homelessness immediate connections to services.	Train assessors to refer to services as needed	
	Expand the Safe Place Program	
	Establish a 24/7 hotline or app to connect youth to services	
BRIEF, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED		
Increase access to safe shelter options.	Create accessible public awareness videos targeted to youth (e.g. for the youth coordinated entry system, youth emergency shelters, etc.)	
	Pilot additional crisis housing options for youth, including host homes and respite beds	
BRIEF, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED		

*Strategy developed by Young Adults in Charge

Objective	Strategy	Focus Area
Strengthen partnerships with other youth-serving systems, including child welfare and the juvenile justice and educational systems. **RARE**	Ensure representation of leaders from other youth-serving systems in CoC leadership	(handshake, puzzle icons)
	Conduct inter-system care coordination at major milestones (ex: intake and exit, school enrollment and graduation, etc.)	(puzzle icon)
Strengthen connections with law enforcement to ensure behaviors associated with homelessness are not criminalized.	Train law enforcement and private security about the issue of youth homelessness, what resources are available in the community, and how to assess youth who may be experiencing homelessness*	(puzzle, handshake, gavel icons)
	Have police conduct Know Your Rights trainings and community forums about youth homelessness*	(handshake, gavel icons)
RARE, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED	Re-evaluate policies and practices that might criminalize youth experiencing homelessness (ex: status offenses, sex trafficking laws, etc.)	(gavel, puzzle icons)

GOAL THREE: THE COMMUNITY USES COORDINATED ENTRY PROCESSES TO EFFECTIVELY LINK ALL YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS TO HOUSING AND SERVICES THAT ARE TAILORED TO THEIR NEEDS.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?
- Average stay in emergency shelter is less than 30 days
- Length of time from assessment to safe and stable housing is less than 90 days

Objective	Strategy	Focus Area
Continue to implement a youth-focused coordinated entry system that is trauma-informed and culturally and linguistically responsive to youth. **BRIEF, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED**	Perform quarterly coordinated entry housing assessment trainings that focus on sensitivity training, trauma-informed care, and promote equity*	
Develop intentional strategies to target vulnerable sub-populations such as LGBTQ youth, commercially sexually exploited children, and youth of color.	Create and distribute outreach materials that reflect diverse populations of youth experiencing homelessness*	
	Sponsor pop-up outreach events at locations that may target youth subpopulations*	
BRIEF, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED	Create a youth-focused coordinated entry public awareness campaign	
Ensure coordinated entry processes provide access to housing options for youth with high potential barriers to housing (criminal background, poor credit history, etc.), using a Housing First approach.	Create mental/behavioral health group homes	
BRIEF, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED	Hire housing navigators to assist youth experiencing homelessness in securing stable and adequate housing	
Increase connections to coordinated entry throughout the community. **BRIEF, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED**	Expand youth coordinated entry to include more youth access sites (including "pop-up" locations), housing assessors, and means of assessment (e.g.: hotlines, online surveys, or apps)*	

*Strategy developed by Young Adults in Charge

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

HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?

- Reduction in the number of youth who were previously homeless who return to homelessness within two years
- Higher percentage of youth with increased or sustained employment
- Higher percentage of youth with improved education

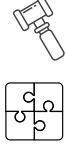| Objective	Strategy	Focus Area
Increase inventory of affordable housing, both inside and beyond the homeless services system.	Establish a landlord mitigation fund to incentivize landlords to house young people	
	Conduct outreach to potential landlord partners to encourage them to house young people	
	Pilot long-term host homes*	
	Fund non-time-limited community-based housing for youth that operates with a Housing First orientation	
	Establish tiny-home communities for young adults*	
RARE, BRIEF, ONE-TIME		
Utilize strategies to make non-subsidized housing more affordable to youth in the community.	Implement a roommate matching service for youth*	
	Promote the establishment of a living wage*	
	Expand the HOPE Scholars Program to ensure housing affordability is not a barrier to higher education	
	Establish co-ops for all youth	
	Pass an inclusionary zoning ordinance in Clark County	
BRIEF, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED		
Reduce barriers to ensure youth can meet all of their self-sufficiency needs.	Require in all contracts case management standards and core competencies to include self-sufficiency and financial literacy	
	Incorporate financial literacy into the school curriculum	
BRIEF, ONE-TIME		

*Strategy developed by Young Adults in Charge

Objective	Strategy	Focus Area
Ensure that youth exiting the homeless system have the supports they need to remain housed. **ONE-TIME**	Establish transition support staff to assist youth exiting the homeless services system	(icons)
	Establish community standards for stabilization services that include case management and behavioral/mental/physical health support services, flexible financial supports, and employment and education support*	(icons)
Support youth in reaching educational and employment goals that will help them achieve long-term stability.	Increase educational supports in secondary education to ensure more students experiencing homelessness graduate and continue to higher education	(icons)
	Provide or promote tutoring and workforce development programs, such as vocational training at schools, to improve access to sustainable careers*	(icons)
	Establish peer mentoring and support for students experiencing homelessness*	(icons)
	Establish specialized liaisons to help youth move through systems and meet educational and employment goals*	(icons)
ONE-TIME	Incentivize local employers to hire youth who are currently or formerly homeless	(icons)
Improve networks to non-traditional housing options to ensure youth are connected to all available housing.	Establish a set-aside of units for youth-headed households at Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority	(icons)
	Connect with Low Income Housing Tax Credit-funded properties to match youth households experiencing homelessness with housing and supportive services	(icons)
BRIEF	Create a points incentive in the NV Qualified Allocation Plan, the annual plan that guides allocation for housing tax credits, for youth aging out of foster care	(icons)
Increase access to basic needs services.	Establish a mobile app to connect youth to available basic needs services (socks, tampons, etc.)	(icons)
	Increase transportation accessibility to connect youth to needed services	(icons)
BRIEF, ONE-TIME	Work with businesses and others to retrieve necessary supplies and create a system to streamline the distribution of goods	(icons)
Ensure all provider and program staff are trained to provide high-quality services through practices such as harm reduction, trauma-informed care, and positive youth development, and are accountable and respectful in all interactions with youth.	Establish an accountability system to ensure standards are implemented across homeless service provider agencies (such as certification, CEUs, licensure requirements, monitoring, etc.)	(icons)
	Establish an annual Mainstream Program Basic Training-Youth Homelessness Training	(icons)
BRIEF, ONE-TIME, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED	Conduct an assessment of training requirements and needs for youth service providers	(icons)

*Strategy developed by Young Adults in Charge

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

HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?

- Percentage of exits to permanent housing for youth and young adults of color are greater than or equal to those of white and non-Hispanic youth and young adults
- Percentage of exits to permanent housing for youth and young adults who identify as LGBTQ are greater than or equal to those who identify as straight and cisgender
- The number of youth entering the homeless system is smaller than the number of youth exiting the homeless system
- Reduction in the annual number of youth who are experiencing homelessness

Objective	Strategy	Focus Area
Improve data quality, data use, and data sharing to better understand the needs of youth.	Increase participation of other youth-serving systems (Clark County School District and Clark County Department of Family Services) and other community partners (The Center, Boys & Girls Club) in HMIS	
	Establish a data dashboard that is updated regularly (at least monthly) that informs an annual youth homelessness data report	
	Identify uncaptured/gaps in available data and create methods to capture needed data	
RARE, BRIEF, ONE-TIME, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED		
Increase collaboration between youth-serving systems.	Establish a leadership network that includes policymakers, sector leaders, youth, providers, and others to lead sustainability efforts	
	Develop a funded State Office of Youth Homelessness	
	Create opportunities for youth to act as advisors (e.g. peer mentors, agency liaisons, etc.) to provide recommendations for system guidance and more*	
RARE, BRIEF, ONE-TIME, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED		
Establish funding to support activities in this plan.	Create a funders' coalition to guide funding asks	
	Pass a funding mechanism (taxes, fees, Measure H, or other sustainable efforts)	
	Establish a community collaborative for accessing new funding sources	
RARE, BRIEF, ONE-TIME, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED		

Strategy developed by Young Adults in Charge

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

The Southern Nevada Homeless Continuum of Care (SNH CoC) is committed to continuous quality improvement (CQI) in its pursuit to end youth homelessness. Decision makers agree to utilize the "Plan-Do-Check-Act" model shown here.

A new working group will be established to lead the CQI process. The membership of this group will include UNLV evaluators, youth and young adults, and implementers of t he strategies. Over the course of the coming months, a CQI plan will be developed that includes quarterly updates and dashboards to be shared with the community.

Both qualitative and quantitative data will be reviewed. Southern Nevada's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) is a major source of quantitative data, and Southern Nevada is working to make HMIS more of a community resource so as to involve partners from beyond the SNH CoC in recognizing and addressing the challenge of youth homelessness.[33] Qualitative data will also be a priority, and may include stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and surveys conducted on a regular basis with youth and young adults, providers, and other interested parties.

ACT/ADJUST
Fine-tune the fix

PLAN
Identify a problem and its root cause

CHECK
Assess whether the problem has been successfully fixed

DO
Fix the problem

Updates will be shared at meetings of the SNH CoC and the Youth Working Group, on the SNH CoC's website, and via social media. As positive outcomes and program impacts are identified, this data will be used to seek out additional funding from other partners. Furthermore, training opportunities will be identified and shared with the community through learning collaboratives in the SNH CoC.

At each year's Youth Homelessness Summit for the Movement to End Youth Homelessness in Southern Nevada (the Movement), an annual review of the Plan will be shared, which will include an update on CQI efforts.

Artwork submitted anonymously

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33 The Homeless Management Information System is used to collect client-level data, including information about housing and services provided to individuals and families who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

next steps

At the November 2018 Youth Homelessness Summit, we will design a leadership structure for Plan implementation, decide which stakeholders will be responsible for implementing each strategy, and further refine the design and timeline of the strategies.

After the Summit, a Plan Implementation and Accountability Team will be created. This group will be responsible for implementing the Plan, including the following first steps:

1. Prioritize which approved strategies in the Plan to pursue first.
2. Decide on a leadership structure for each of the approved strategies, and identify stakeholders to recruit for optimal success.
3. Categorize each strategy as short-term (within the first year), medium-term (within the next two years), or long-term (within the next five years).
4. Pursue necessary funding, resources, and stakeholders to drive the chosen strategies.

At each annual Youth Homelessness Summit, Movement leadership will share updates made to the Plan and progress toward ending youth homelessness.

conclusion

For over six months, community members and organizations have worked intensively, united by the passion and commitment to end youth homelessness in Southern Nevada. Contributions by the Young Adults in Charge, in particular, have been essential and have informed the entire design of the Plan. Together, all of these voices offer a true reflection of our community's hope for a better system to serve youth who are experiencing homelessness and housing instability.

Now the hard work of implementation begins. To succeed, we need the voices and energy of policymakers, service providers, businesses, and community stakeholders. Much like the heavily collaborative planning process, implementation must be carried out with an all-hands-on-deck approach. Southern Nevada is rich with subject matter experts and systems leaders whose participation will be essential as we move forward. Youth and young adults with lived experience of homelessness will continue to play a central role as we use this Plan to transform our existing systems and create a sustainable end to youth homelessness in Southern Nevada.

To keep up with progress on the Plan, visit the Movement to End Youth Homelessness in Southern Nevada at *www.nphy.org/themovement/*.

> "HOMELESSNESS FOR ME WAS COUCH SURFING, PUSHING MY PRIDE ASIDE JUST SO I CAN HAVE SOMETHING TO EAT OR SOMEWHERE TO LAY MY HEAD AT FOR THE NIGHT. IT WAS HAVING TO LOOK FOR A JOB SO I COULD PAY THE PERSON FOR LETTING ME STAY AT THEIR HOUSE FOR A FEW DAYS. I DIDN'T EVER THINK I WOULD EXPERIENCE IT BECAUSE I WAS SO CONFIDENT THAT I WOULD BE LIVING WITH MY MOM FOREVER."
>
> – NJ, age 19

APPENDIX A: FEDERAL DEFINITIONS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)

SOURCE

The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009 (HEARTH Act)

Notes on Origin

The HEARTH Act was signed in to law in May of 2009. It reauthorizes the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. This reauthorization included a variety of changes, namely the definition of homelessness and chronic homelessness.[1]

DEFINITION

CATEGORY 1: An individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, meaning;

(i) An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;

(ii) An individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals); or

(iii) An individual who is exiting an institution where he or she resided for 90 days or less and who resided in an emergency shelter or place not meant for human habitation immediately before entering that institution.

CATEGORY 2: An individual or family who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence, provided that;

(i) The primary nighttime residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance;

(ii) No subsequent residence has been identified; and

(iii) The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, faith-based or other social networks, needed to obtain other permanent housing.

CATEGORY 3: Unaccompanied youth under 25 years of age, or families with children and youth, who do not otherwise qualify as homeless under this definition, but who:

(i) Are defined as homeless under section 387 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5732a), section 637 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9832), section 41403 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e–2), section 330(h) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 254b(h)), section 3 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012), section 17(b) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786(b)), or section 725 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a);

(ii) Have not had a lease, ownership interest, or occupancy agreement in permanent housing at any time during the 60 days immediately preceding the date of application for homeless assistance;

(iii) Have experienced persistent instability as measured by two moves or more during the 60-day period immediately preceding the date of applying for homeless assistance; and

(iv) Can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities; chronic physical health or mental health conditions; substance addiction; histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse (including neglect); the presence of a child or youth with a disability; or two or more barriers to employment, which include the lack of a high school degree or General Education Development (GED), illiteracy, low English proficiency, a history of incarceration or detention for criminal activity, and a history of unstable employment.

CATEGORY 4: Any individual or family who:

(i) Is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member, including a child, that has either taken place within the individual's or family's primary nighttime residence or has made the individual or family afraid to return to their primary nighttime residence;

(ii) Has no other residence; and

(iii) Lacks the resources or support networks, e.g., family, friends, and faith-based or other social networks, to obtain other permanent housing.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)   *continued*

Age Range	Users
Youth-dedicated projects serve households under the age of 25.	All HUD-funded homeless assistance programs (e.g. Continuum of Care, Emergency Solutions Grant, etc).

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SOURCE

McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001

Notes on Origin

In 2001, Congress reauthorized the McKinney Education of Homeless Children and Youth Program after being influenced by statistics regarding the high numbers of children likely to experience homelessness and extreme poverty each year. This legislation would ensure that no student experiencing homelessness could be segregated from their housed peers.[2]

DEFINITION

The McKinney-Vento Act defines "homeless children and youth" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes —

- Children and youth who are: sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as doubled-up); living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; living in emergency or transitional shelters; abandoned in hospitals; or awaiting foster care placement;
- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

Age Range	Users
Under the age of 24.	All Local Education Agencies (LEA), regardless of whether or not they receive a McKinney-Vento subgrant.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS)

SOURCE

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA)

Notes on Origin

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act was passed in 1974. It authorized the Basic Center Program, which enabled organizations such as non-profit agencies to operate short-term shelters, providing emergency assistance to runaway and homeless youth who were not receiving services from the child welfare or juvenile justice systems.[3]

DEFINITION

The RHYA (42 USC 5701 § 387) defines "homeless youth" as —

- individuals who are not more than 18 years of age if seeking shelter in a Basic Center Program, or not more than 21 years of age or less than 16 years of age if seeking services in a Transitional Living Program;
- and for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative, and who have no other safe alternative living arrangement.

Age Range	Users
Under the age of 21.	All community-based providers receiving funding through the RHYA.

Endnotes

1 *https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/hearth-act/*
2 *https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg116.html*
3 *https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/resource/bcp-fact-sheet*

"THERE ARE ABOUT TWENTY HOMELESS SHELTERS IN THE LAS VEGAS AREA MOST OF THEM ARE FULL AND YET THERE ARE STILL PEOPLE LIVING ON THE SIDEWALK WHO CAN'T EVEN GET SLEEP BECAUSE THEY ARE AFRAID TO CLOSE THEIR EYES BECAUSE THEY FEAR THAT SOMEONE WILL TRY TO ATTACK THEM OR STEAL THE LITTLE BELONGINGS THEY HAVE."

– Anonymous, age 20

"WE SHOULD NOT BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST BECAUSE WE ARE UNDERAGE. BY THIS I MEAN DURING MY TIME THAT I WAS LOOKING FOR A PLACE TO STAY AND I WAS UNDERAGE, I EXPERIENCED IT. WHEN I ASKED FOR HELP AND A PLACE TO STAY, NOT ONLY WAS I DENIED THE SPACE BUT I WAS ALSO ACCUSED OF RUNNING AWAY FROM HOME BECAUSE I DID NOT WANT TO FOLLOW RULES. THIS OBVIOUSLY WAS NOT THE CASE. AT THE TIME, MY MOM WAS STILL GRIEVING THE LOSS OF HER MOTHER. NOT BEING ABLE TO PROCESS HER LOSS PROPERLY, SHE FELL INTO A DEEP BATTLE WITH DRUGS AND GAMBLING. IT GOT SO BAD TO THE POINT THAT IT STARTED TO AFFECT MY SLEEP AND EVENTUALLY IT TOOK OUR CAR AND THEN NEXT WAS THE APARTMENT. WE NEED TO STOP THE DISCRIMINATION AND OPEN MORE DOORS FOR OUR YOUTH. EVEN IF IT MEANS MAKING A FEW CALLS OR ASSISTING WITH FINDING RESOURCES THAT MAY BE HELPFUL, THE EFFECT SHOULD STILL BE MADE."

– AE, age 22

"PEOPLE TELL ME ALL THE TIME THAT A PERSON JUST WANTS MONEY FOR DRUGS OR BEER, BUT I SEE A TRUE PERSON'S HEART, I KNOW WHEN SOMEONE IS LYING ABOUT WHAT THEY NEED. BUT EVEN THOUGH THEY COULD BE ASK-ING FOR MONEY FOR THAT PARTICULAR REASON THERE [ARE] OTHER WAYS AROUND THAT TO HELP THEM. LIKE BUYING THEM SOMETHING TO EAT, OR SOME CLOTHES, OR MAKING THEM SANDWICHES AND WATER."

– RE, age 20