



Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program

Akron/Barberton/Summit
County Continuum of Care
OH-506



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Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who participated in and supported our work to develop this community plan to prevent and end youth homelessness. First, we want especially to thank the Youth Advisory Board and supporting YYA for their continued hard work and dedication to this process of developing this Coordinated Community Plan. We would also like to thank the many community youth providers who have been actively supporting and encouraging the YAB in its decision-making process. We would also like to thank the Summit County Continuum of Care staff for their unconditional support and assistance. Finally, thank you to HUD for selecting Summit County Continuum of Care to become a YHDP grant recipient. Joining the national network of YHDP communities brings us closer to a future in which all young people in our community have access to safe and stable housing.



March 2024 Fieldtrip to Star House in Columbus, Ohio

Back row (l to r): Joe Rizzo, Executive Director of Shelter Care, Inc; Joseph Scalise, Director of Housing Services, United Way of Summit and Medina Counties, Jeannie Cargill, Independent Living Program of Summit County Children Services; Melody Stardust, member of YAB; Javon Solomon, member of YAB; Breanna Wesson, member of YAB; Brielle Davis, YAB member; Charles Fraise, Bayard Rustin LGBTQ+ Resource Center; Mar-quetta Boddie, Executive Director, Summit County CoC

Front Row (l to r): Delaney Jones, Hope& Healing Survivor Resource Center; Megan Vermillion, Hope& Healing Survivor Resource Center; Nikki Woodley, Director of Street Outreach Services Program, Shelter Care, Inc., Jada Moore, Youth Coordinator, Summit County CoC, Krystal Levstek, HMIS Coordinator, United Way of Summit and Medina Counties; Summer Hall, Akron Public School Board member and Cultural Engagement Coordinator -City of Akron; Mylasha King, YAB Chair

Definitions

Acronyms Used in this CCP

BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
CCP	Coordinated Community Plan
CE	Coordinated Entry
HMIS	Homeless Management Information System
LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer +
PYD	Positive Youth Development
RFP	Request for Proposal
SCCoC	Summit County Continuum of Care
SCCS	Summit County Childrens Services
TH/RRH	Joint Transitional and Rapid Rehousing
YAB	Youth Advisory Board
YHDP	Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program
YYA	Youth and Young Adults



Mission & Vision Statements

Mission: To learn from the lived experiences of the homeless and formerly homeless youth of Summit County in providing guidance and leadership; to advocate for those without a voice in the processes and practices that directly impact youth; to collaborate with others on youth-driven solutions that empower us to exercise our rights, to employ community resources, and to bring issues dealing with youth housing instability and its effects to the public eye.

Vision: To prevent and end homelessness amongst youth of all races, ethnicities, gender expressions, and abilities. The Youth Advisory Board (YAB) educates, advocates, and develops partnerships within Summit County in order to inspire the community, uplift youth voices, and directly reach youth experiencing homelessness to provide peer support and system navigation.



Community History with the Youth Homeless System

Established in 2018, the Youth Advisory Board is comprised of youth and young adults in Summit County who have experienced or are currently experiencing homelessness. The YAB demonstrates the importance of youth leadership and agency when advocating for better housing and housing rights. The YAB has grown exponentially and promotes equity throughout the community's youth homeless response system for Black, Indigenous, Hispanic (non-white), and LGBTQ youth who are disproportionately more likely to experience homelessness than their White, straight, and gender conforming counterparts. This includes identifying barriers that lead to any disparities in subpopulations being served and taking the necessary steps to eliminate these barriers in our community's youth homeless response system.

The Youth Summit workgroup comprised of Summit County Children Services, Project Rise (Akron Public Schools), Summit County Job & Family Services, Shelter Care, Juvenile Court, and many other stakeholders who work with youth was established in 2015 specifically to address local youth homelessness. In 2021 the SCCoC, in collaboration with the Summit County Health Department, contracted with The Partnership Ltd. to conduct a youth risk needs assessment.

The Youth Advisory Board meets twice monthly and includes sessions dedicated to YHDP planning and working sessions with the YHDP technical assistance teams.



Community Partners

Partner	Organization	Involvement
Youth Advisory Board	Youth Advisory Board (YAB)	YHDP Planning Team, CoC Board, Youth Advisory Board, Education Sub-committee
CoC Lead Agency (HMIS/CE/Youth Summit-Up workgroup)	Summit County Continuum of Care (SCCoC)	YHDP Lead, YHDP Planning Team, Work Groups/Info Sessions, CoC Board, YAB Recruiter/Support
CoC Program Recipient (YAB Recruiter, Housing, Supportive Services, Youth CE, Access, HMIS)	United Way of Summit & Medina County	YHDP Planning Team, Youth Summit-Up workgroup, CoC Member, YAB Recruiter/Supporter, CoC Board Member, CE Provider, HMIS Provider
CoC Program Recipient (Youth Prevention Programs, Youth Mental Health, Youth Substance Abuse)	Alcohol Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services Board (ADM), Community Support Services (CSS), Community Health Center (CHC), Shelter Care, Inc. Joanna House II, Ohio Guidestone, Bellefaire, Coleman Health Services, CYOP	YHDP Planning Team, Youth Summit-Up workgroup, CoC Member, YAB Recruiter/Supporter, CoC Board Member
CoC Program Recipient (LGBTQ+ Youth Provider & Youth Serving Organization)	Community AIDS Network Pride Initiative (CANAPI), Akron AIDS Collaborative (AAC)	YHDP Planning Team, Youth Summit-Up workgroup, CoC Member, YAB Recruiter/Supporter
CoC Program Recipient (Shelter, Youth Programing)	Shelter Care, Inc., Harmony House	YHDP Planning Team, Youth Summit-Up workgroup, CoC Member, YAB Recruiter/Supporter
Human Trafficking	Shelter Care, Inc., Hope and Healing (Battered Women's Shelter) Victims Assistance Program	YHDP Planning Team, Youth Summit-up workgroup, CoC Member, YAB Recruiter/Supporter, YAB Board Member

Partner	Organization	Involvement
Public Child Welfare Agency (Local)	Summit County Children Services	YHDP Planning Team, Youth Summit-Up workgroup, CoC Member, YAB Recruiter/Supporter
City Government (Youth Services, Workforce, Violence Prevention Services, Parks & Recreation)	City of Akron Akron Police Department Akron Fire Department	YHDP Planning Team, Youth Summit-Up workgroup, CoC Member, YAB Recruiter/Supporter, CoC Board Member
WIOA Boards & Employment Agencies	Summit County Job and Family Services	YHDP Planning Team, Youth Summit-Up workgroup, CoC Member
Local & State Educational Agency (LEA & Homeless Youth Liaison)	Project Rise (Akron Public Schools), Towpath Trail High School, I Promise School	YHDP Planning Team, Youth Summit-Up workgroup, CoC Member, YAB Recruiter/Supporter
Local & State Educational Agency	Summit Education Initiative, Out of School Time Network	YHDP Planning Team, Youth Summit-Up workgroup, CoC Member, YAB Recruiter/Supporter
Institution of Higher Education	University of Akron, Stark State Akron	YHDP Planning Team, Youth Summit-Up workgroup, CoC Member, YAB Recruiter/Supporter
Advocacy, Lobbying, Resourcing CoC	YAB, Freedom Bloc, Youth and Young Adult Council (Akron Urban League)	YHDP Planning Team, Youth Summit-Up workgroup, CoC Member, YAB Recruiter/Supporter
Juvenile Justice	Summit County Juvenile Court	YHDP Planning Team, Youth Summit-Up workgroup, CoC Member, YAB Recruiter/Supporter

Governance Structure (Decision Making Process)



Role of the Continuum of Care Board: The Akron/Barberton Summit County Continuum of Care (CoC) is a collaborative body that promotes community-wide commitment to the goal of making homelessness rare, brief, and non-recurring in Summit County. The CoC is designed to carry out responsibilities assigned by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) CoC Program and coordinates available resources and stakeholders' efforts. Comprised of elected and appointed positions, the Continuum's Board acts on behalf of the full Continuum to maintain direction and oversight of the mission of the Continuum of Care.

The CoC Board provides high-level leadership and support to the Youth Advisory Board and all YHDP planning and implementation activities. The Board votes to approve the YHDP Coordinated Community Plan and all project applications. The Board formally committed to formalize an ongoing focus on youth homelessness through the creation of the YHDP Planning Committee and Youth Summit-Up Workgroup. Lastly, the CoC Board ensures that other applicable committees review the Coordinated Community Plan on Youth Homelessness, align efforts where applicable, and consult with the Youth Advisory Board.

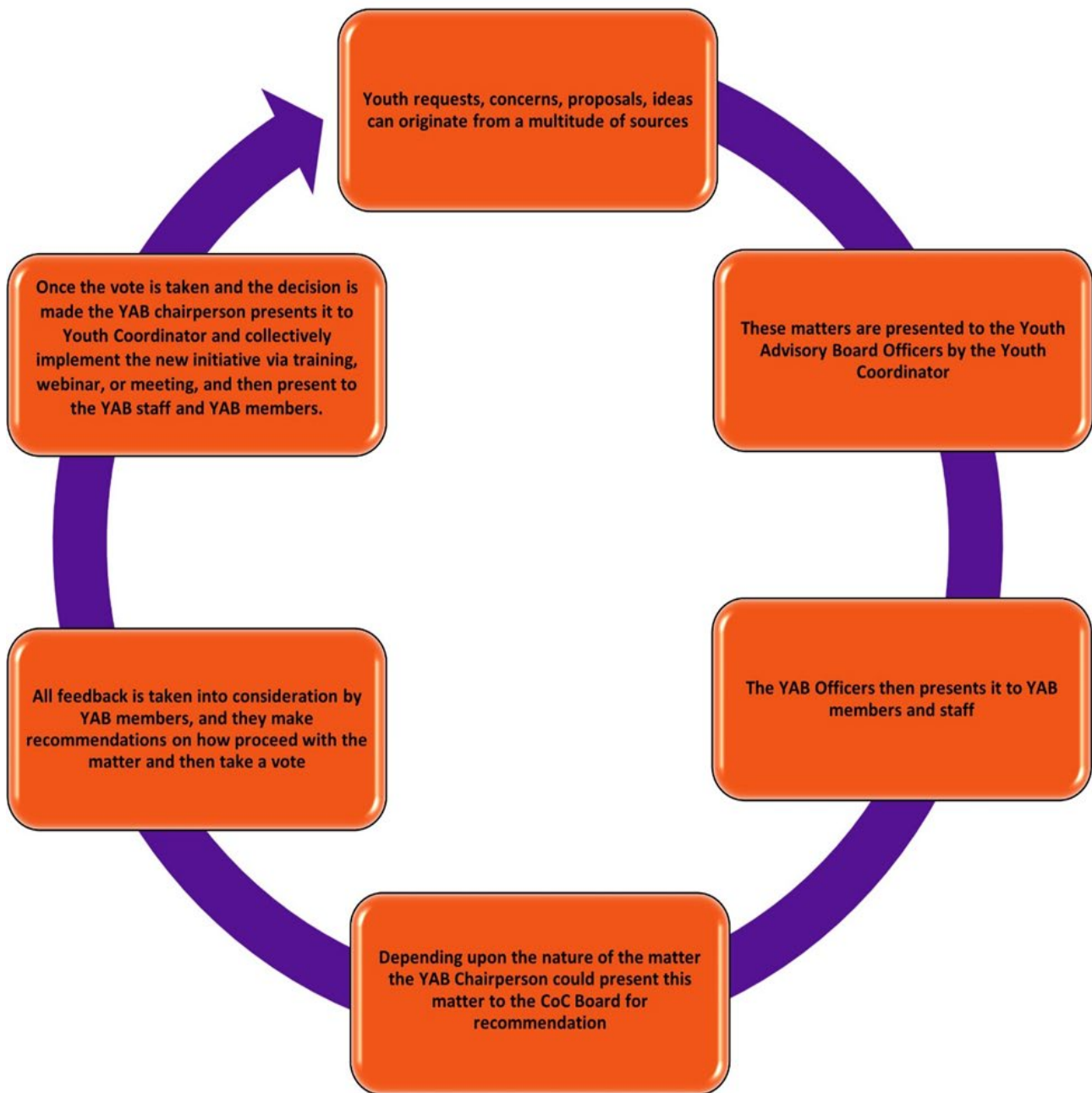
Role of the Youth Advisory Board:

The YAB designates members to participate in the YHDP planning process, including the project application review process, and to participate in the YHDP Planning Committee. YAB reviews and provides input on all aspects of the YHDP Coordinated Community Plan and votes to approve the YHDP Coordinated Community Plan along with all project applications.



Role of the YHDP Planning Committee and Youth Summit-Up workgroup: These groups participate regularly in YHDP monthly planning meetings and technical assistance sessions. They also develop, manage, and implement all required YHDP activities in accordance with required timelines. The committees developed the YHDP Coordinated Community Plan and implementation processes and approved the YHDP Coordinated Community Plan, designating specific members to participate in the project application review process.

YAB Decision Making Chart



Guiding Principles

EQUITY

Equity means that all people are given an equal opportunity for success, regardless of their race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or other identifying factors. In this context, equity will refer to the ability of YYA to be able to access Summit County's homeless response system and to achieve positive outcomes through it. Equity includes ensuring meaningful access to power for those most impacted by homelessness. This also includes identifying who does and does not have the power to make decisions and shifting that power balance to ensure equitable access and outcomes.

- Provide Equity trainings to all staff on the historical context and subsequential impact of systemic and institutionalized racism.
- Review outcomes for subpopulations and create measurable goals for addressing inequities.
- Emphasize equity and inclusion in procurement decision-making, including assessing submitted proposals for demonstrated cultural competency as well as evidence of partnerships, programming, and hiring strategies that promote racial and gender equity.
- Create paid opportunities for YYA enrolled in the YHDP funded projects.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

HUD believes that the best diversion and intervention strategy is to engage families, whenever appropriate and consented to by YYA, through community partnerships with organizations such as child welfare agencies, schools, youth providers, and other community human services and homeless service providers.

- Youth experiencing homelessness are connected to a strong support system.
- No project requires youth and young adults to speak or interact with their families unless they consent to
- There is an expanded definition of family to focus on each young person and the best "family" for them, including chosen family.
- Organizations work with families from a strength-based perspective

HOUSING FIRST

Housing First is designed to address the needs of YYA by providing them with immediate access to housing that is safe, affordable, and appropriate, and the necessary and age-appropriate supports that focus on health, wellbeing, life skills, engagement in education and employment, and social inclusion without preconditions.

- Housing First practices will be incorporated into all projects developed as part of the YHDP, as well as the overall system response to youth homelessness.
- All YYA are connected to housing that they offer voluntary services with a primary focus on moving homeless youth into housing.
- Provide Housing First training to organizations outside the homeless system.
- Ensure there is a common understanding across systems, e.g., child welfare and justice, about what Housing First means for those systems.
- The CoC's Written Standards were revised in 2022 to include required adherence to Housing First practices across all project types (regardless of funding source).

YOUTH CHOICE

The capacity for self-determination is a critical factor in obtaining positive outcomes for young adults experiencing homelessness. Allowing young adults to exercise self-determination is a youth-centered approach that values their expressed needs and self-awareness. *(HUD)*

- Ensure we are centering the voices of YYA in decision-making on all levels of the CoC and developing YYA to participate in leadership positions to make certain their input is incorporated.
- Designate YAB members seats on the CoC Board and other decision-making committees.
- A customized plan for success is driven by each young person and supported by providers.
- Changing systems to ensure YYA with lived experience are a valued part of the conversation and compensated for their time and expertise.

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Positive Youth Development (PYD) focuses on building protective factors for and providing positive influences on youth to help them succeed in the transition to adulthood. PYD approaches focus on strengths, build skills, assets, and competencies; foster healthy relationships with family and community partners; to strengthen the environment; and transform systems.

- The CoC will require organizations to implement PYD as a key model for any programs that work with YYA.
- There will be training available for youth-serving organizations on implementing Positive Youth Development.
- The CoC will create opportunities for youth to develop skills, including leadership skills, by supporting the YAB to help develop the coordinated community plan, engage in the design and development of specific housing and services projects, and inform the project selection process.

TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES

History of trauma causes significant mental health challenges, including depression, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), suicidal ideation, attachment issues, and substance abuse disorders. Trauma-informed programs can help to mitigate these adverse outcomes for youth and young adults. All systems that serve youth who have experienced homelessness must understand the basic principles of trauma to serve youth appropriately. Working with youth who have experienced significant trauma can be overwhelming for some organizations, but understanding the importance of promoting intentional healing is critical. So often, youth are overlooked and overshadowed. At the same time, many organizations have policies and guidelines that cause youth to “fail.” Organizations need to establish a balance between power and bring youth to the table to help shape the culture shift. *(National Network for Youth)*

- Trauma-informed care trainings will be widely promoted and accessed via multiple platforms to ensure staff and other YYA are equipped to support youth experiencing homelessness.
- When trauma-specific services are unavailable within the organization, there should be a trusted, effective referral system to connect individuals with appropriate trauma treatment.
- YHDP funded organizations will be required to implement and use trauma-informed practices.
- Unfavorable exits from programs does not mean YYA are no longer eligible for housing and/or services from YHDP funded programs.

- Peer mentoring will be available for YYA and especially for those who have experienced trauma.

SOCIAL & COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

The goal of youth homelessness services should be a successful transition to adulthood, including successful integration into a community as a positive, contributing community member. This requires the community to provide socially supportive engagement and the opportunity for youth to participate in meaningful community activities.

- Explore options for shared living models and invest in developing shared living models with YYA input and direction.
- Peer support exists both within programs through youth peer navigator; it also exists outside of programs in a variety of local support groups.

UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS

People who sleep in places not meant for human habitation are experiencing unsheltered homelessness. These locations include encampments, abandoned buildings, cars, etc.

- No YYA is sleeping unsheltered in our community.
- The YAB and CoC has an active outreach program, dedicated to identifying and engaging YYA.
- CE and Youth Peer Navigators provide targeted assistance to YYA experiencing unsheltered homelessness to ensure access to permanent housing.

COORDINATED ENTRY

Coordinated Entry (CE) is a process developed to ensure that all people experiencing a housing crisis are quickly identified, assessed, referred, and connected to housing and services based on their needs in a fair and equitable way.

- The CE System has been redesigned to ensure it is equitable and youth-appropriate regardless of where YYA first accesses the homeless system.
- YAB and YYA feedback will be incorporated in the ongoing evaluation and quality improvement process for CE.
- CE includes implements diversion to prevent YYA from entering shelter.
- Youth Peer Navigators provide assistance to YYA as they navigate the CE system.

Statement of Need

Homeless youth are defined as youth aged 24 and under who currently reside either in shelters, by couch surfing at someone else's dwelling, or staying at other places not meant for human habitation. Youth aged 17 and under not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian are considered *unaccompanied youth*. If a youth (under age 18, or ages 18-24) is experiencing one of the situations described above and is accompanied by children of their own, they are referred to as *homeless parenting youth*.

The Akron/Barberton Summit County Continuum of Care Needs Assessment conducted in April and May of 2021 utilized data from Summit County's Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), as well as through multiple forms of provider and stakeholder engagement. The methods used in this research are consistent with the latest recommendations of the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program, which is a federal funding program to prevent and end homelessness through the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Additionally, the SCCoC conducted a more recent analysis utilizing HMIS data from 2020-2023 to get a better understanding of the barriers and needs of YYA at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Based on feedback provided by youth during YAB meetings, events, focus groups and surveys conducted, the most common risk factors for youth homelessness are dysfunctional family dynamics, youth aging out of foster care, family rejection due to sexual orientation, and substance abuse, high local eviction rate, and the lack of affordable housing. According to members of YAB the biggest areas of risk in the current youth homeless system are for youth who suffer from addiction, youth who aged out of foster care without a support system in place, and the need for housing with programs that include wrap around services. The findings from both the Needs Assessment and the data analysis, accompanied by feedback from YYA helped identify where to prioritize resources.

Black YYA are disproportionally represented in youth experiencing homelessness. 44% of the YYA in our analysis identified as Black in Summit County whereas only 16% of the population is made up of Black individuals. DEI training and enhanced services are necessary to fully implement a race equity lens throughout the homeless service system. New program development is required to create an enhanced homeless system with access to services. We envision a system in which BIPOC YYA experience trust, honesty, and the acknowledgment of historical racial trauma and discriminatory policies. Strategies that are inclusive should acknowledge and address the distinctions between different populations of BIPOC YYA, particularly the experiences of Black and Brown youth.

Youth in the foster care system are vulnerable to becoming separated from educational and employment opportunities, creating a challenging transition when aging out. 47% of YYA in Summit County have public child welfare involvement. Youth making the transition to adulthood from foster care fare severely worse than their same-age peers when looking at housing security rates. Currently there is a deficit of programs that meet the needs of young people aging out of the foster care system. To better prepare foster youth who are aging out, federal policy should focus on programs that teach independent living skills. YYA voices should be centered when making critical decisions that will impact their lives. PYD that promote and prioritize empowerment are critical resources for youth as they transition into adulthood. Additionally, programs that support foster care alumni in gaining financial literacy, educational

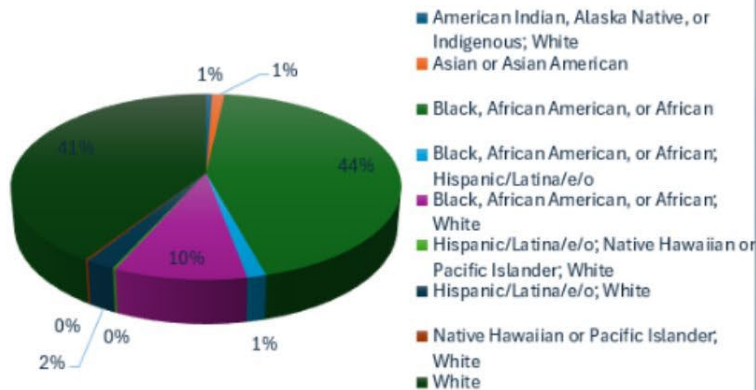
and employment opportunities, and housing security are key to ensuring young adults find success in this transition.

Multiple youth identified the need for a 24/7 drop-in center and increased emergency housing that are considered “safe spaces.” When asked to define what a safe space means to them, their answers invariably included “somewhere free from violence and drug-use.” Some youth also mentioned the act of being solicited for sex as making spaces “dangerous.” One youth stated that to “stay clean” she slept in her car rather than go back to the local homeless shelter because of the presence of drugs available at that shelter. One youth discussed that she couldn’t have her children with her in-shelter when addressing her substance abuse issues; another mentioned that while they “didn’t have anything against religion” they would have preferred to stay in a more secular setting and “less faith-based” so that they could speak openly about “what you go through on the streets...”. Creating a 24/7 youth specific drop-in center will provide a safe place to seek refuge while dealing with risk factors and challenges that cause homelessness. When a YYA enters the drop-in center, this can be a healthy decision to seek support and to start resolving issues. A highly individualized, wraparound program designed to meet the immediate needs of homeless YYA and can equip them with the tools they need to grow into healthy, independent adults.

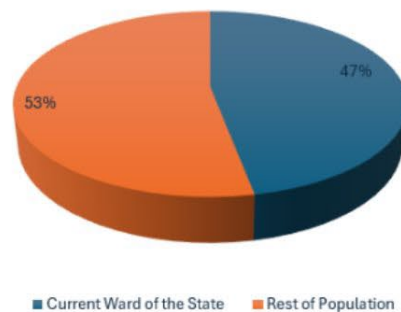
Group	Number of Individuals
Unaccompanied minor experiencing homelessness	498
Unaccompanied Young adult parents experiencing homelessness	17
Trans gender and non-conforming/non-binary youth and young adults experiencing homelessness	69
YYA fleeing DV, including sex trafficking	5
Unaccompanied youth at risk of homelessness (education)	513
Pregnant or parent YYA at risk of homelessness	285
Employed Homeless youth	24
Young adults exited the foster care system and experiencing homelessness (former ward)	247

IDENTITY DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE YYA POPULATION

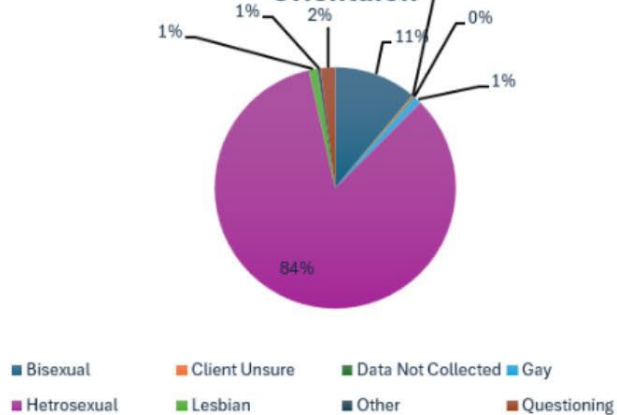
YYA Population by Race/Ethnicity



Homeless YYA That Are Wards of the State (HUD)



Homeless YYA Population By Sexual Orientation





1,849
AT RISK

498
ACTUAL

Homeless Youth and Young Adults in Summit County

What do youth and young adults at-risk of or experiencing homelessness need in Summit County?

To better understand the needs of YYA in our community and accompany the quantitative data, the SCCoC held monthly meetings with YAB, YYA currently or formerly experiencing homelessness, youth providers, and local government. During meetings we focused on the needs of YYA ages 24 and under, gaps in the current homeless system, and identified creative and innovative solutions. Meetings also included discussions focused on specific subpopulations of YYA at risk of homelessness and those experiencing homelessness, including the following:

- LGBTQ+ YYA (including gender non-conforming/non-binary YYA)
- Minors
- YYA is involved with other systems, including child welfare, the juvenile justice system, and the education system.
- YYA fleeing domestic violence or trafficking
- pregnant & parenting YYA
- Undocumented YYA



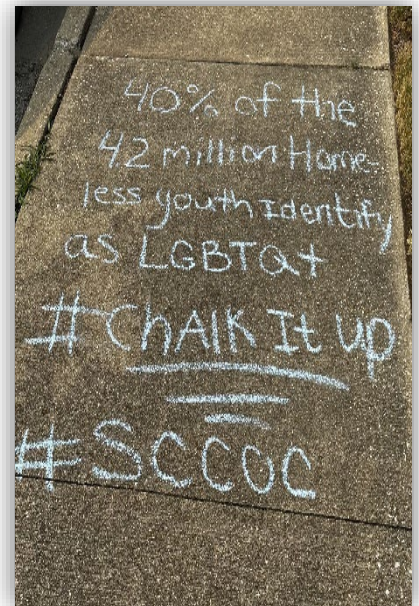
While there were some unique challenges and needs identified for each subpopulation, many identified needs and potential strategies were similar across all groups. These include transportation, access to services, youth-specific case managers, racism, mental health, education, employment, and the need for a strong “family” support network, however broadly family is defined.

The following section highlights some of the greatest needs and barriers facing different YYA population groups. It is important to note

that while we had targeted conversations about each subpopulation group, there is significant overlap between some of the identities and experiences that YYA hold. Each subpopulation indicated needs related to the USICH Four Core Outcomes of stable housing, education/employment, social/emotional wellbeing, and permanent connections. In the following section the *Action Plan* outlines strategies to start breaking down some of the biggest challenges and barriers for both specific and broader groups.

LGBTQ+, including gender non-conforming and non-binary YYA

- LGBTQ+ data may not be an accurate reflection due to it being self-reported.
- Currently there aren't any emergency shelter for LGBTQ+ identifying YYA to go except for the Haven of Rest, which is faith-based, privately funded, and not LGBTQ+ affirming.
- A targeted process aimed at addressing equity issues and vulnerable for YYA who identify as LGBTQ+ needs to be implemented.
- Efforts to support and protect LGBTQ+ YYA need to include offering SOGIE (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression) training to community partners and service providers.
- Expansion of peer support from other people with similar experiences, gender identities, and sexual orientations needs to be addressed in existing and new programs. More support groups for LGBTQ+ YYA and community spaces that are designed by and for them.
- There is a need to ensure that other youth in shared spaces and their service providers are educated about social identities and are respectful/affirming of people's full identities.
- Valuing LGBTQ+ young people's identities are just as important as serving their housing needs. Where they are placed including in rental market units, matters. They need to feel safe with their neighbors and landlords.
- There need to be more ongoing education and training for case managers, service providers, and supervisors/leadership on being supportive to the LGBTQ+ community.
- There is currently a shortage of affordable, accessible LGBTQ+ affirming and responsive healthcare and mental / behavioral healthcare providers.



Minors

During brainstorming sessions, YYA and the staff and community members who support them shared that the following needs and challenges tend to arise for minors experiencing homelessness and housing instability.



- Few projects can serve minors without the consent of their guardian, so many minors may avoid asking for help for fear of being required to go to (or to go back to) foster care or families where they do not feel safe and supported.
- They may not know where to go to access help, or who to ask for help.
- They may not trust many people (often true for queer, trans, gender non-binary or non-conforming youth).
- Some parents press "incorrigible" charges on youth who run away; consequently they are then detained at the local juvenile

justice center.

- Many are not being supported anywhere or by anyone. They may not have a positive example of what family could be like, and they may not feel like they have their own voice to advocate. Some youths are afraid to access help. Some youth say they did not ask for help because they don't want to be "in the system". Others say that they didn't like a particular program because the staff "couldn't relate" to their choices, history, culture.
- It's challenging for unaccompanied minors to access mental health or healthcare services.
- Many adults, including staff, but also including broader community members do not know how to interact with minors in a trauma-informed way and are not familiar with their experiences.



YYA with justice and child welfare/foster care system involvement

- The state of Ohio launched the Bridges program in 2018 to provide Extended Care to youth aging out of foster care at 18. While stakeholders will leverage this resource, Bridges will only assist a narrow group of youth.
- To prevent homelessness among those with a history of child welfare system involvement, partners want to improve discharge planning and strengthen permanent connections while youth are still involved in the child welfare system.
- Youth and young adults who have been involved with child welfare and/or justice/legal systems face distinct barriers and have unique needs.
- Youth need ongoing support, especially those who have no positive, healthy connections in the community when coming out of care.
- Figuring out transportation can be particularly challenging for this group.
- Many staff aren't trained and supported in meeting the person where they're at
- Transitions aren't seamless. Youth exit into homelessness and often then don't know how to get help.
- There's a lack of housing and employment options for this group, especially for those who have specific prior criminal records. More education and support with expungement would help increase employment rates.
- Many YYA need support getting connected or reconnected to education opportunities.
- Youth with a history in the justice system have a more difficult time finding stable housing options, especially if they have a violent drug offense or a record that identifies them as a sex offender.
- Another subpopulation that has a difficult time transitioning out of the justice system into stable housing are youth with families residing in AMHA public housing. The families are not allowed to let additional people stay with them; by doing so puts them in jeopardy of losing their housing voucher. If a youth has justice-involvement whether on or off public housing properties, AMHA has canceled vouchers and evicted families, even when the offending youth remain incarcerated.
- Thus, it is necessary to increase relationships between homeless housing and service providers and the justice system to take full advantage of existing resources, as well as to leverage additional support to keep YYA exiting the justice system from entering homeless situations.

YYA who survived sexual trafficking and exploitation and/or domestic violence (DV)

Conversations specifically about youth and young adults fleeing trafficking, domestic violence, and other forms of sexual exploitation uplifted the following needs and barriers:

- YYA don't know what to do if they're in a dangerous situation or are isolated/in an area where they don't know anyone.
- There is limited space in domestic violence shelters.
- When there are no DV beds available in the SCCoC, leaving the county for shelter isn't ideal for many clients.
- Resources are in distant locations, and transportation options are scarce.
- They may lack healthy support, which may cause them to gravitate to unhealthy DV relationships or individuals that would exploit them.
- Resources are not adequately presented so individuals are unaware that they exist.
- People in abusive and exploitative relationships or situations often share a phone with their abusers, so it's more dangerous for them to try to seek help.
- Those fleeing trafficking can be a less visible or identifiable population, so providers may not even know to help support that part of their experience if it is not disclosed. This may be in part due to lack of screening and lack of trauma-informed care training/support.
- For parenting households, it can be a challenge to safely get their children to school or daycare when their abuser knows where they will be and when.

Pregnant and Parenting YYA:

YYA who are already or are expecting to become parents face unique barriers.

- Insufficient access to prenatal, postnatal, and child health care
- Preventing rapid repeat pregnancy/ access to contraception/encouragement for cessation
- Addressing depression, past trauma, and treatment for substance abuse
- Ensuring a safe and nurturing environment, reducing child maltreatment
- Many YYA need assistance with birth planning.
- Concerns over their ability to care for and nurture their children appropriately without a safe and stable place to call home.
- Concerns about potential child welfare involvement if experiencing homelessness with their child(ren).
- The added expense of paying for childcare to go to work or school
- Access to critical supplies, including diapers and clothes as their child(ren) grow, and a safe place to keep those supplies, especially if they are not yet in permanent housing
- Lack of shelter spaces that provide support for newborns and their parent(s)
- Transportation to medical appointments.
- Lack of awareness of community resources for pregnant and parenting YYA



Undocumented YYA

YYA who are undocumented and experiencing homelessness have compounding trauma and stress of navigating the system. Undocumented YYA often navigate additional risks and barriers to meet their housing needs such as:

- Language barriers
- Facing the results of stigma against non-native English speakers, non-U.S.-citizens, people from other places, and immigrants of color makes it challenging to build trust and connections.
- Inability to access mainstream benefits/cash assistance.
- There are not many legal employment options for this group to get a sustainable income and support their own housing long-term.
- There is no funding to provide rental assistance to undocumented YYA.
- Inability to access mainstream benefits/cash assistance
- Fear of deportation or legal action if they seek help from the wrong person or agency.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: All youth have access to safe, supportive, and affirming housing options as well as restorative wraparound services. We intend to increase the percentage of YYA who have access to this care each year.		
Objective: To secure more beds and safe temporary housing while waiting for permanent housing	Action Steps: Still developing action steps	Responsible Party: SCCoC Grantees/YAB
Goal 2: Collaborating with the community to gather more accurate data particularly about youth ages 24 and under that can inform project design and implementation.		
Objective: Have a more accurate understanding of the overall population of homeless youth as well as subpopulations.	Action Steps: Still developing action steps	Responsible Party: SCCoC Grantees/YAB
Goal 3: As a community we will offer resources to support and provide adaptable care to all youth experiencing homelessness, while prioritizing those who are the most vulnerable in our community including LGBTQIA+ youth, youth with disabilities, youth ages 24 and under, among other populations that are highlighted in our data.		
Objective: As a community we will offer resources to support and provide adaptable care to all youth experiencing homelessness, while prioritizing those who are the most vulnerable in our community including LGBTQIA+ youth, youth with disabilities, youth ages 14-24, among other populations that are highlighted in our data.	Action Steps: Still developing action steps	Responsible Party: SCCoC Grantee/YAB

New Projects

Project 1: Planning Grant	
YHDP Planning Grant	Support for the Youth Advisory Board, YHDP project implementation, monitoring/evaluation, and system coordination.
Project Description	<p>The YHDP Planning Grant will support the Youth Advisory Board (YAB), Youth and Young Adults (YYA) and CoC staff dedicated to the development and implementation of YHDP projects.</p> <p>The YHDP Planning Grant to continue the coherent planning process for all activities related to youth homelessness. The YAB, YYA, and designated CoC staff will continue to develop and expand youth homelessness services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Reviewing, updating, and implementing the YAB Governance Charter and Bylaws. ·Reviewing and updating the Review and Ranking Process ·Creating Performance Measures for all recipients which include Ranking and Review tools and Systemwide Performance Measures. ·Continuing to review committee structures including roles, responsibilities, and meeting guidelines ·Monitoring all YHDP-funded projects to ensure compliance with HUD regulations (24 CFR 578). ·Creating and implementing a reallocation process ·Continuing the development of a comprehensive system-wide Centralized Intake system to focus on the youth homeless response system ·Coordinating youth specific point-in-time counts ·Providing a system-wide analysis of the CoC by reviewing project data submitted through Annual Performance Reports ·Continuing to expand the collaboration with stakeholders and other interested individuals

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Implementing a financial analysis of each project to analyze the cost of meeting outcomes and cost effectiveness of programs ·Identifying low performing projects and collaborating with them to create corrective action plans, and to improve performance ·Reviewing, updating, and revising all policies & procedures to ensure that they align with 24 CFR 578 ·Updating CoC monitoring guide to reflect new HUD standards.
Target Population	Youth experiencing homelessness, ages 24 and under, including unaccompanied youth and pregnant or parenting youth who are experiencing homelessness.
YHDP Budget	Approximately \$43,678 (3% of Total Award) Cost does not include MATCH
Project 2: Enhanced Coordinated Entry and Youth Peer Navigator	
Program Description	<p>Support for new positions in the youth/young adult system – CE System Management and System Navigation. These positions will strengthen the operation of the entire youth coordinated entry system from identification and engagement to housing by providing direct navigation assistance to young people, ensuring all providers are using best practices, marketing the youth CE system, and engaging the youth advisory board in the work to build a new, improved system.</p> <p>Development and implementation of a youth-specific CE system, including initial triage before young people enter shelter and assistance for young people as they navigate the CE system. Improving coordination with system partners to improve coordination within, access to, and referrals to and from the CE system.</p> <p>YYA contacting CE or YAB hotline are immediately referred to a youth peer navigator.</p> <p>The youth peer navigator is a field-based services position that is charged with helping address all aspects of street outreach, diversion/prevention, shelter entry, and assessment for all homeless or at-risk YYA in the county.</p> <p>Youth peer navigator does diversion screen with YYA and either diverts or assists to enter emergency housing program</p>

	Once YYA is in emergency housing, the youth peer navigator completes CE assessment within 48 hours to help identify housing needs and best intervention.
Target Population	Youth experiencing homelessness, ages 24 and under, including unaccompanied youth and pregnant or parenting youth who are experiencing homelessness.
Desired Outcomes	Increased and rapid access to emergency TH for YYA without safe places to sleep; decrease in length of time homeless; increase in exits to permanent housing; reduction in recidivism; increased connection to wrap-around services (i.e. mental health, employment, treatment, benefits, etc.).
YHDP Budget	Approximately \$250,000 cost does not include MATCH.
Timeframe	Immediate one-time response
Project 3: Youth Drop-In Center	
Program Description	The Drop-In center will serve youth ages 24 and under, who are experiencing homelessness. At this 24/7/365 drop-in center, youth will be provided with access to food, clothing, hygiene items, laundry facilities, showers, and a safe place to be. Beyond basic needs, a clinical team will provide therapy and case management, and partner agencies provide on-site and community-based access to stabilizing resources, such as housing, transportation, health care, employment, education, addiction services, legal aid, government benefits, ID cards and more.
Target Population	All YYA experiencing homelessness, ages 24 and under, including unaccompanied youth and pregnant or parenting youth who are experiencing homelessness.
Outcome Measures	We will see an increase in youth receiving housing and decrease the number of youths that are category 1 homeless.
YHDP Budget	Approximately \$412,543 Cost does not include MATCH
Timeframe	Unlimited duration
Project 4: Emergency Transitional Housing (TH)-Rapid Rehousing (RRH)	
Program Description Note: Applicants will be given the option to apply for TH-RRH or RRH projects under this project type.	<p>TH-RRH will provide permanent and transitional housing and supportive services to young adults 18-24 experiencing homelessness, particularly but not limited to young adults and young adult families who are members of the LGBTQIA+ community or fleeing violence, including trafficking and exploitation.</p> <p>TH-RRH will co-enroll young adults into transitional housing and rapid rehousing with the choice given to YYA to opt in or out of the transitional or rapid rehousing option at any time.</p> <p>The transitional housing option will provide short to medium-term assistance for up to 2 years in a site-based setting using a housing first model that centers the needs and preferences of</p>

	<p>YYA and works with them to quickly move to permanent housing.</p> <p>The rapid rehousing option will provide rental assistance plus supportive services using a housing-first model that is similarly YYA-led and meets program participants where they are. While the length of time on the subsidy must be participant-driven and individually determined, we expect an average of 1 year per participant and up to 3 years (maximum allowed). We also expect an average of 6 months of aftercare and up to a maximum of 1.5 years once a participant's rental assistance ends. Housing will be scattered site and allow program participants the option to have a roommate. Supportive services may be provided directly by the YHDP grantee or through program partnerships but must have the capacity to meet participant needs to sustain housing and thrive.</p>
Target Population	All YYA experiencing homelessness, ages 24 and under, including unaccompanied youth and pregnant or parenting youth who are experiencing homelessness.
Desired Outcomes	Successful exits to Permanent Housing, decrease in length of time homeless, reduction in recidivism, and increased connection to wrap around services (i.e. mental health, employment, treatment, benefits, etc.).
YHDP Budget	Around \$650,000 Cost does not include MATCH
Timeframe	<p>Transitional Housing will be short to medium-term assistance for up to 2 years in a site-based setting.</p> <p>Rapid Rehousing will be an average of 1 year per participant and up to 3 years (maximum allowed). We also expect an average of 6 months of aftercare and up to a maximum of 1.5 years once a participant's rental assistance ends.</p>
Project 5: Host Homes	
Project Description	<p>Short-term host homes are an intervention for youth who are currently experiencing homelessness for any variety of reasons, including but not limited to family conflict, poverty, gender identity and sexual orientation. The goal of short-term host homes is to provide a safe, temporary, welcoming space for up to six months where the young person has time to repair their relationships with self-identified families or make decisions about other housing options with the support of a caring housing case manager.</p> <p>Successful implementations of short-term host homes have generally been volunteer-based programs, with stays lasting from three to six months; however, other successful implementations addressing community needs have existed in the short-term housing system. Providing short-term host homes is a cost-effective and successful model for preventing youth homelessness in a wide range of cases.</p>

	Youth peer navigators provide primary services, including connection to host homes, conducting assessments, assisting with housing plan development and linkage/connection to other resources.
Target Population	All YYA experiencing homelessness, ages 24 and under, including unaccompanied youth who are experiencing homelessness.
Desired Outcomes	Reduced youth involvement with Summit County Children Services, reduction in first time homeless, and increased connection to wraparound services (i.e. mental health, employment, treatment, benefits, etc.). Emergency response services available 24/7 YYA can access shelter within 12 hours of presenting to a system access point, YYA have a safe place to stay (assessments to determine safety of current housing situation or need to move to Emergency TH)
YHDP Budget	Approximately \$50,000 Cost does not include MATCH
Timeframe	Average length of stay between three to six months
Project Description:	<p>Long-term host homes are an intervention for youth who are currently experiencing homelessness for any variety of reasons, including but not limited to family conflict, poverty, gender identity and sexual orientation. The goal of long-term host homes is to provide a safe, welcoming space for up to 24 months where the young person has time to repair their relationships with self-identified families or make decisions about other housing options with the support of a caring housing case manager.</p> <p>For parenting youth long-term host home can be a family, couple, or individual who is willing to open their home and life to a mother and child(ren). The Host Home must have a commitment to showing generous hospitality, building intentional relationships, and meeting the physical and emotional needs of the mother and child(ren) throughout the pregnancy and postpartum period. This period will average about 9 months, depending on at which point in pregnancy the mother entered the Host Home and the need for ongoing support before moving into Independent Supportive Housing.</p> <p>Successful implementations of long-term host homes have generally been volunteer-based programs. Providing long-term host homes is a cost-effective and successful model for preventing youth homelessness in a wide range of cases.</p> <p>Youth peer navigators will provide primary services, including connection to host homes, conducting assessments, assisting</p>

	with housing plan development and linkage/connection to other resources.
Target Population	All YYA experiencing homelessness, ages 18- 24, with special focus on parenting YYA
Desired Outcomes	Emergency response services available 24/7, YYA exiting to permanent housing, YYA increase total income (cash and non-cash), YYA achieve at least one self-identified education and/or employment goal, YYA identify at least one permanent connection to provide ongoing support, YYA achieve at least one goal related to establishing permanent connections. Reduction in infant mortality and maternal mortality rates.
Timeframe	Avg length of stay between one to 18 months in some cases, YYA may stay up to 24 months.
YHDP Budget	Approximately \$50,000 cost does not include MATCH

Community Support

Copies of letters indicating support for the Coordinated Community Plan and a commitment to implementing the Plan can be found on the following pages. The signatory organizations include the *Youth Advisory Board*, the *CoC Governing Board*, the *Public Child Welfare Agency*, *City of Akron*, *County of Summit*, and the *CoC's Runaway & Homeless Youth provider*.



Summit County Continuum of Care (SCCoC)

a collaboration of agencies working together for the homeless

*Each person is a branch of
strength within the community.*

*Strong branches make
a strong community!*

Signatures of Support

The signature(s) below attest to the approval and support of the Summit County Continuum of Care (SCCoC) OH-506, Coordinated Community Plan to end Youth Homelessness. We agree to work collaboratively with our partners to implement a comprehensive system to prevent and end youth homelessness, including the goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

Signature

Date

4/3/2024

Print Name and Title

Kyle Julien, Planning Director

Agency

City of Akron

Local Government



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Signature Rachel Wilson Date 4/9/24

Print Name and Title Rachel Wilson, YAB Member

Signature Jayus Payne Date 04/9/24

Print Name and Title Jayus Payne

Signature Melody Star Date 04/9/24

Print Name and Title Melody Stardust

Signature Breanna Nelson Date 4/9/24

Print Name and Title Breanna Nelson YAB Member

Signature Brielle Davis Date 4/10/24

Print Name and Title Brielle Davis YAB ~~Sec~~ Sec.




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Signature  Date 4/9/24
Print Name and Title Joseph Rizzo, Executive Director
Agency Shelter Care, Inc.

Runaway and Homeless Youth Providers



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Signature  Date 4/1/2024
Print Name and Title Traci Foley, Department Director Placement Services
Agency Summit County Children Services Authorized Agent of
Legal Custodian, Cassandra A. Holtzmann
Summit County Children Services

Public Child Welfare Agency



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Signature  Date April 5, 2024
Print Name and Ilene Shapiro, County Executive
Title Agency Summit County

Local Government



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Signature  Date 4/3/2024

Print Name and Title Kyle Julien, Planning Director

Agency City of Akron

Local Government