

COORDINATED COMMUNITY PLAN

GA BOS YAB



PREVENT AND END
YOUTH
HOMELESSNESS



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Acronyms and Definitions

BoS: Balance of State - Includes all the jurisdictions in a state that are not covered by any other CoC. BoS CoCs include non-metropolitan areas and may include some or all the state's smaller cities.

CCP: Coordinated Community Plan – A plan that serves as a community's blueprint for preventing and ending youth homelessness. The CCP is the result of a comprehensive planning process that brings together diverse stakeholders to develop a coordinated community response to youth homelessness.

CE: Coordinated Entry – A process through which people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness can access the crisis response system in a streamlined way, have their strengths and needs quickly assessed, and quickly connect to appropriate, tailored housing and mainstream services within the community; the most intensive interventions are prioritized for those with the highest needs

CH: Chronically Homeless – When a homeless individual with a disabling condition has either been continuously homeless for a year or more OR has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

CoC: Continuum of Care – A community-based local planning group, the purpose of which is to promote community wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; provide funding for efforts by nonprofit providers, and state and local governments to quickly rehouse homeless individuals and families while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused to homeless individuals, families and communities by homelessness; promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and optimize self-sufficiency among individuals and families experiencing homelessness

CoC Interim Regulations - The set of requirements issued by HUD to implement the CoC Program. YHDP funding is required to align with these regulations as well as rules set by the [YHDP NOFO](#). The CoC Interim Rule can be [here](#).

DV: Domestic Violence – Domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate person against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, and emotional abuse.

ES: Emergency Shelter – A facility the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary or transitional shelter for people experiencing homelessness in general or for specific populations of people experiencing homelessness. ES is not an eligible YHDP project type.

HMIS: Homeless Management Information System – A computerized data collection application designed to capture client-level information over time on the characteristics and service needs of people experiencing homelessness, while also protecting client confidentiality.

Homeless Prevention – Homelessness prevention refers to policies, practices, and interventions that reduce the likelihood that someone will experience homelessness

Housing First – A homeless assistance approach which prioritizes providing permanent housing to people experiencing homelessness, thus ending their homelessness and serving as a platform from which they can pursue personal goals and improve their quality of life. This approach is guided by the belief that people need basic necessities like food and a place to live before attending to anything less critical, such as getting a job, budgeting properly, or attending to substance use issues. Additionally, Housing First is based on the theory that client choice is valuable in housing selection and supportive service participation; exercising those choices is likely to make a client more successful in remaining housed and improving their life.

HUD: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development – The Department of Housing and Urban Development is the Federal agency responsible for national policy and programs that address America's housing needs that improve and develop the Nation's communities, and enforce fair housing laws.

LGBTQIA+: An inclusive term which includes people of all genders and sexualities, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, queer, intersex, asexual, pansexual, and allies. While each letter in LGBTQIA+ stands for a specific group of people, the term encompasses the entire spectrum of gender fluidity and sexual identities.

Literally Homeless – When an individual's or family's primary nighttime residence is a place not meant for human habitation, they are living in a shelter designated to provide a temporary living arrangement, or are exiting an institution where they have resided for fewer than 90 days and who resided in a place not meant for human habitation or an emergency shelter, immediately before entering the institution.

McKinney-Vento – Subtitle VII-B of The McKinney-Vento Homelessness Assistance Act authorized the federal Education of Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program and remains the only major federal legislative response to support students experiencing homelessness. It protects the educational rights of homeless students, authorizes the use of federal funds to provide homeless assistance. The McKinney-Vento Act requires the elimination of barriers to allow homeless students immediate school enrollment and access to educational supports – ensuring that all children and youth have equal access and equitable educational opportunities. Overview of the McKinney-Vento act can be found [here](#).

NOFO: Notice of Funding Opportunity - The set of requirements issued by HUD to implement the YHDP Program. GA BOS YHDP is required to adhere to the CoC Program Interim Rule and the Fiscal Year 2021 YHDP NOFO. *Applicable NOFO resources can be found on the [HUD Exchange](#).*

PH: Permanent Housing – A general umbrella term for housing for persons who are homeless without a designated length of stay. Within the CoC program, PH is frequently utilized to refer to Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and Rapid Re-Housing (RRH). RRH does have a limit of 24 months of financial assistance.

Precariously Housed or At-Risk – When a person is couch-surfing, doubled-up with friends/relatives, living in a hotel/motel while paying out of pocket, or at imminent risk of losing their housing

Pregnant or Parenting Youth/Young Adult – Individuals age 24 or younger who are pregnant or who are the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of one or more child(ren) who are residing with that youth parent, when there is no person over age 24 in the household.

PSH: Permanent Supportive Housing – Permanent housing with indefinite leasing or rental assistance in conjunction with supportive services to assist homeless persons with a disability or families with an adult or child member with a disability, achieve housing stability.

PYD: Positive Youth Development – Positive Youth Development is based on a body of research suggesting that certain “protective factors,” or positive influences, can help young people succeed and keep them from having problems. Two key findings emerged from this research:

- Young people may have fewer behavioral problems and may be better prepared for a successful transition to adulthood if they have a variety of opportunities to learn and participate at home, at school, in community-based programs and in their neighborhoods.
- Some protective elements putting young people on the path to success include family support, caring adults, positive peer groups, a strong sense of self and self-esteem, as well as school and community involvement.

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

RRH: Rapid Re-Housing – A housing model with up to 24 months of rental assistance; a Housing First approach which provides immediate access to permanent housing, with low-barriers to entry and to keep assistance, and voluntary but persistent services with high expectations and levels of engagement.

Note: With YHDP funds, projects may be able to request the ability to provide up to 36 months of support.

SSO: Supportive Service Only - A YHDP project type where funds only pay for services, not housing assistance. Example projects include:

- **Diversion** - Support offered at the front door of the system to assist youth in finding or maintaining safe and appropriate housing before entering an episode of homelessness. Diversion is a Housing Problem Solving technique which focuses on strategies to help young people identify housing options and avoid an episode of homelessness.
- **Outreach** - An opportunity to engage youth who are unsheltered, providing basic needs assistance, and connections to necessary resources, including shelter & housing.
- **Drop-In Center** - A physical space designed to offer basic needs assistance, connection to other systems, and diversion service.
- **Navigation** - Supports offered to assist young people who are at risk of or experiencing literal homelessness, navigate complex systems, and provide direct support to youth in crisis as they engage with the coordinated entry system.
- **Coordinated Entry** - An opportunity to improve Coordinated Entry System processes to be youth-centered.
- **Host Home** - A short-term, family-based setting that can offer youth a safe alternative to shelter.

TIC: Trauma-Informed Care – A framework that centers around the adverse experiences of people and works to prevent perpetuating those experiences, while promoting healing, power of choice and inner agency through the process.

TLP: Transitional Living Program – A program funded by a variety of funders, providing transitional housing and supportive services to youth between the ages of 16-21, with the goal of independent living. TLP is not an eligible YHDP project type.

TH: Transitional Housing – Time-limited (up to 24 months in a CoC program), supportive housing for youth who are not ready to live independently; this model focuses on youth developing life skills and staying in school or securing work. Possible housing types include:

- Congregate housing with overnight staff
- Clustered units with or without a supervisor on-site, sometimes referred to as Single-Room Occupancies (SRO)
- Scattered site units without a supervisor on-site

TH-RRH: Joint Component Transitional Housing and Rapid-Re-Housing - Provides short-term crisis housing for youth who enter the TH portion of the program. It also provides medium/long-term permanent housing for youth who transition directly from TH into RRH or from homelessness into RRH. Youth have a choice of which program they wish to access and both TH and RRH portions must be available.

Undocumented Youth – Young people living in the United States without U.S. citizenship or other legal immigration status.

VI-SPDAT: Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool – A survey administered both to individuals and families to determine risk and prioritization when providing assistance to homeless and at-risk of homelessness persons.

YAB: Youth Action Board – YAB is an interagency group of young leaders with lived experience of homelessness and/or foster care. The mission of the YAB is to strive for the elimination of youth homelessness in our region. They work to inform the public about homelessness, identify and work to eliminate barriers to housing, and advocate for increased resources to help youth who are unstably housed transition into stable, permanent housing.

YHDP: Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program – The ultimate goal of the YHDP is to reduce youth homelessness. YHDP aims to support selected communities in the development and implementation of a coordinated community approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness. The hope is that the awarded communities will then share that experience with and help mobilize communities around the country towards the same end.

YYA: Youth and Young Adults – By HUD's definition, this includes any person age 24 and under.

Values, Vision, Mission



YHDP Value Statements:

- **Inclusive** – We believe that there should be a path forward for all youth, with no one left behind.
- **Responsive** – We create timely, individualized, youth-guided, and culturally relevant solutions which are accessible across all regions. Utilizing digital access and resources whenever possible.
- **Innovative** – We evaluate what’s not working, recognize what’s outdated, and make changes
- **Collaborative** – We are youth-led, harmonizing with community partners to achieve the shared vision of ending youth homelessness and finding permanency.
- **Empowering** - We believe in enabling youth with the tools to spark a knowledge of self, autonomy, and will-power to govern their own success and future.

Vision

Every youth and young adult will have **EQUITABLE** access to a blueprint for success which includes a multitude of youth-informed, **INDIVIDUALIZED** services; empowering them to live a life of safety, stability and able to clearly visualize their futures and have something to look forward to.

Mission

The Balance of State CoC will meet immediate and long-term needs of youth experiencing homelessness through a series of services specifically co-designed with youth. The system will focus on preventing homelessness whenever possible and assisting youth in obtaining and maintaining safe and stable housing. There will be a no barrier approach ensuring that youth entering the system will find resources from their first point of entry. Youth-identified and youth driven wrap-around services will be provided. Youth will be encouraged to make organic connections to create lasting support networks. An emphasis will be placed on incorporating youth-developed strategies for improving education and employment connections. We seek to equitably serve all people, recognizing the unique barriers that exist in historically underinvested communities and the inequitable distribution of power.

Statement of Need

Georgia BOS at a Glance

The Balance of State (BoS) comprises the vast majority of the state of Georgia, representing 152 of 159 counties. Those counties which are excluded from the BoS geography are Clarke, Cobb, Chatham, DeKalb, Fulton, Muscogee, and Richmond, all of which include or share a border with a major city. The BoS is divided into five (5) super regions, most of which are anchored by one youth service provider. While some characteristics remain the same across regions, each presents its own unique attributes.

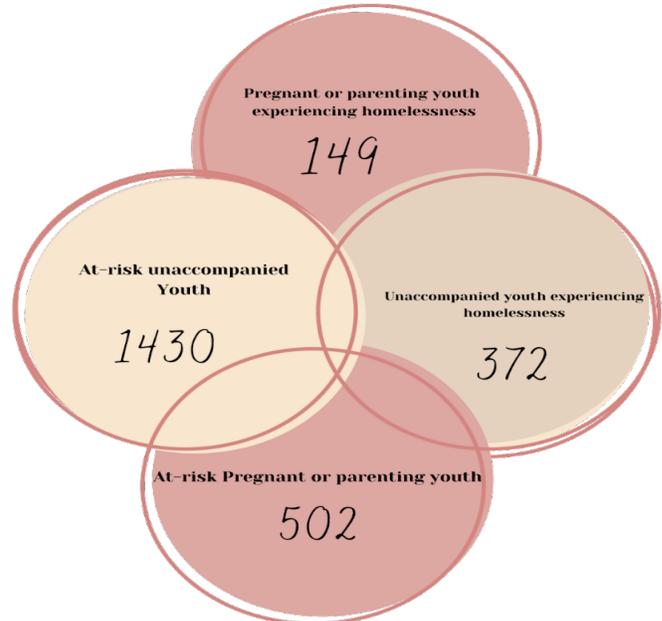
Georgia ranks 28th in the nation for extent of child homelessness but 49th in the nation for the risk of child homelessness. That ranking is based upon the number of children living in poverty, children without health insurance, female headed households, and birth rates among teens. The state ranks 43rd in the nation for parameters of child wellbeing. Ranking is based upon health problems exhibited in children, number of eligible households participating in SNAP programs as well as educational proficiency. Pregnant and parenting youth and their children are a particularly vulnerable group in this geography, especially noting the challenges and shortcomings in infrastructure and service provision.

Georgia has “service deserts” throughout the state. These are communities and/or entire counties, with few or no services for those experiencing homelessness. Some youth travel from under-resourced rural areas to metro areas, notably Atlanta, seeking resources and opportunities.

The Numbers

Quantifying youth homelessness in a geography as large as the Georgia Balance of State is a difficult and imperfect task. We took into account a variety of data sources with none of them containing a complete picture of the categories described below. We believe that the graphic below outlines the best estimates¹ for at-risk unaccompanied youth and those experiencing homelessness.

For the categories of **unaccompanied youth and pregnant or parenting youth experiencing homelessness**, we looked at HMIS data; specifically looking at our Stella data from October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021.



¹ Data sources outlined in narrative (1430 at-risk unaccompanied youth; 372 unaccompanied youth experiencing literal homelessness, 502 at-risk pregnant or parenting youth; 149 pregnant or parenting youth experiencing literal homelessness)

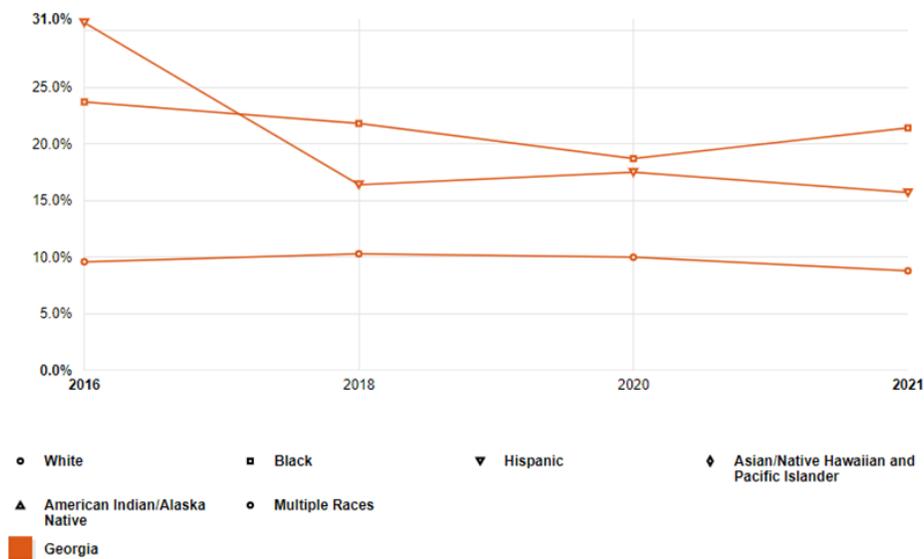
This date range was selected because it best aligns with the education system data for the community. We acknowledge that there are gaps in this method, as we are not including data from Victim Service Providers (VSP) and Non-HMIS participating entities, but there is no reliable way to deduplicate those data sources with our HMIS data source. By leveraging Stella data, we are able to gain insights into how youth households are moving through our system.

For **unaccompanied youth at risk of homelessness**, we used education data on students identified as unaccompanied homeless youth either doubled-up or in motels. We acknowledge that this number is extremely large and may be an overrepresentation of the actual number of at-risk youth. But at the same time, we know that the homeless cycle of young people flows in and out of HUD's homeless definition and students who meet the education definition of homelessness, will find themselves in HUD category 1 or 2 situations throughout the school year. We plan to improve partnerships to gain further insight and more accurate information on our at-risk population.

For **pregnant and parenting youth at risk of homelessness**, we utilized data from the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. The data in the chart above relates to parenting youth under 20 who are receiving low-income, child care assistance. While this number may be an underrepresentation of the actual number of at-risk pregnant or parenting youth, it is still a good indicator for the prevalence and need in the Balance of State.

Poverty

According to County Health Rankings, the percent of children in poverty ranges from 5-50% across counties in the BoS geography with a 20% average for the state of Georgia as a whole. The 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) notes that 14% of Georgians live in poverty, compared to 12.8% of the U.S. population. While the state exceeds the national average, certain racial and ethnic groups experience poverty at varying rates. The chart below from the Kaiser Family Foundation shows 2021 poverty rates for White (8.8%), Black (21.4%), and Hispanic (15.7%) residents.



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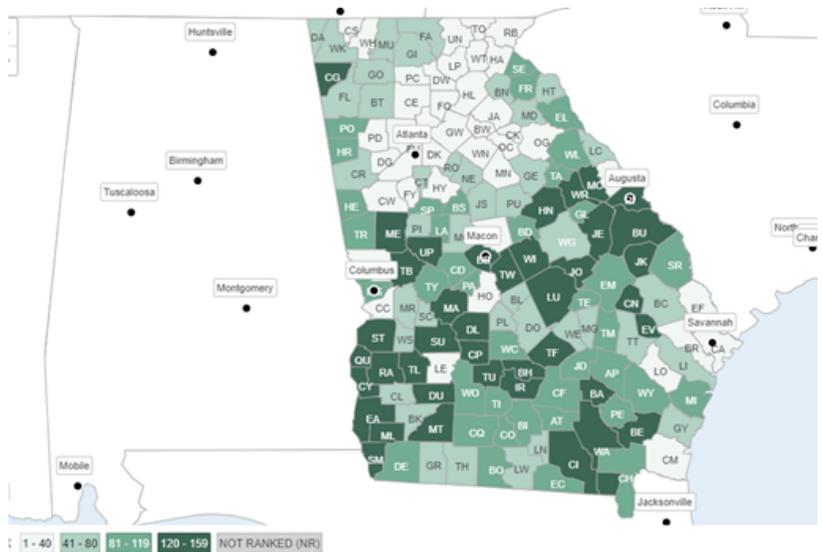
² Kaiser Family Foundation.

<https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/poverty-rate-by-race-ethnicity-cps/?activeTab=graph¤tTimeframe=0>

Poverty guidelines are used to determine eligibility for some public assistance benefits such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medical Assistance. Focusing on families in which the head of household is between the ages of 18 and 24, data from the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) shows that 311 households receive SNAP benefits, and 1038 receive Medical Assistance. It is widely known that there is significantly more need than families supported by benefits, and represents only a portion of the need that exists in the BoS community.

Food insecurity is directly linked to poverty, lack of access and local economic conditions, as well as a struggle experienced more deeply in rural areas than their urban counterparts. Rural counties are more likely to experience “persistent poverty” rates more often than urban communities, as defined by counties with at least 20% of the population living in poverty for over 30 years³. According to the 2021 USDA Food Security in the United States report, “Compared with the national average, food insecurity was significantly lower in the Northeast and significantly higher in the South⁴”. Food insecurity is significantly higher for single female-headed households, with 24.3% of this population lacking food security based on a 2021 USDA report⁵.

The map below from County Health Rankings shows the ranking of Georgia counties by health outcomes. This measure encompasses both physical and mental well-being and is made up of a variety of indicators reflecting length and quality of life for residents. The most rural counties, particularly concentrated in the southern half of the state, rank almost exclusively in the bottom half (and lowest overall) of this measure. From an infrastructure perspective, many of the lowest ranked counties struggle with standard resources like transportation and those more closely related to homelessness in terms of shelters and other similar interventions. Access to healthcare is a struggle for many, even those who are covered by health insurance. For example, rural Peach County’s ratio of residents to primary care physicians is just 4591:1. These numbers are similar and at times worse in other counties, thereby contributing to residents’ poor health outcomes which can be linked to other negative indicators.



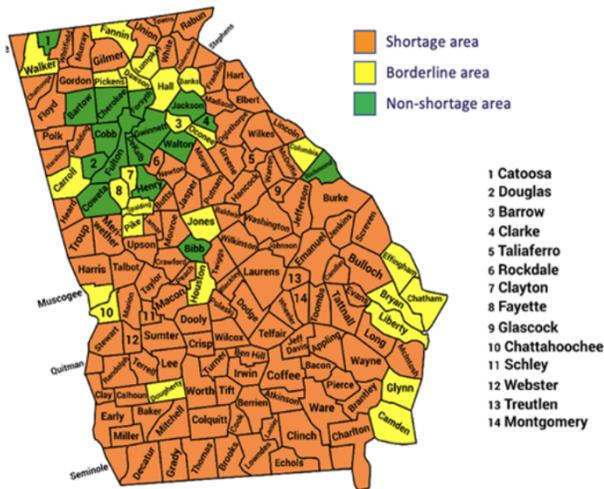
<https://www.healthdata.org/county/rankings/2020/georgia>

³ No Kid Hungry & Feeding America, Examining Food Insecurity in the Rural United States: A Qualitative Study. <http://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/Rural%20Food%20Insecurity%20Qualitative%20Research%20Brief.pdf>

⁴ USDA Economic Research Service. Household Food Security in the United States in 2021. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/104656/err-309.pdf?v=3879.4>

⁵ Ibid.

Transportation is frequently noted as a major gap and impediment to residents' ability to commute to and from work, travel to medical appointments, school, and other services⁶.



Map of Georgia health transportation shortage areas

The map to the left shows the presence of transportation-related barriers to healthcare access, with counties in orange, scoring a 6 or higher and thereby deemed shortage areas. Of the 159 counties in Georgia, 117 are deemed shortage areas, 26 are borderline, and 16 are non-shortage areas. Many counties operate using a Demand-Response transportation system where residents are usually required to request a pickup. While intended to increase accessibility, these systems often have limited hours, do not run each day of the week, and operate almost exclusively within the home county, excluding access to providers and services across county lines. Additionally, rideshare programs such as Uber and Lyft do not service these areas leaving

households without transportation stranded. Currently, the average cost of a taxi or rideshare service is between \$24-26 each way for a 10-minute ride.

Despite the small number of counties noted in green (designated “non-shortage areas”), the need still remains across populations and residents within these counties. For example, a short transit van for seniors operates in some of the “non-shortage area” counties. However, scheduling is limited, rides are unavailable due to limited capacity, it’s hard to arrange, there are often communication and economic barriers. Green counties facing these barriers include Henry, Forsyth, Cherokee, and similar barriers may exist in Coweta, Hall and Bartow as well. Additionally, Douglas & Bartow counties (represented in green in the map) have community members noting that even though programs may exist, they are not functioning to meet the need. This is an ongoing identified gap in homeless needs assessment data.

Employment-related transportation challenges will be discussed in greater detail below.

Housing

Tenure and Affordability

According to 5-year estimates gathered by the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS), just over 30% of the BoS population rent their home. In some counties, though, this number drops below 20% (and in some instances below 15%) as rental housing stock may be in low supply, may not fit the needs of individuals and families, or may present a cost burden. The below figure from Harvard University’s Joint Center for Housing Studies captures the profile of renters in the U.S. who are more likely to be single, households of color, and have lower incomes than their homeowner counterparts.⁷

⁶ Health transportation shortage areas (HTSAs) report:

<https://healthyfuturega.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/HTSI-cover-merged.pdf>

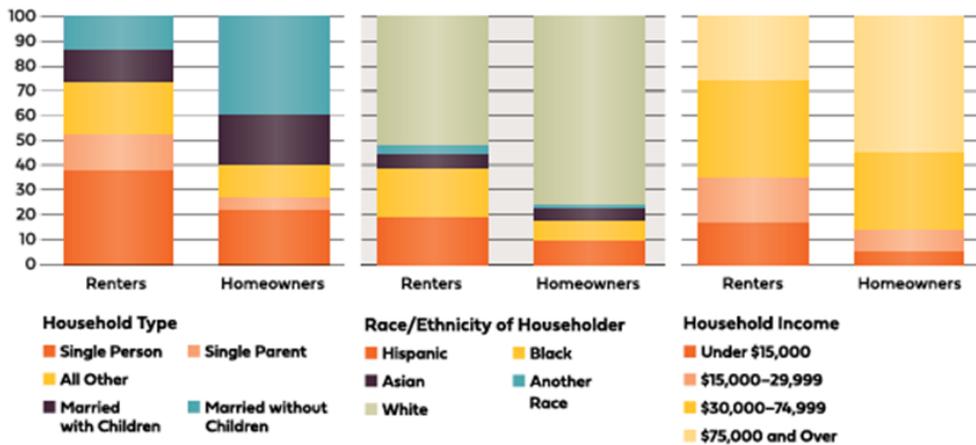
⁷ America’s Rental Housing, 2022. Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University.

https://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/reports/files/Harvard_JCHS_Americas_Rental_Housing_2022.pdf

FIGURE 9

Renters Are Much More Likely than Homeowners to Be Single, to Be Households of Color, and to Have Lower Incomes

Share of Households (Percent)



Notes: Black, Asian, white, and another race(s) householders are non-Hispanic. Hispanic householders may be of any race(s). All Other household type includes both unrelated roommates and other types of families.

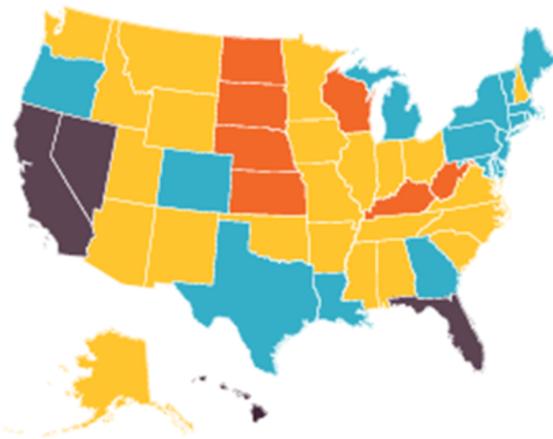
Source: JCHS tabulations of US Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

Housing affordability and other related housing struggles present a significant barrier to the ability of some households to remain housed. Where County Health Rankings calculated an average of 16% of Georgia households struggling with severe housing problems, some BoS counties measure as high as 24% on this measure. Severe housing problems include experiencing at least 1 of 4 housing problems: overcrowding, high housing costs, lack of kitchen facilities, or lack of plumbing facilities.

The Georgia statewide average of residents experiencing severe housing cost burden was 14%; this average was as high as 23% in some BoS counties. Housing cost burden refers to households that spend more than 30% of their earnings on housing costs, while “severe” refers to those who spend more than 50% of their income on housing. A figure from Harvard University’s 2022 “America’s Rental Housing” study suggests that the number of those impacted is even higher, identifying Georgia as state where 45-49% of renters are cost-burdened⁸.

FIGURE 24

Even in the Most Affordable States, More than a Third of Renters Face Cost Burdens



Share of Cost-Burdened Renters (Percent)

- Under 40 (Down to 38)
- 40-44
- 45-49
- 50 and Over (Up to 54)

Note: Cost-burdened households pay more than 30% of income for housing.

Source: JCHS tabulations of US Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

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⁸ Ibid.

2021 ACS data show that 8.4% of BoS households are headed by individuals aged 15 to 24. In the more rural parts of the state, (living wage) jobs, transportation, educational opportunities, and access are significantly more challenging to obtain. These factors will be discussed in more detail below, but it is worth noting that each is a major contributor to housing stability (or, conversely, lack of access leads more directly to housing *instability*).

Housing Inventory for Youth Experiencing Homelessness

| Youth Housing Inventory Count 2/21/22 | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| | BEDS | UNITS |
| PSH | 0 | 0 |
| RRH | 54 | 29 |
| TH | 19 | 13 |
| ES | 39 | 19 |
| TOTAL PH Beds | 54 | 29 |
| Total Temporary Beds | 58 | 32 |

Youth-dedicated beds across housing programs are limited in the BoS. The above programs designate very few beds to youth, with the overall percentages listed for each below:

- PSH: total year-round beds = 2552, youth dedicated = 0* (0%)
- RRH: total year-round beds = 1190, youth dedicated = 54 (4.5%)
- TH: total year-round beds = 993, youth dedicated = 19 (2%)
- ES: total year-round beds = 1973, youth dedicated = 39 (2%)

This may be a result of the limited number of youth providers across this geography, identifying only 3 CoC-funded youth agencies for the 152-county area. With lacking homeless response systems across the state, youth also represent a population that is more difficult to track as they are more likely to couchsurf or make other short-term arrangements in order to avoid full-fledged sheltered or unsheltered homelessness. Severely undercounted numbers of youth experiencing homelessness may support the very limited supply of youth-dedicated beds and units in housing programs, emphasizing the need to conduct a more specialized count for this population and increase the resources and proper training to serve youth across the BoS.

* 10 youth-dedicated PSH beds will be made available with the announcement of new funding under HUD’s Rural Homelessness initiative.

Known Gaps in Housing

Across the state of Georgia as with much of the country, there is a lack of affordable housing units. In this context, affordable is conceived as spending no more than 30% of earned income on housing

costs. The current metric used by landlords and property managers to determine a prospective tenant's financial stability is proof of earning three times the cost of rent in a given month. With rents on the rise and structural challenges to locating and maintaining employment in rural Georgia, safe, affordable, and dignified housing is often difficult to access.

The barriers to accessing safe, affordable, and dignified housing are more significant for youth and young adults. In addition to the burden of financial proof, young renters may lack sufficient rental history to support a landlord's decision to accept them as tenants. For those who may have lived in unsafe or unstable households, past records of damages or eviction may tarnish their short-lived history even if the issues were not their fault. Even with proof of income and a clear rental history, youth and young adults are disadvantaged by the stigmatized perspective that some landlords hold of renting to them. This is especially true of youth seeking leases in their own name, but has also proven challenging for housing programs in which a youth provider seeking to place a youth in housing is met with unwillingness by various landlords.

Education

According to SY 2015-16 statistics from the Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness, Georgia has the 8th highest number of homeless students and the 23rd highest rate of student homelessness in the country. These data represent statewide statistics, notably including urban centers that are outside of the BoS geography. Homelessness among students was disproportionately seen in urban as well as rural settings, with students making up a larger percent of total homeless students in their home area than their share of the population in those same areas. In rural areas, "26% of all students hailed from rural school districts, yet rural areas were home to almost one-third of Georgia's homeless students"⁹. While these statistics capture data from a K-12 perspective, the staggering numbers of children experiencing homelessness (especially in rural parts of the state) illustrates the larger need for resources and programs to address the evident gaps in securing and maintaining safe, affordable, and stable housing.

Early Childhood Education

Head Start/Early Head Start and McKinney-Vento funded programs in local school districts (LEAs) provide free early childcare and education programming to low-income families, including pregnant and parenting youth and youth and young adult heads of household. These programs are vitally important for youth parents in particular, noting the strong ties between young adult homelessness and parenthood. A finding from Chapin Hall's *Missed Opportunities* series notes that "young adults experiencing homelessness are disproportionately parents"¹⁰. For those YYA experiencing homelessness, "43% of 18- to 25-year-old young women, and 29% of 18- to 25-year-old young men [experiencing homelessness] reported having at least one child"¹¹. This compared to 22% of young

⁹ Institute for Children, Poverty & Homelessness.

<https://www.icphusa.org/reports/one-third-of-georgias-homeless-students-live-in-rural-areas/#mckinney-vento-funding-and-number-of-homeless-students>

¹⁰ Chapin Hall Voices of Youth Count; Pregnant and Parenting Youth Homelessness.

<http://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/VoYC-PP-Brief-FINAL.pdf>

¹¹ Ibid.

women and 14% of young men in this age range, who had not experienced homelessness in the past year. With staggering differences across lived experience, it is important to understand the unique needs of this parenting sub-population. Other programs within the Early Childhood system recognize and prioritize these needs, such as the CAPS program (discussed below) and its priority group of minor parents.

Head Start was federally funded to serve 24,088 children in Head Start for Georgia (children under age 5). However, approximately half (325,724) of all children under age five in Georgia are living in poverty or in low-income households. Despite the investment in resources, the overall supply does not meet the measured demand (if all families were accessing the resources for which they are eligible). However, only 4% of children under age 6 experiencing homelessness were served by one of these programs according to 2019 data¹².

While an explanation for the low utilization rate of these programs and services cannot be confirmed, it may be attributed to families not being aware of them or identifying themselves as housing unstable at their point of enrollment. Oftentimes, families qualify for federal programs on income status and do not disclose or are properly screened to identify their additional qualifying factors that may identify their categorical eligibility as homelessness. Other assumptions like lack of transportation to enroll in services may also contribute to the low utilization rate, combined with long wait lists if and when families are able to access a point of entry/enrollment. These scenarios are correlated with the number of individuals experiencing homelessness living in rural areas that tend to lack robust transportation options and services. While the data from a state level demonstrate an underutilization of services for the populations eligible, this does not suggest that families are not accessing other ECE options from faith based organizations and other local initiatives.

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) administers the Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS) program to enable access to quality childcare for low-income families who are either working or in school by providing financial support through scholarships. Georgia ensures that children receiving CAPS are enrolled in high quality programs statewide by mandating all CAPS providers participate in the Quality Rating Improvement System in Georgia called Quality Rated. Children receiving CAPS scholarship funding can be up to age 13 (longer if there is a documented disability), providing critical funding for working families who may require after school child care and/or summer and holiday child care for school-aged children. CAPS and Head Start are both federally administered through the Administration for Children and Families and both programs provide categorical eligibility to families who meet the McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness. In addition to the McKinney-Vento priority group, CAPS offers access to child care scholarships through an additional priority group pertinent for YHDP: minor parents. DECAL defined their minor parent age group to be 20 years of age or younger.

According to DECAL data as of February 2023, 762 families were receiving CAPS through this initial priority group status for a total of 914 children in care statewide. BoS counties included 603 of those

¹² U.S. Department of Education, Early Childhood Homelessness State Profiles: Georgia (2018-19)
<https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/disadv/homeless/early-childhood-homelessness-state-profiles-2021.pdf>

children specifically. For example, according to the GEEARS Readiness Radar profile¹³, the number of births to girls ages 15-19 in Houston County was 24.1% while the state average is 18.1% (rate per 1000 population). This county also had 23 families receiving CAPS under the minor parent category in February 2023. Another example of need is present in Dougherty County, where 40% of the children under age 6 are living at 100% poverty; this is compared to the state average for this age group at 21%. Even higher than Houston, Dougherty County had 27.5% of its births to girls ages 15-19. CAPS scholarships were awarded to 31 children eligible through the minor parent priority group as of February 2023. If we know that pregnancy and parenthood increase the risk of youth homelessness and young adults experiencing homelessness are disproportionately parents, then we can identify a critical need for YHDP to include local and statewide early childhood partnerships to provide outreach and improve referral systems for all available child care options in Georgia (CAPS, Head Start, GA PreK, and McKinney-Vento K-12).

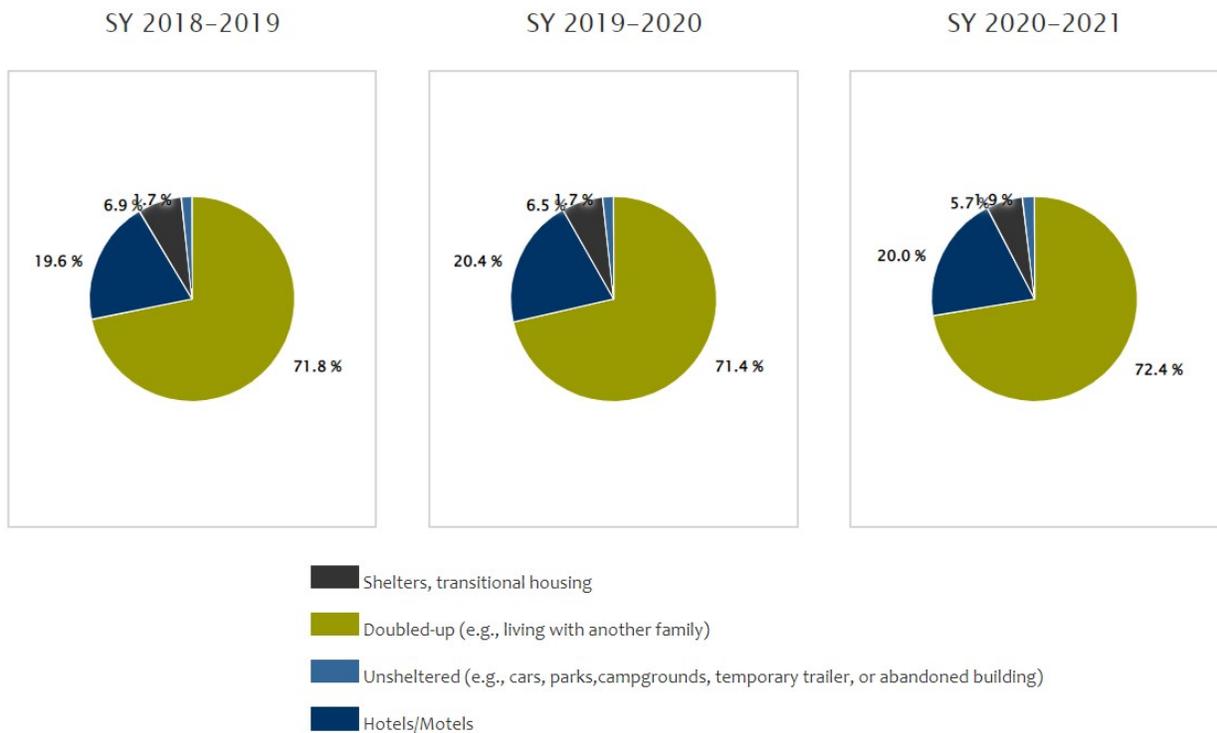
K-12 Education

Of note, the differences between HUDs definition of homelessness and the US Department of Education's McKinney-Vento definition results in reporting variances in the number of youth who are identified experiencing homelessness. The [McKinney-Vento definition of homelessness](#) under Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines homeless as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and includes children who are living in shared housing also referred to as "doubled up" or "couch surfing." For reference, data from the National Center for Homeless Education shows the number of homeless children and youth enrolled in public school in Georgia for school years 2018-19 (38,891), 2019-20 (35,538) and 2020-21 (31,161) respectively.¹⁴ In an accompanying diagram, "doubled up" and "hotels/motels" have held steady for several school years accounting for more than 90% of the nighttime residences for homeless children and youth in the public school system. These data are significant in that these categories are not typically considered "homeless" by HUD program standards, yet still represent a significant uncertainty and housing instability for those impacted.

¹³ GEEARS & Get Georgia Reading, Readiness Radar.
<https://data.neighborhoodnexus.org/project/readinessradar>

¹⁴ National Center for Homeless Education, Georgia.
<https://profiles.nche.seiservices.com/StateProfile.aspx?StateID=13>

Percentage of homeless children/youth enrolled in public schools by type of primary nighttime residence



In an effort to better capture the realities faced on the ground, we developed and distributed a qualitative questionnaire to gather additional data and insight from McKinney-Vento liaisons working in school districts across our geography. The qualitative survey received responses from school districts in all five of the BoS super regions. The most noted structural challenges (top 3) from a predetermined list included stable housing, transportation, and access to healthcare. The top 3 noted socio-economic needs included lack of basic needs (may include food, clothing, shelter), family supports (for parenting youth and youth heads of household), and social/behavioral concerns. Missed educational opportunities were also noted as a need, but fell just outside of the top 3. These missed educational opportunities may include tutoring, extracurricular activities, higher education applications, and other such resources that are more difficult for youth experiencing homelessness to access.

Open-ended questions provided space for survey respondents to share details or stories not captured in multiple choice style questions. Some of the most common responses include lack of (referral) resources for families and youth, both in terms of resource supply (demand is significantly more than supply of assistance) and health insurance to access physical health, mental/behavioral health, vision, and dental needs. Even with health insurance, staff shortages at many providers' offices prevent some youth and families from accessing care. This is especially prevalent in rural areas where an entire county may rely on a singular hospital or other health resource, if these resources exist there at all. As

only one of 11 states that has not expanded Medicaid coverage, Georgia will soon be the only state that mandates a work requirement to be eligible for this insurance.¹⁵

Some stories collected from school support personnel who work directly with youth experiencing homelessness speak about YYA remaining in homes where their safety is called into question, resulting mainly from the lack of existing shelters or other diversion resources to prevent literal homelessness. Accounts mention the lacking resources that hold youth and families back from leading healthy and safe lives. Transportation (to get to appointments), shelters and affordable housing are noted most often as the greatest needs and the aspects that continue the vicious cycle of homelessness for many in rural areas. The word “trapped” was used across several explanations, describing the ways that youth and families feel as a result of lacking transportation options, living within the week-to-week cycle of hotel/motel payments, and not having access to resources to support in their time of need from housing to education to livable-wage-paying jobs.



This concept of extinguished hope for the future is highlighted in a fall 2022 New York Times Magazine article, focused on youth homelessness in a rural context. Author Samantha Shapiro noted that: “Homeless students have the worst educational outcomes of any group, the lowest attendance, the lowest scores on standardized tests, the lowest graduation rates. They all face the same cruel paradox: Students who do not have a stable place to live are unable to attend school regularly, and failing to graduate from high school is the single greatest risk factor for future homelessness”¹⁶. Without the existence of basic resources, students are unable to perform well in school and unlock doors to future opportunities and sustained stability over time.

Higher Education

Hope for College research conducted a survey of 2-year and 4 year college students on the topic of needs insecurity (food and housing) in 2021 in a report titled [The Hope Center Survey 2021: Basic Needs Insecurity During the Ongoing Pandemic](#). While data on the prevalence of youth homelessness among higher education students in Georgia or in the counties within the CoC is not currently available, we can draw insights from data collected by the HOPE Center which includes 2 institutions of higher education in the State of Georgia. Based on a national survey of nearly 195,000 college students from 130 two-year colleges and 72 four-year colleges from 24 states, including Georgia:

- 34% (66,300) of respondents reported experiencing food insecurity
- 48% (93,600) of respondents reported they were experiencing housing insecure
- 14% (27,300) of respondents reported experiencing homelessness

To significantly reduce the risk of future homelessness and attain self-sufficiency, it is critical that youth have supported access to educational and workforce development opportunities. Intentional

¹⁵ Georgia Public Broadcasting.

<https://www.gpb.org/news/2023/02/14/georgias-medicaid-expansion-will-cover-more-low-income-adults-it-will-also-leave>

¹⁶ The New York Times Magazine. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/29/magazine/rural-homeless-students.html>

relationship building to create effective connectedness between schools, service providers, business community and YYA is fundamental to increasing awareness of and access to educational pathways, employment opportunities and other community-based resources and services.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for Georgia shows in 2018/19 school year 1,235 students, the 2019/20 school year 1,237, and the 2020-21 school year 1,176 unaccompanied homeless youth were deemed "independent students" on the FAFSA, enabling them to apply for federal student aid without information on or consideration of the income and assets of their parent(s)/guardian(s) . According to the U.S. Department of Education, 37,481 students across the country were deemed independent as unaccompanied homeless youth during the 2020-21 FAFSA application cycle. It is important to note that this data likely undercounts the number of youth experiencing homelessness in higher education given the FAFSA's use of skip logic to determine independent student status. There are 10 additional questions used to determine dependency status (e.g. age 24 or older, graduate students, married students, active military or veterans, students in foster care since age 13, etc.), with the unaccompanied homeless youth questions presented last. Once an applicant provides a positive response to a previous independent student status question, the unaccompanied homeless youth questions are not shown and, therefore, not answered.

Housed within the J.W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development at the University of Georgia, Embark Georgia seeks to increase college access and retention for youth who have previous experience in the foster care system or with homelessness. In partnership with the University System of Georgia (USG) and the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), Embark has stationed Designated Points of Contact at every higher education institution in the state to ensure that all students within these sub-populations have access to a dedicated source of support. While all institutions have an assigned contact, not all have programming available for interested students. Embark and the BoS CoC hope to work together to better capture the number of students that fit these categories, as there is no policy at the state or federal level to track the number of students in the target group.

Students from rural areas are underrepresented in the student body at top Georgia colleges and universities. Based on data from the 2017 school year shared in a 2018 *Atlanta Journal Constitution* article, "fifteen percent of the University of Georgia's undergraduate students are from rural counties, and they graduate at lesser rates than fellow students, according to a December [2017] UGA task force report on student learning and success"¹⁷. Rural students are already at an academic disadvantage noting these statistics, based on physical location alone. The struggles faced by youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in rural Georgia may interfere with the preparation and prerequisites required to enroll in one of the state's top colleges or universities, as resources pertaining to housing, health, income, and overall stability are difficult to come by. This cycle of lacking resources suggests that YYA, and the higher education institutions that may otherwise offer them admission, miss out on the opportunity to share and expand their knowledge and experience.

¹⁷ The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

<https://www.ajc.com/news/local-education/top-georgia-universities-seek-more-rural-students/cufYtQ98VckYpj9yQclCjM/>

Employment & Transportation

While Georgia is a growing state for business, it remains difficult for rural Georgians to access and maintain employment. Transportation plays a major role in this as many residents across the state do not have access to a personal vehicle or a county-supported public transportation system. To make matters worse, many small towns are losing residents and shrinking in overall size. This is impactful from a local government perspective because with decreasing residents comes less tax-base funding for needed services and amenities in the community, such as public transportation.



Many counties feel that the development of a countywide transit system is too large an undertaking, like Lowndes County Board of Commissioners chairman Bill Slaughter: “To run a full-blown public transit system... to try and do a system like that and reach out and do it county-wide is just not feasible at all... Trying to cover all the roads on a route in Lowndes County doesn’t make any sense”¹⁸. This lack of service leaves many without the tools needed to support themselves and their families. A 2021 report from the U.S. Census Bureau shows an average one-way commute time of 27.6 minutes, a new high measured from 2019 ACS data. This time increased for those using public transportation, with an average one-way commute of 46.6 minutes. With lacking access to both forms of transportation in rural areas, residents are provided few options to help make ends meet.

Jobs that are available may be misaligned with professional preparation, if they exist at all. This is particularly true for youth, as their education may have been interrupted, or other opportunities for higher education may have been limited in scope and resources. The superintendent/principal in Taliaferro County, the smallest in Georgia, expressed that his county’s students deserve the best opportunities, while also acknowledging the larger challenges at hand: “We have no adequate housing, no viable businesses and no real industry to entice a young college graduate or recently discharged veteran to return to our community as a working citizen. When the local name for the Dollar General is the ‘Crawfordville Mall,’ you understand your limitations.”¹⁹ Options for older adults are limited, making it especially difficult for youth and young adults to access the same housing, job, and family support markets and resources.

In a time where remote and work from home jobs are on the rise, they are not easily accessible for rural residents. With broadband connectivity programs garnering increased support and funding, a 2021 Georgia Broadband Availability map “revealed 507,000 homes and businesses were lacking reliable broadband services with 70% of those locations in rural communities”²⁰. Lacking access to the flexibility of remote work compounds other existing issues such as transportation accessibility and (affordable) childcare programs, serving as impediments for maintaining safe and stable housing.

¹⁸ Valdosta Daily Times.

https://www.valdostadailytimes.com/news/local_news/moving-people-rural-areas-get-creative-addressing-transportation-needs/article_192a80f1-5080-5e9b-ad98-2c99c24ae197.html

¹⁹ The Atlanta Journal Constitution.

<https://www.ajc.com/blog/get-schooled/rural-georgia-losing-residents-and-jobs-will-anything-bring-young-people-back/IUWEdbZli5msiaKHCOAqJO/>

²⁰ Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

<https://www.dca.ga.gov/newsroom/blog/rural-georgia-continues-receive-support-broadband-expansion>

In a rural context, a youth experiencing homelessness may be impacted by these lacking structural resources more deeply and directly than their adult counterparts. Some pregnant and parenting youth experience homelessness as a result of their families' rejection of their pregnant or parenting status, leaving them without the social and kinship networks most needed at that time. Making reference to the aforementioned CAPS program's limited funding supply compared to the realistic demand, pregnant and parenting youth are often left with few choices but to forgo the limited existing employment opportunities to care for their children instead. Multiple factors must align for this population, from transportation to job availability to childcare resources, to be considered truly stable, safe, and able to provide for themselves. Many of the same impediments exist for youth without childcare responsibilities, leaving them with few prospects and opportunities for achieved and sustained stability.

Feedback from a youth needs assessment designed and distributed by the BoS gathered input from 78 community members, 10 of whom self-identified as under age 25 and were concentrated in regions 1 (northwest) and 5 (southern, coast). When asked about employment/ education needs for youth, jobs and transportation were the overwhelming response. For those who provided more detail, the need for transportation to a job or school in particular as well as employment training, mentors to help realize educational and professional goals, and help learning to balance the workload of job, education, and/or children's needs/ care responsibilities were all noted as needs to secure and sustain housing.

Spotlight on BOS Super Regions

BoS CoC Super Regions



Region 1

Encompassing 39 counties in the BoS, Region 1 stretches the width of the state from Alabama to the South Carolina border. It also borders Tennessee on the most northern part of the region. North Georgia's geography is beautiful with lakes, rivers, farmlands, preserves, and the Blue Ridge mountains. The foothills of the Appalachian Mountains lie in the northwest counties and it has many of the problems that are synonymous with Appalachia. Appalachia struggles with problems typical of rural poverty: social stratification, unemployment, lack of social services, poor education, and poorly developed infrastructure²¹.

The first rural Rapid Re-Housing project dedicated to youth, started in the northwest portion of the region. Recently, a listening session was held to learn about youth participants' experience in the project and identify gaps that still exist. The youth identified the following items:

- Lack of reliable transportation/the affordability of Uber/Lyft

²¹ The University of Alabama at Birmingham, Institute for Human Rights.
<https://sites.uab.edu/humanrights/2020/10/13/human-rights-in-the-appalachian-region-of-the-united-states-of-america-an-introduction>

- Inability to receive utility assistance from the RRH project
- Childcare for 2nd and 3rd shift schedules
- Lack of affordable housing - the counties served by this project have an average 97% occupancy rate
- Inability to renew the lease at the end of the program because landlords are requiring 3xs for them to continue in the unit
- The Coordinated Entry system that is designed for adults and forces youth into systems that may retraumatize or make them feel unsafe
- Personal challenges such as lack of rental history, lack of credit, increasing costs of everything, lack of family support, and lack of life skills in the traditional educational system
- Lack of affordable healthcare for physical and mental health care
- Lack of enjoyment in life - focused on work, education, housing, family, goals but need some self care; they would like to see a fund or Direct Cash Transfers to build in some life enjoyment activities.

Other needs/gaps identified by regional partners include:

- No youth focused, inclusive shelter
- Services for underserved populations such as LGBTQIA+ and Latine/Latinx

The funding available through YDHP can be used to address some of these challenges. A TH-RRH model would be particularly helpful as all of the youth requested more time in the project (current project length is 12 months). They stated that the first year they were struggling to get settled, get a job, find childcare, obtain benefits, learn the area, find a support network, etc. They felt that a second year would allow them to begin to build upon the achievements of the first year and become more stable.

They also stated a drop-in center with a youth-specific Coordinated Entry system and navigation services would make them feel more comfortable than utilizing the adult systems. North Georgia will carefully evaluate these interventions and will work to include them wherever possible.

Region 2

Region 2 of the Balance of State surrounds Metro Atlanta's Fulton, DeKalb and Cobb counties. Region 2 comprises communities in Cherokee, Clayton, Douglas, Fayette, Gwinnett, Henry, and Rockdale counties. All BoS counties in this region fall within the top 30 most populous counties in the state, with four counties in the top 10 most populous (Gwinnett is ranked second). Pushing up on the metro area, this region represents a somewhat different geography than others. While not close enough to directly benefit from the increased access to public transportation, available resources, and job opportunities, the knowledge of their existence within Atlanta city limits and/or the I-285 perimeter that encircles the central metro area serves as a draw inward for those in search of assistance. Recognizing the lacking resources in some counties, there is a somewhat transient nature of residents in this region seeking services outside of their home communities. With this in mind, the region may see elevated need in some spaces as residents seek out stabilizing resources.

As the second largest county in the state, Gwinnett's 2022 Coordinated Entry numbers give a glimpse into the demographics of those seeking resources. During that year, 3,183 individuals were enrolled in

Coordinated Entry, representing 1,491 households. 260 of these individuals were aged 18-24, 123 of which identified as Head of Household. Of the 123 Head of Households 18-24 youth, 77 were adult only households and 46 were households with children. The further breakdown is below.

| 87 Female Households | | 36 Male Households | |
|---|------------------------------------|---|----------------|
| Adults Only | 45 | Adults Only | 32 |
| With Children | 42 | With Children | 4 |
| American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous | 0 | American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous | 1 |
| Black, African American | 69 | Black, African American | 25 |
| Multi-Racial | 3 | Multi-Racial | 3 |
| White | 11 | White | 6 |
| Unknown / Refused | 4 | Unknown / Refused | 1 |
| Hispanic / Latinx | 8 (4 Black, 2 white, 2 unknown) | Hispanic / Latinx | 2 (2 Black) |
| Income | 40 | Income | 18 |

This county's Coordinated Entry numbers show a trend that is seen often in other geographic areas across the state: data which show that certain racial or ethnic groups (specifically Black, African American) are overrepresented in the homeless response system compared to their share of the total population in a given geography. Black heads of household in Gwinnett County make up the vast majority of those entered into the CE system in 2022, but Census data show that this group makes up just less than 31% of the county's population. Whether these data represent resident access of the homeless response system or outsiders who have traveled in search of resources, the larger implications of systemic racism are visible within one of the state's largest counties.

Region 3

The Balance of State Super Region 3 in Georgia covers a large state area made up of 33 counties that spans from east to west through the middle of Georgia.. The region has a diverse population, including urban, suburban, and rural areas. Homelessness is a critical issue for young adults aged 18-24 in Georgia's Balance of State Super Region 3. Young adults experiencing homelessness have unique needs and challenges, including:

- **Lack of stable housing:** Many young adults experiencing homelessness in the region lack stable housing and may be sleeping in cars, couches, or other temporary arrangements.
- **Financial instability:** Young adults experiencing homelessness often have limited income and may struggle to meet their basic needs, such as food, clothing, and healthcare.
- **Mental health and substance use issues:** Homelessness can be a traumatic experience, and young adults may experience mental health and substance use issues as a result.
- **Educational and employment barriers:** Homeless young adults often face significant barriers to education and employment, hindering their ability to secure stable housing and move towards self-sufficiency.

Interventions such as emergency shelter, transitional housing, and rapid rehousing programs are crucial to address these needs. Additionally, services such as case management, mental health and substance use treatment, employment and education support and access to healthy food can help young adults stabilize and work towards long-term housing stability. Addressing homelessness among young adults requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach involving multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community partners. Overall, the Balance of State Super Region 3 in Georgia has a range of demographic and community needs that require attention and resources to support the well-being and prosperity of the young adults experiencing homelessness.

Region 4

In the southwestern corner of Georgia lies country living, where everyone knows everyone. The city of Albany is the largest in the region, known for its resilience and incredible sense of community. In recent years, this city has been plagued with natural disasters, increased poverty and homelessness, and the pandemic that has affected everyone in the community. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Albany was listed as #2 with the most positive cases and deaths, per capita, in the nation. Between the years of 2017-2019, Albany was ravaged by two major tornadoes and two hurricanes that caused widespread death and devastation. Many businesses were permanently closed and housing communities were literally flattened. Because Albany is the hub for the region when it comes to emergencies, smaller surrounding cities/communities have flocked there. The already strained resources and service providers have been depleted.

Youth homelessness has been a pressing issue for this community. With an estimated homeless youth population of over 300 in Albany, these devastations have only made the situation worse. With the permanent closure of many businesses after the storms and pandemic, the availability of jobs that youth qualify for are limited. Factories were a major employer, but only three remain. With the scarcity of jobs, older and more qualified workers typically absorb them. The only hospital in this community is Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital. Many of these jobs require skills that take time to obtain – time that many homeless youth do not have when trying to move from homelessness to permanent housing. To further exacerbate the issue, public transportation is very limited. With the last bus running at 8 p.m., jobs that youth qualify for are often out of reach because they close after this time.

The digital divide is a real and present barrier in the region. Internet access is spotty, with Mediacom being the main provider in the community and only provider in many neighborhoods. Lack of

recreational opportunities presents another issue that causes poor retention of young talent, as well as an increased involvement in youth criminal activity due to boredom. One of the last spots in which youth could safely congregate was the Stardust Skating Rink, and it closed on April 11, 2023.

With regards to services, even with a sense of community, there is often competition in areas wherein collaboration should be taking place. Albany has the most nonprofits in the world, per capita. This often leads to a replication of services or a large number of ineffective services. For a youth that does not know how or where to navigate systems of help, this presents more challenges. With limited income (due to job scarcity) and lack of housing, youth often find themselves homeless or living in deplorable conditions. Affordable housing is limited; dignified housing is even less. Youth will settle for living in slumlords' apartments, just so they can have somewhere to stay.

Region 5



The extent and scale of the youth homelessness problem in the region is described in the following paragraphs and demonstrates that the project serves emerging, unserved, and underserved youth populations located in pockets of extreme poverty.

Physical features of the region indicate an underserved population lacking medical and affordable housing resources as well as limited access to food. Targeted counties in the region have a total population of 694,999 persons. A majority of the counties have rural designations and are eligible for Rural Health grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human services meant to improve health care to people who are geographically isolated, economically or medically vulnerable. Further, all of the counties are designated as Health Professional Shortage Areas.

Of note, calculations in the published report define the availability of affordable housing as the percentage of households spending less than 30% of their income on housing related costs. Glynn, Liberty, and McIntosh counties indicate the lack of affordable housing with percentages that fall below state and national percentages.

Food Desert is a region where the people who live there have limited access to healthy and affordable food, such as fresh fruits and vegetables. Many factors contribute to the presence of food deserts today, such as the traveling distance necessary to find healthy food options, having a low income, or a lack of transportation. The United States Department of Agriculture provides an interactive map called the Food Access Research Atlas²² to pinpoint low-income census tracts with a substantial number or share of residents with low levels of access to retail outlets selling healthy and affordable foods. All Region 5 counties except Effingham have census tracts labeled as food deserts.

Social indicators highlight the elevated risk for youth homelessness in the region and include the high percentage of single parent households, substantiated child abuse rates, increased foster care populations, and high violent crime rates. Statistically, a child in a single-parent household is far more likely to experience violence, commit suicide and continue a cycle of poverty. Families headed by single

²² USDA Economic Research Service.

www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/go-to-the-atlas/

mothers are among the poorest households, more than a third live in poverty, and as such, are extremely vulnerable to homelessness. Almost one third (27.7%) of single mother families were “food insecure,”²³ about one-ninth (11.7%) used food pantries, one third spent more than half their income on housing, which is generally considered the threshold for “severe housing cost burden.” Among all homeless families nationwide, about two thirds (60%) were headed by single women with children — representing 21% of the total homeless population; nearly half were African Americans (49%).

Another data point entered in the chart includes the variable of opportunity or disconnected youth — youth not in school and not working between the ages of 16 to 24. The elevated percentages demonstrate significant numbers of youth in the service area that are vulnerable and facing challenges including housing instability and food insecurity.

| Proposed County | Single Parent Households ²⁴ | Children with a substantiated incident of child abuse and/or neglect per 10,000 ²⁵ | Children in Foster Care October 2020 through September 2021 ²⁶ | Violent Crime rates per 100,000 ²⁷ | Youth not in School and Not Working(ages 16-24) ²⁸ |
|------------------|--|---|---|---|---|
| Appling | 32.3% | 2.4 | 27 | 379.2 | 34.7% |
| Bleckley | 38.5% | 3 | 11 | 224 | 7.8% |
| Bryan | 26.4% | 2.9 | 51 | 258.1 | 13.6% |
| Bulloch | 36.8% | 1.5 | 37 | 295 | 3.9% |
| Camden | 37.8% | 2.3 | 181 | 464.9 | 18.9% |
| Candler | 46.6% | 6.6 | 8 | 208 | 9.6% |
| Dodge | 43.3% | 5.9 | 50 | 513 | 22.7% |
| Effingham | 23.0% | 1.8 | 75 | 118.4 | 13.1% |
| Emanuel | 24.3% | 10.5 | 33 | 206 | 25.1% |
| Evans | 51.8% | 6.2 | 13 | 104 | 4.5% |

²³ Single Mother Statistics. <https://singlemotherguide.com/single-mother-statistics/>

²⁴ The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center. <https://datacenter.aecf.org/data/tables/663-children-living-in-single-parent-families?loc=12&loct=5#detailed/5/1927-2085/false/2517,2516,2515,2514,2513,2512,2511,2510,2509,2508/any/8884,8885>

²⁵ Fostering Court Improvement. <https://fosteringcourtimprovement.org/ga/>

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Opportunity Index. <https://opportunityindex.org/detail/13/>

²⁸ Ibid.

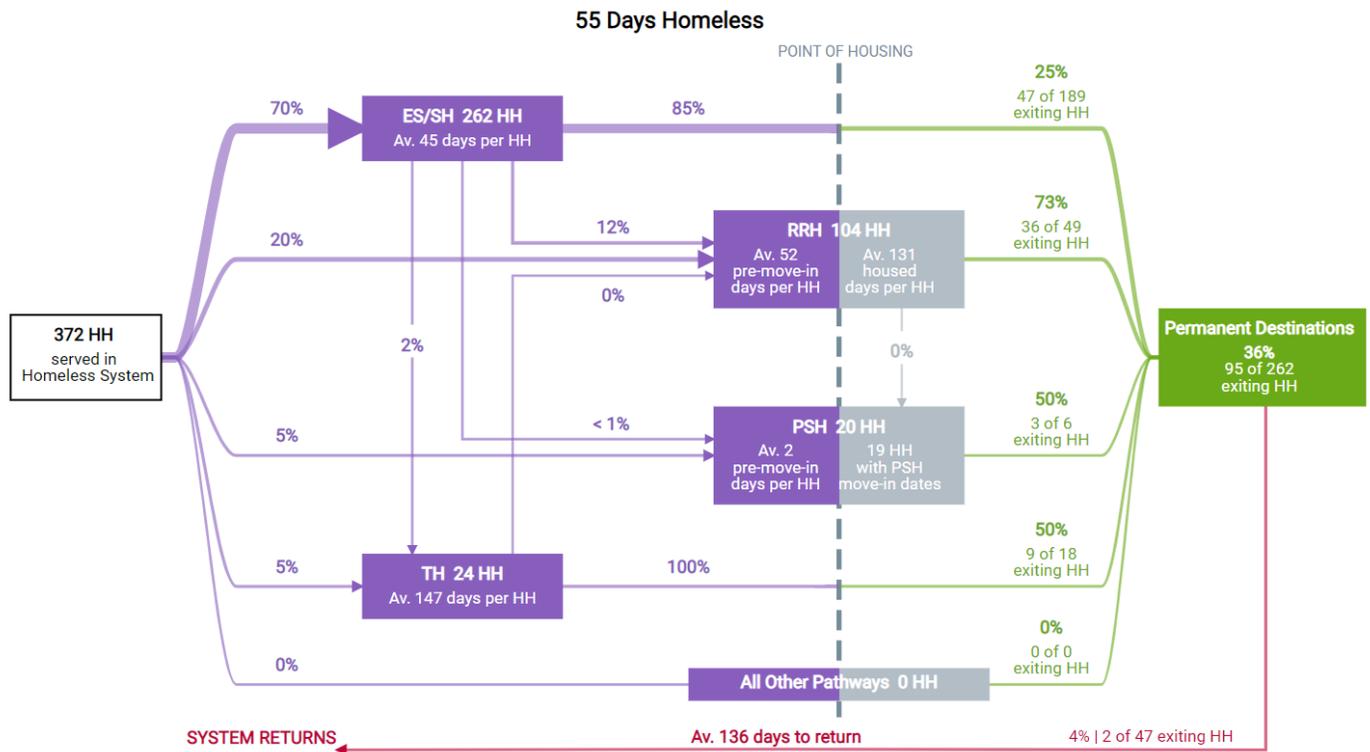
| | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|------|-----|-------|-------|
| Glynn | 41.3% | 1.1 | 171 | 479.4 | 21.1% |
| Jeff Davis | 33.5% | 3.0 | 39 | 347.8 | 16.2% |
| Johnson | 51% | 10 | 4 | 0 | 18.4% |
| Laurens | 48.9% | 5.9 | 83 | 548 | 9.8% |
| Liberty | 37.8% | 5.1 | 130 | 478.3 | 18.8% |
| Long | 35.3% | 5.7 | 15 | 81 | 38.2% |
| McIntosh | 35.8% | 4.2 | 15 | 138.4 | 27.1% |
| Screven | 47.4% | 10.3 | 37 | 53 | 21.1% |
| Telfair | 47.1% | 2.4 | 25 | 55 | 27.7% |
| Toombs | 30.9% | 6.5 | 20 | 564 | 13.8% |
| Treutlen | 34.4% | 5.9 | 5 | 54 | 6.1% |
| Wayne | 35.4% | 5.7 | 76 | 591.0 | 20.6% |
| State | 33.8% | 1.9 | - | 357.2 | 13.5% |

Flow Through the Current Homeless Response System (Stella P)

Singles

In federal fiscal year 2020-21, 372 unaccompanied, single youth households accessed the GA BoS homeless services system²⁹. The graphic below, pulled from HUD’s Stella P visualizations, shows how these youth households moved through different combinations of CoC projects throughout the fiscal year.

²⁹ Stella P, “2021 data pull” - System maps for AO 18-24 year old

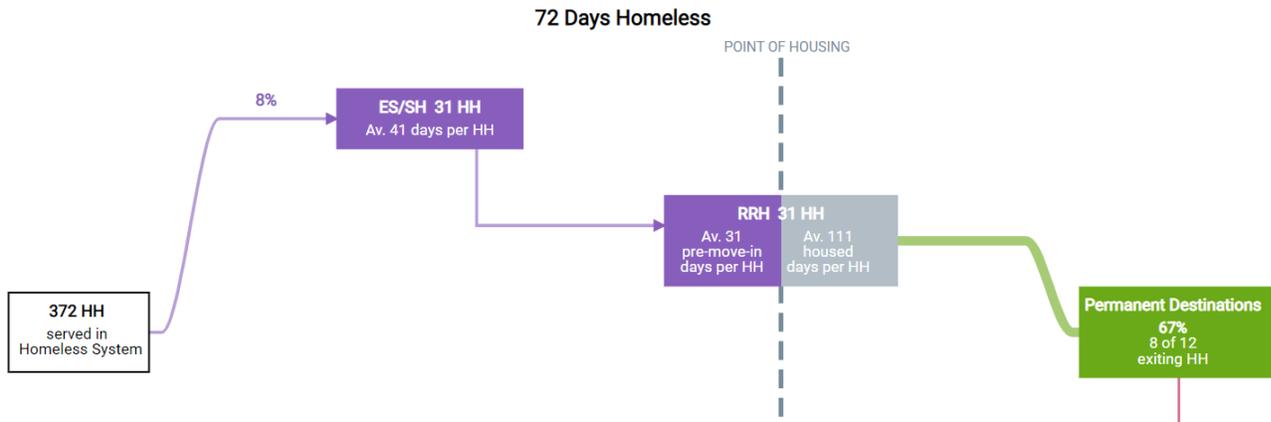


From this data recorded in Stella P, we know during this time period:

- 372 young adults accessed the system of care and experienced homelessness for an average of 55 days
- Of the 262 young adults who entered emergency shelter, only 13% moved into permanent housing in the CoC (12% RRh and <1% PSH)
- 262 young adults exited the system during this period, and 36% of exits were to permanent destinations; See chart below for data disaggregated by race

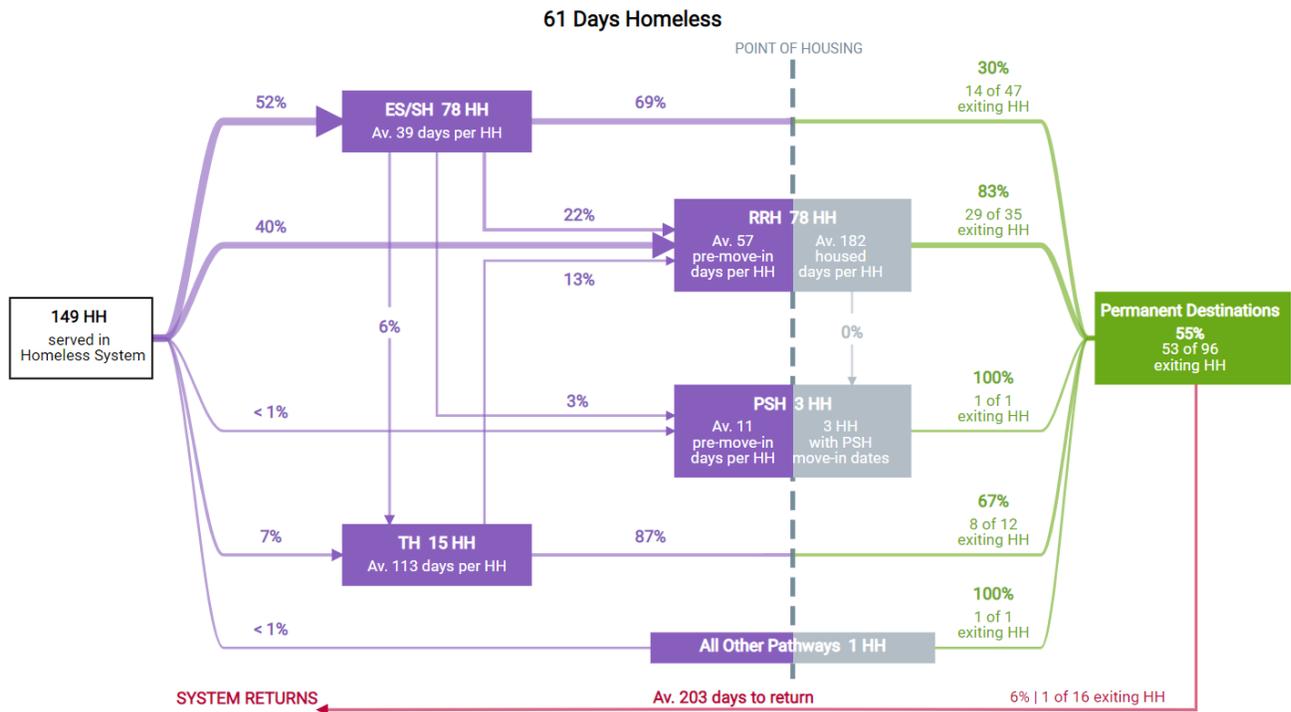


Rapid rehousing is a housing intervention that has been popular and effective with youth and young adults. Currently in the GA BoS, only 31 households that entered shelter, moved into RRH.



Families

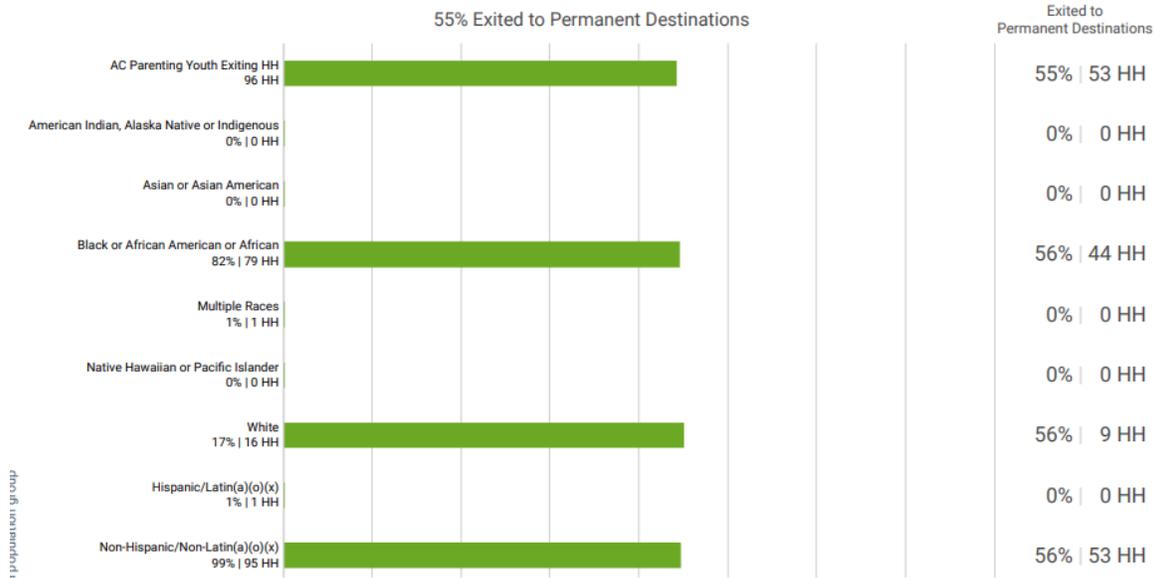
In comparison and in the same time period, 149 parenting youth households accessed the GA BoS homeless services system³⁰. The graphic below, pulled from HUD’s Stella P visualizations, shows how these youth households moved through different combinations of CoC projects throughout the fiscal year.



From this data recorded in Stella P, we know during this time period:

³⁰ Stella P, “2021 data pull” - System maps for AO 18-24 year old

- 149 young adult families accessed the system of care and experienced homelessness for an average of 61 days
- Of the 78 young adult families who entered emergency shelter, only 25% moved into permanent housing in the CoC (22% RRh and 3% PSH)
- 96 young adult families exited the system during this period, and 55% of exits were to permanent destinations; *See chart below for data disaggregated by race*



PIT Count

Annually HUD requires all CoC's to conduct a Point in Time (PIT) count to better understand the scope of homelessness across different geographic areas. In 2022, the BoS conducted the most recent count on 02/21/22, providing a snapshot of homelessness on that night. Traditionally done in January the BoS CoC was granted a waiver from HUD to move count to February due to a spike in COVID-19 cases from the Omicron Variant.

Background³¹

HUD allows CoC's to estimate the size of their unsheltered populations biannually using, broadly, one of three methodologies. The BoS produces a reliable estimate of our unsheltered population by utilizing a statistically modeled estimate, in which findings from a street based count and service based in target areas are applied to the entire CoC through statistical extrapolation.



Producing a reliable estimate is difficult even in small, densely populated areas and is significantly more difficult in a CoC as large and geographically diverse as the Georgia Balance of State CoC. In many of the areas encompassed by the Balance of State, there is no provider available to lead a local count and, even if there was, the logistical and financial costs of a complete census can be prohibitive. Therefore, the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has employed statistical methods

³¹ U.S. Census Bureau. (2019). American Community Survey.

whereby the results from counties where statistically reliable counts can be conducted are extrapolated to other counties in the CoC using inferential modeling.

The Department of Community Affairs contracted with Simtech Solutions to provide the mobile-based survey tool, Counting Us, that was used to conduct the count in selected counties. DCA also contracted with Simtech Solutions to produce an inferential model that would help DCA estimate its total unsheltered homeless population for the Balance of State CoC; this work was completed via a subcontract with Social Policy Analytics.

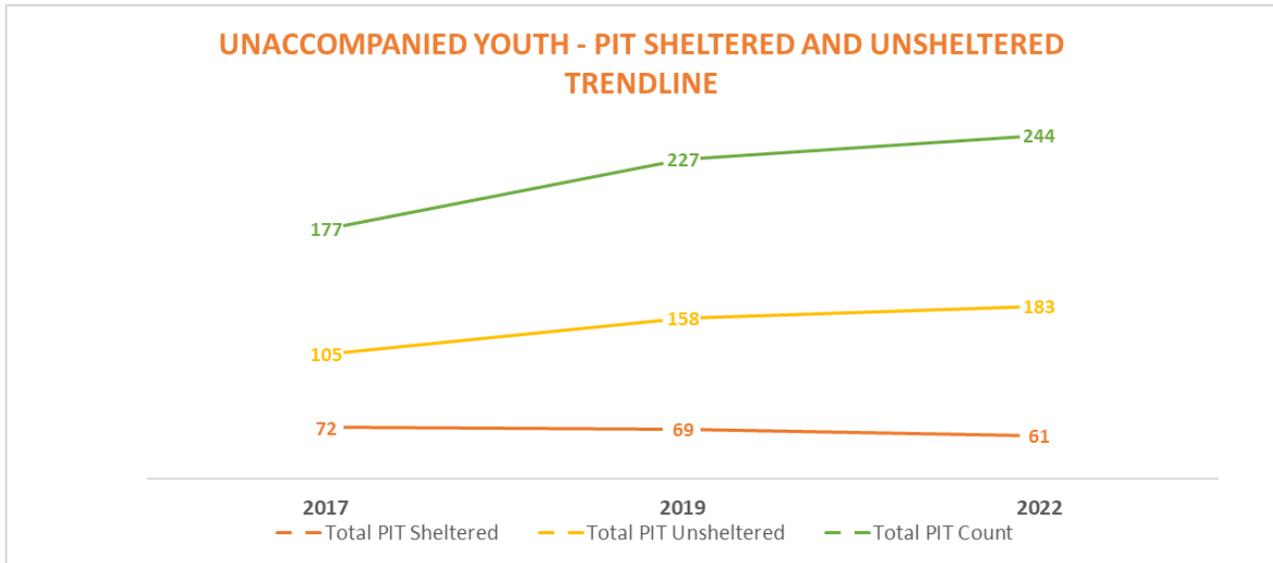
The unsheltered count data was collected in 35 counties by surveyors consisting of volunteers and street outreach teams who used Simtech Solutions' Counting Us app to gather the information required by HUD. The mobile application captured the physical location of each survey interaction, and this location information was subsequently associated with the county where the interaction occurred. Counties were canvassed on the night of the count and service based surveys were also conducted in the days following the night of the count. Data was deduplicated and reliable counts from 33 counties were used to produce a model which was then used to produce estimates for remaining Georgia BoS counties.

Limitations

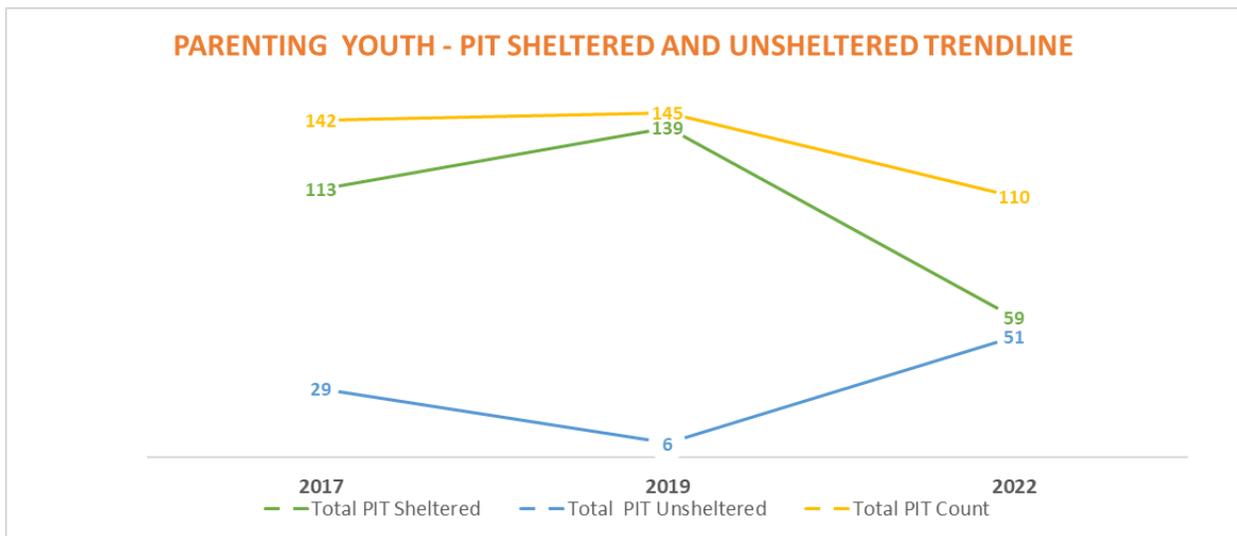
There are, of course, limitations to this methodology. First, the limitations of street-based Point-in-Time (PIT) counts are well-documented and apply here, as the inferential model is based on findings from street-based counts. Most notably, PIT counts aim to estimate a moving target; the number of people sleeping unsheltered changes from day to day or month to month and can systematically be impacted by exogenous factors such as weather and methodological rigor. PIT counts are also poor indicators of the size of highly marginalized groups, like youth and young adults and the LGBTQ population, who are more likely to seek refuge in areas not visible to enumerators. More generally, PIT counts undercount the "hidden homeless" who may sleep in abandoned buildings or other locations inaccessible to enumerators.

Some limitations are specific to the development of this inferential model. First, the small sample size limits the number of variables that we can include in our model. Second, models using data from the American Community Survey rely on 5-year estimates. While they have larger sample sizes than the 1-year or 3-year estimates, which reduces the margin of error and ensures that data are available for every county, this means that year-to-year changes are likely to be masked by the aggregation of data across years. Third, there are likely to be systemic differences, not visible in available data, between counties able to produce a count of high or medium reliability and the other counties in which results are based on model coefficients. In addition, there is a possibility that the model is "overfitted" to the observations included in the modeling process.

In the graph below, trend lines show an increase in **unaccompanied youth experiencing unsheltered homelessness**, with a slight decrease in YYA experiment sheltered homelessness. On any given night, significantly more YYA are sleeping in unsheltered locations.



The graph below shows the trends for parenting youth experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness. From 2019 to 2022 our dedicated family youth TH beds saw a decrease from 19 to 8 beds and family youth households in TH saw a decrease from 41 to 6. In that same time period dedicated youth family RRH beds increased from 19 to 32. With our prioritization of RRH over TH we are seeing declines in our youth sheltered population. Over that last several CoC annual competitions we have been able to increase our Youth focused RRH portfolio.

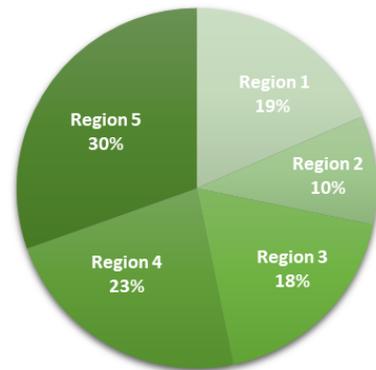


Youth & Young Adult Needs & Strategies

The Balance of State used an online survey to collect input from 78 community members to identify the specific needs of youth at risk of and experiencing homelessness across the full geographic area. 10 of the respondents identified themselves as under the age of 25. The survey was designed to align with the Youth Framework and Four Core outcomes as defined by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness:

- **Housing**, including a safe, environmentally healthy, and reliable place to call home
- **Education and Employment**, including high performance in and completion of educational and training activities, especially younger youth, and starting and maintaining adequate and stable employment, particularly for older youth
- **Permanent Connections**, including ongoing healthy attachments to families, communities, schools, and other positive social networks
- **Social Emotional Well-being**, including the development of key competencies, attitudes, and behaviors that equip a young person to be empowered to succeed across multiple domains of daily life, including school, work, relationships, and community

Response Rate by BOS Super Region



for

The needs and strategies outlined below include voices from all 5 BoS super regions and while there are unique needs of each region, this highlights the overarching needs of the majority of YYA at risk of or experiencing homelessness in the BoS.

The tables below outline the needs of all YYA at risk of and experiencing homelessness, with more information on each subpopulation as you continue reading.

| Stable Housing Needs for YYA at-risk of and experiencing homelessness |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Youth Specific Shelters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hotel/Motel ★ Affordable Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Semi-Independent ○ Supportive Housing ○ Transitional Housing ★ Prevention/Diversion Services w/ Family & Friends ★ Financial Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cash Transfers ○ Utility Assistance ○ Food Assistance ○ Transportation Assistance |

Education and Employment Needs for YYA at-risk of and experiencing homelessness

- ★ Affordable post-secondary education
 - Access to Scholarships
 - Financial Aid
- ★ Training and skill development for employment
- ★ Living-wage employment opportunities
- ★ Access and funds for GED courses and test
- ★ Navigation assistance for Education and Employment systems; including assistance in obtaining IDs/SS Card, etc.
- ★ Transportation
- ★ Tutoring

Social, Emotional & Well-being needs for YYA at-risk of and experiencing homelessness

- ★ Free and/or affordable counseling/therapy
- ★ Family Support
- ★ Mentoring
- ★ Drop-in Centers
- ★ Social and Community Groups
- ★ Place to Socialize/Belong
- ★ Life Skills Training

Permanent Connection needs for YYA at-risk of and experiencing homelessness

- ★ Food & basic needs
- ★ Family support and role models
- ★ Transportation
- ★ Peer support

Youth & Young Adults - Subpopulation Needs, Strategies, and Data

Pregnant & Parenting

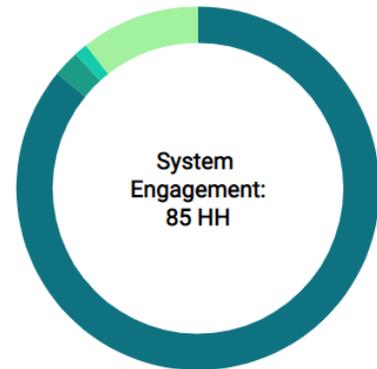
According to HMIS data reported in Stella P, 85 parenting youth households experienced homelessness and were served between 10/1/20 and 9/30/21³². Collectively this represents 226 people - 88 between the ages of 18-24, 15 between the ages of 6-17, and 123 young children between 0-5.

95% of the heads of households identified as female and 95% were also single parent households. Only 3% of the households reported that they were experiencing homelessness while fleeing domestic violence.

³² Stella P - Demographic Overview - AC Parenting Youth served in shelters and TH.

73 (86%) of the parenting households reported that this episode of homelessness was their first time accessing the homeless service system.

Rates of youth and young adult homelessness among pregnant and parenting youth are at times more prevalent than other sub-populations. Youth have been stigmatized and forced to leave their homes when their pregnancy is not accepted by family members, while youth with families in tow find it very difficult to locate resources (shelter and otherwise) to support their multi-member households. Lack of educational and job skills attainment/preparation make accessing needed basic resources seemingly impossible. From affordable housing to living wage jobs, to childcare options, parenting supports, reliable and efficient transportation, pregnant and parenting youth require more targeted resources and interventions to support their maintained stability. Left unaddressed, the risks of generational poverty and trauma for the children involved in this instability increase significantly.



- 86% | 73 First time homeless in the system
- 2% | 2 Returning from a permanent destination
- 1% | 1 Re-engaging from a temporary destination
- 0% | 0 Re-engaging from an unknown destination
- 11% | 9 Continuously homeless

We know from a geographic perspective that many counties in our rural BoS geography have alarmingly high rates of teen and young adult pregnancy, as well as disconnected youth and children in the foster care system. In the rural counties of Dougherty and Houston, birth rates among young women aged 15 to 19 were 27.5% and 24.1% respectively; these data are taken in comparison to the state average of 18.1% (calculated as rate per 1,000 people). Lack of targeted programmatic support will result in a continuation of these data, compromising the opportunity to lead lives defined as safe, healthy, and full of opportunity. Implementation of a “two-generation”³³ approach would serve to support both parent and child, addressing the factors that impact generational hardships early on.

Specific Needs for Pregnant & Parenting Youth & Young Adults

- ★ Affordable Childcare
- ★ Access to state CAPS program, Head Start or employer programs.
- ★ Childcare that is available in evening or overnights
- ★ Parenting Classes and support groups
- ★ Access to remote work/educational opportunities
- ★ Access to Healthcare (Dietary, pre/post-natal and mental health)
- ★ Transportation needs

³³ Chapin Hall Voices of Youth Count.

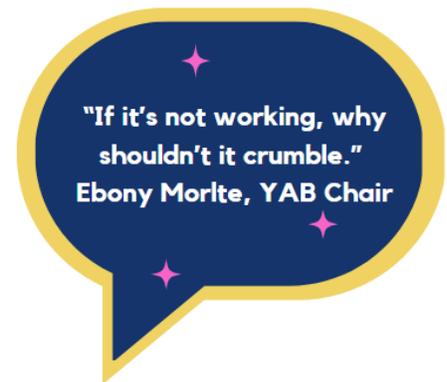
<https://voicesofyouthcount.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/VoYC-Pregnant-and-Parenting-Brief-Chapin-Hall-2018.pdf>

LGBTQIA+ and Gender Non-Conforming YYA

LGBTQIA+ and gender nonconforming youth are more likely to be at risk of enduring homelessness. While little data has been captured on this population outside Atlanta city limits, we know that the combination of resource deprivation and lack of supportive services place these youth in particular danger of experiencing homelessness.

LGBTQIA+ youth experience homelessness at higher rates than non-LGBTQIA+ youth for a range of reasons. Some of the reasons identified as causes for homelessness among LGBTQIA+ youth are family rejection resulting from sexual orientation or gender identity, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, aging out of the foster care system, and emotional neglect. One study who interviewed LGBTQIA+ youth who experienced homelessness found that the path to homelessness was “described as a gradual escalation of the parent-child conflict over time, or a growing sense of rejection in the home...”³⁴ This rejection causes youth to either be thrown out of their homes or run away out of fear. This finding shows there may be more opportunity to intervene before an LGBTQIA+ youth becomes homeless with diversion and prevention services in the YHDP project.

The Voices of Youth Count³⁵ project from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago found that LGBTQIA+ young adults are more than twice as likely to experience homelessness than their non-LGBTQIA+ peers. Additionally, youth who are Black or multiracial and LGBTQIA+ reported the highest rates of homelessness (16 percent), and white and LGBTQIA+ youth report a rate of 8 percent.



As a result of traumatic experiences in emergency shelters and in their family network and community, LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults are more likely to live unsheltered on the streets and are more vulnerable to many forms of exploitation. This is why we believe it is imperative to have LGBTQ+-sensitive outreach methods and partners that understand this need. LGBTQIA+ agency partners will be identified for referral connections, resources and role models in our communities. A trauma-informed approach will focus on physical, psychological, and emotional safety of all clients. Services and policies will follow positive youth development and trauma-informed approaches in providing support.

LGBTQIA+YYA who experience homelessness also experience high rates of post-traumatic stress, mental health crisis with suicidal behavior. LGBTQIA+ youth sometimes suffer traumatic experiences, including harassment, stigmatization, and mental and physical abuse as a result of their sexual orientation and gender expression. Supportive services and housing projects will need to have an understanding of these experiences.

³⁴ Sandra Hoskins Legacy Foundation. <https://www.shlfdn.org/our-focus/supportive-housing-for-lgbtq-teens/>

³⁵ Chapin Hall Voices of Youth Count; LGBTQ Youth Homelessness. <https://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/lgbtq-youth-homelessness/>

LGBTQIA+ youth who experience homelessness need access to safe and supportive services with housing opportunities. Street outreach, emergency shelters, crisis interventions, transitional housing programs, and other RRH housing programs will be free of bias and harassment and provide access to services that affirm their identity and welcome these youth and young adults promoting positive youth development and their unique Youth Voice.

| Specific Needs for LGBTQIA+ & Gender Non-Conforming YYA |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ★ Welcoming shelters with private rooms or non-congregant rooms ★ Trauma Informed Care Trained Outreach and Engagement Teams ★ Safe Spaces within supportive service and housing option providers ★ LGBTQ+ Agency partnerships that provide dedicated services and role models ★ Staff/Leadership reflective and inclusive of LGBTQIA+ Youth population ★ Hygiene Items that are non gender specific |

Unaccompanied Minors

In federal fiscal year 20-21, 67 minor households entered the GA BoS homeless response system³⁶ and remained homeless for an average of 91 days. The majority of these minor youth households were served in emergency shelter (91%) and 5 of the households accessed transitional housing. Only 35% of these minor youth reported exits to permanent housing destinations.

Of the 67 minor households that accessed shelter, 48% of those youth identified as Black or African American or African and 39% identified as white, non-hispanic/non-latin(a)(o)(x). 64 households presented independently as a single, unaccompanied youth, while 3 households had 2 more younger children in their household.

The chart below outlines the prior living situations for the 67 minor households.



³⁶ Stella P - Demographic Overview - Child Only & System Map

Specific Needs for Unaccompanied Minors

- ★ Stable Housing
 - Transitional Housing
 - Host Home
- ★ Supportive and Legal Services
 - Emancipation
 - Life Skills
- ★ Education
 - Opportunities to finish school
 - Tutoring
- ★ Specific Shelter/Children's Home
- ★ Family Support and reunification strategies
- ★ Foster Care, when applicable

Involved in other systems

Child Welfare

According to the most recent data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, in fiscal year 2020:

- 20,262 youth aged out of foster care in the United States.
- The average age of youth who aged out of foster care was 20 years old.
- 51% of youth who aged out of foster care were male, and 49% were female.
- 32% of youth who aged out of foster care were African American, 21% were Hispanic/Latino, and 37% were white.
- 47% of youth who aged out of foster care had been in care for five or more years.
- 7% of youth who aged out of foster care had been in care for less than one year.
- Youth who age out of foster care face a number of challenges, including high rates of homelessness, unemployment, and lack of access to education and healthcare. In a study conducted by Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, 1 in 5 youth who aged out of foster care experienced homelessness within a year of leaving care.



According to the most recent data from the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services:

- In fiscal year 2021, a total of 452 youth aged out of foster care in Georgia.
- The average age of youth who aged out of foster care in Georgia was 19.6 years old.
- Of those who aged out of foster care in Georgia, 53% were male and 47% were female.
- African American youth made up the largest racial/ethnic group of those who aged out of foster care in Georgia at 63%, followed by white youth at 23%, and Hispanic/Latino youth at 5%.
- 62% of youth who aged out of foster care in Georgia had been in care for three or more years.
- Youth who age out of foster care in Georgia face challenges similar to those in other states, including higher rates of homelessness, unemployment, and lack of access to education and healthcare compared to their peers who have not been in foster care.

Specific Needs for YYA with Involvement in the Child Welfare System

- ★ Mental health Counseling & Trauma Therapy
- ★ Extended Foster Care Services
- ★ Safe Neighborhoods
- ★ Youth Leadership within the system
- ★ Legal Advocacy
- ★ Access & support with permanent relationships
- ★ Non-discriminative employment opportunities
- ★ Free College Tuition
- ★ Financial Literacy (opening bank account, business start-up expenses)
- ★ Advocates, people they can trust
- ★ Collaboration between DFCS and other agencies working in the system

Justice System

Preparing youth for family reunification is an essential component to youth's successful reintegration. However, youth experiencing system involvement may encounter difficulty securing stable housing which in turn may interrupt their ability to complete their education, obtain employment, and position themselves to live independently and thrive. There are specific populations of youth being released from the justice system that require added wrap around services to alleviate the risk of being hard to place.

Older youth (18-21) exiting the Juvenile Justice (JJ) system may not be able to return to the family home due to many factors such as family relocation, family violence, and the expectation that they are old enough to live independently from the family.

Youth who have sexually harmful behaviors exiting the JJ system may be hard to place when a victim or victim age youth resides in the home, or the family has ostracized the youth. Access to continued treatment and services could be difficult to maintain.

Youth with severe mental health diagnosis and substance use can be hard to place due to their intense treatment needs, particularly if the family is unable to meet the needs adequately in the home or there is a lack of resources in their respective community. Instances where there are more difficult to treat conditions such as schizophrenia, bi-polar, reactive attachment disorder, disruptive, impulse-control disorders, trauma and stress related disorder, neurodevelopmental disorders, substance-related and addictive disorders, and/or depressive disorders compound the challenge in securing stable housing. Autism spectrum disorder presents additional barriers for youth and families when the youth's needs or behaviors are more than the family is equipped to take on.

Commercially Sexually Exploited youth can be hard to place due to lack of available placements specific to their needs or they are part of the older youth population. There is additional counseling and services required to address trauma and deprogramming in a safe and protected environment. Research supports that 90 percent of families of justice involved youth desire to be involved in the youth's treatment, care, programming, and education. Therefore, it is imperative that systems are in

place to promote continuity of care. Communities are encouraged to consider the populations mentioned and provide the needed services and support to facilitate wellbeing and reduce the risks of homelessness and recidivism.

Specific Needs for YYA with Involvement in the Justice System

- ★ Legal Advocacy (record expungement, etc.)
- ★ Job Placement/Coaching for Participants and Employers
- ★ Community Involvement Programs

Victims & Survivors

Of violence, including sexual trafficking and exploitation

According to the National Network for Youth, experience with homelessness or the foster care system and identity as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community statistically increase a youth's risk of being trafficked. Specifically, "one in five runaway and homeless youth are a victim of human trafficking— inclusive of sex and labor trafficking."³⁷ Of equal or greater concern is the data that "68 percent of the youth who had either been trafficked or engaged in survival sex or commercial sex had done so while homeless."³⁸ Youth and young adults experiencing homelessness represent one of the most vulnerable groups to traffickers based on their lack of resources and absence of available opportunities.

Straddling the line between Atlanta and Clayton County, Hartsfield Jackson International Airport fuels Atlanta's status as the U.S. city with the second highest rate of human trafficking. This area is also home to a convergence of several interstate highway systems, all of which transit through the Balance of State, connecting the city to deep rural pockets of Georgia. Lacking resources like housing and employment often contribute to vulnerability to trafficking, though this may also be the case when social emotional wellbeing is neglected. When fostered, social emotional wellbeing allows for the realization and processing of emotions and daily stressors. Youth often identify resources that support this wellbeing (notably therapy and mental health services, life skills training, and peer support options) in their requests for stronger systems construction.

According to HMIS data and Stella reporting (see graphs below), 17% of adult only youth experiencing homelessness in the GA BOS report as survivors of Domestic Violence, with 5% of that population actively fleeing that violence. This number increases to 29% of parenting youth self-identifying as survivors of and 10% actively fleeing incidences of Domestic Violence when they engaged with the

³⁷ National Network for Youth.

<https://nn4youth.org/learn/human-trafficking/#:~:text=Youth%20experiencing%20homelessness%20who%20have,a%20history%20of%20sexual%20abuse>

³⁸ Ibid.

homeless response system.

18-24 Adult Only Stella Demographics



- 79% | 316 Not a DV survivor
- 5% | 21 DV survivor and currently fleeing
- 12% | 47 DV survivor and not currently fleeing or unknown fleeing status
- 4% | 17 DV status unknown

AC Parenting Youth Stella Demographics



- 71% | 119 Not a DV survivor
- 10% | 17 DV survivor and currently fleeing
- 19% | 31 DV survivor and not currently fleeing or unknown fleeing status
- 0% | 0 DV status unknown

Specific Needs for YYA Survivors of Violence & Exploitation

- ★ Trauma-informed counseling & support groups for holistic approach
- ★ Safety Planning Support
- ★ Better collaboration between DV providers and youth providers
- ★ Legal Advocacy
- ★ Life skills classes for financial literacy, well being, stress management & career development
- ★ Healthy relationships education & safety planning
- ★ Supportive Housing Options
- ★ Peer mentors
- ★ Family support programs
- ★ Safe access to DV shelter & safe havens

Disabilities and Overall Health Issues

Youth with co-occurring diagnosis, including mental health, substance abuse, HIV-AIDS and other communicable diseases.

The instability caused by homelessness makes maintenance of routines and responsibilities especially difficult. This is true of jobs, childcare provision, education, and notably maintenance and care of existing physical, mental, and behavioral health conditions. “Homeless young people experience higher rates of chronic health problems, trauma-related injuries, and nutritional problems, including starvation,

obesity, and associated dental complications³⁹ than their housed peers. The trauma induced by experiencing homelessness can cause mental health struggles and other developmental issues, even if experienced for only a short time⁴⁰. Lack of treatment for health issues, whether known/diagnosed or not, can lead to worsening of symptoms, overall health, or underlying, unseen issues.

Many of the previously identified challenges for the BoS geography contribute to the health struggles faced by those experiencing homelessness. Lack of access to reliable, affordable transportation prevents youth from attending appointments with health care professionals; similarly, lack of access to health insurance (due to lacking employment or a high-cost individual plan) maintains health care out of the reach of many youth. As youth access the homeless response system differently than adults, their likelihood of avoiding shelters removes the opportunity to be seen by a health care professional or evaluated for other needed services. Using the often prohibitively high cost of health insurance and related appointments as an example, youth experiencing homelessness would benefit from systems navigation assistance to recognize the programs for which they may qualify and receive help in applying.

For youth at risk of and currently experiencing homelessness that have physical disabilities, there are many barriers with receiving supportive care and housing. Transportation barriers, caretaker support, and lack of affordable and accessible housing units puts these youth at higher risk of homelessness. If these youth are receiving SSI benefits, the award is typically too low to cover the cost of rent. Affordable housing is already a barrier for youth experiencing homelessness, but affordable and accessible is even more difficult to secure. Accessible housing is limited and this housing needs to have features such as wheelchair ramps, accessible showers and sinks, lower light switches, countertops, and wider hallways.

| Specific Needs for YYA with Disabilities | |
|--|--|
| ★ | Quick Access to case management for appointment referrals to medical care and behavioral health specialists |
| ★ | Accessible, Affordable Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Permanent Supportive Housing○ Host Homes that are accessible for youth with disabilities |
| ★ | Accessible and Safe Shelter |
| ★ | Job Training, including access to vocational rehabilitation. |
| ★ | Legal Support <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Understanding Rights under ADA○ Dedicated Youth Navigation and assistance applying for SSDI Benefits○ Filing for reasonable accommodations |
| ★ | Access to therapeutic services and specialized medical services |
| ★ | Access to specialized transportation |

³⁹ FYSB RHY National Clearinghouse on Homeless Youth & Families.
<https://rhyclearinghouse.acf.hhs.gov/blog/2018/10/health-needs-homeless-youth>

⁴⁰ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
<https://www.samhsa.gov/homelessness-programs-resources/hpr-resources/youth>

Identification with Marginalized Racial Identities

American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black, Latina/o/e/x, Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander persons experiencing homelessness

The CoC adopted a three-phase Racial Equity Improvement Framework, modeled on the data gathered from the 2019 Point in Time (PIT) Count. These data showed that Black or African American individuals made up 50% of those experiencing homelessness on a given night, while representing roughly 25% of the general population. Phase 1 analyzes data on racial ethnic disparity, as well as disparities within the provision or outcome of homeless assistance. Phase 2 focuses on capacity building, data collection, data analysis, strategic planning, and Phase 3 implements changes based on the prior two phases.

The CoC's data team has assembled a racial equity Power BI dashboard to better understand and visualize racial and ethnic data across our geography, an internal effort to address Phase 2 and lead into Phase 3 of the Racial Equity Improvement Framework. The data input to the dashboard is a combination of providers' own HMIS data on the individuals they've served, as well as census data presented from the county level. While some counties' racial and ethnic census data match the proportion of those served by individual agency projects, others are quite skewed, serving significantly more Black, African American, or African clients than are represented in the county's demographic statistics. Building upon the initial data gathered from the 2019 PIT Count, the dashboard allows for greater scrutiny and investigation to address the unequal access to homelessness resources between racial or ethnic groups.

As noted in a recent research study released by the Department of the Treasury and the Office of Evaluation Sciences, Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funds have been shown to support low-income and Black renters most prominently in maintaining housing stability. In fact, these populations (in addition to women) were overrepresented when reviewing their share of those who received ERA funds compared to the eligible population.

- Extremely low-income renters comprised 64% of the recipient population, compared to their share as 32% of the eligible population.
- Black renters' share of the recipient population was 21-22 percentage points higher than their proportion of the eligible population for this assistance.
- ERA funds received by women-identifying applicants were distributed at 14-15 percentage points higher than their share of the eligible population.

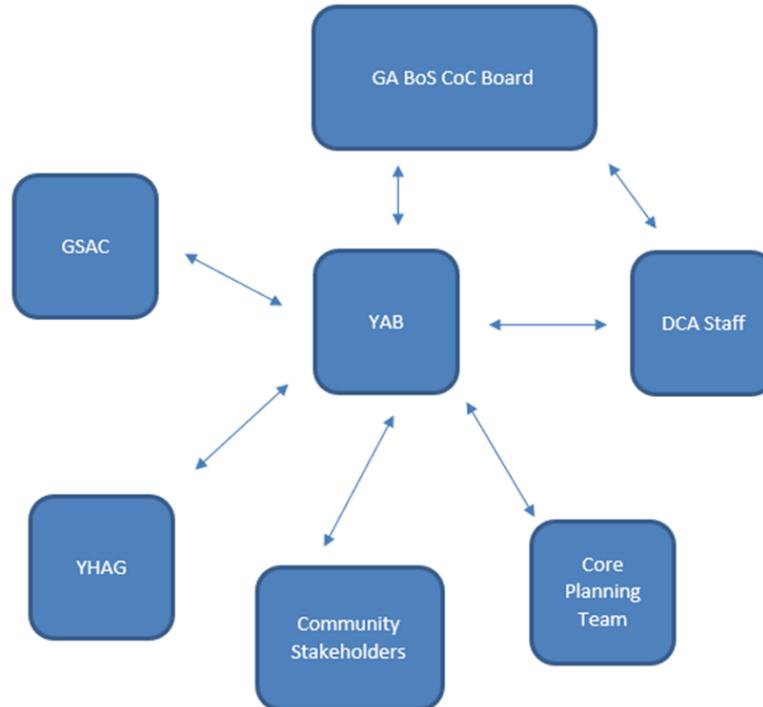
This data supports the overrepresentation of these populations in seeking homelessness prevention resources and services, with statistics that are most staggering during the present COVID-19 pandemic. While the numbers suggest that particular identity groups are accessing services at rates higher than their share of the population, we can be sure that the programs and service providers involved are indeed reaching and addressing the immediate needs of those who are most marginalized. The CoC will continue to work toward equitably supporting the individuals and families most in need across our geography, maintaining best practices and relevant data through service delivery, trainings, and resource allocation.

Specific Needs for Marginalized Racial Identities

- ★ Cultural affirming Therapy/Support Groups
- ★ Culturally Specific Services provided by leadership and staff reflective of the population.
- ★ Equitable Services
- ★ Street Outreach
- ★ Services available in native language or with interpreters as needed.
- ★ Peer Support Group

YHDP Governance

YHDP Decision-Making Structure



Balance of State CoC Board: The Board consists of nineteen (19) members. To assure a strong start, continuity over the longer-term, and to mitigate the potential for liability claims against individuals serving on the Board, eleven (11) appointments will be made by state agency heads. Two (2) appointments by the State Housing Trust Fund for the Homeless Commission, one (1) appointment by the Membership and Rules Committee who is homeless or formerly homeless, and five (5) at large members elected by the full membership, one from each of the five (5) GA Department of Community Affairs’ “Super Regions.” All of these appointments must be “relevant” to the Continuum (providing homeless funding, services, mainstream services that serve homeless persons, or provide other indirect services to homeless persons or to community organizations in the Continuum), and otherwise qualified, as outlined in our CoC Governance Charter⁴¹ and by HUD rule.

The Board approved the original YHDP governance, the YAB governance, YAB members and the submission of the original YHDP application on July 9, 2021. The Board was kept informed on the progress of YHDP efforts at their quarterly meetings. Board members are representatives in the Core Planning team, Georgia State Agency Collaborative (GSAC), and Youth Homelessness Advisory Group (YHAG). The Board Chair is a signatory on the CCP. Moving forward in this work the Board will be of support to the YAB and the continued improvement of the youth homeless response system.

⁴¹Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

https://www.dca.ga.gov/sites/default/files/governance_charter_georgia_bos_coc_-_approved_9-12-22_0.pdf

DCA Staff (CoC team): The CoC is made up of 7 staff members (6 full-time and 1 part-time)—a CoC Program Manager, 2 CoC Program Coordinators, 1 Youth Homelessness Specialist, 2 Coordinated Entry Specialists, and 1 CoC Assistant. The Coordinated Entry (CE) team will be expanding later this year to include 2 additional Specialists and a CE Team Lead. The CoC serves as Collaborative Applicant for funding opportunities and works with/to support partners within our community, and also serves as the YHDP Lead Agency to convene working groups and direct the process from initial application to project selection and funding.

- The CoC Program Manager (PM) is responsible for the supervision, management, and support of CoC team staff as well as the overall management of day-to-day needs and activities. The PM is ultimately responsible for making decisions that impact the YHDP planning process, and ensuring the smooth functioning of responsibilities and cohesion between internal teams.
- The CoC Program Coordinators (PC) serve in different capacities. One PC is focused primarily on CoC Board functionality and programming in addition to the annual competition process and other HUD-required submissions such as the HIC/PIT count, System Performance Measures (SPM), etc. The second PC focuses their efforts on YHDP, managing the program alongside the CoC PM. Specific responsibilities include writing the CCP, supporting the YAB, facilitating weekly YHDP Core Planning team meetings and related collaborative groups, and will aid in the process of selecting projects to be funded with YHDP funds.
- The Youth Homelessness Specialist (YHS), a new team hire, is tasked with supporting the Youth Action Board. The YHS ensures that the YAB has the resources it needs to function, as an entity as well as for the benefit of members who may be experiencing individual struggles. The YHS supports formal board functions as well as YAB-designed projects and interests, aiding in the development of a space that is youth-led and youth-driven in the activities that it facilitates.
- Both CE Specialists (CES) are responsible for the operation and maintenance of the CE system in the BoS. With each managing their own region of the BoS geography, the CES provides training and technical assistance to existing lead agencies as well as those communities working to identify a sustainable lead agency.
- The CoC Program Assistant (PA) works in a part-time capacity assisting on a range of programs, with particular emphasis on performing environmental reviews for other HUD-funded programs.

Youth Action Board: The Youth Action Board (YAB) is a formal committee of the BoS CoC of youth and young adults in the BoS CoC. It consists of 11 members, aged 18 through 25 years old, 2/3rds of whom are either currently experiencing or have formerly experienced homelessness or housing instability. Members represent a diversity of Georgia's population and are from varied geographic, experience, and identity backgrounds. All members were aged 18-24 at their time of joining the Board.

The GA BoS CoC compensates YAB members at a rate of \$20 per hour. For meetings that extend beyond 1 hour but less than 2 YAB members will be compensated \$40. The CoC will cover reasonable travel costs associated with in-person meetings, training, or focus groups. The YAB chair and vice chair will be compensated an additional \$20 for YAB meetings that they facilitate. Compensation is currently in the form of check or direct deposit on a bi-weekly basis. Members are currently compensated out of CoC Planning grant and have been included in the budget for the next CoC planning grant through 2024. We are committed to youth compensation and will leverage additional community resources as

well as future planning grants as needed. Additional compensation details are outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement between DCA and the YAB.

The YAB provides input and direct contribution to the work of the YHDP, especially including the Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness. The YAB also exists to provide input on other ongoing policy making decisions particularly related to preventing and ending youth homelessness. As necessary, the YAB helps gather information and feedback from youth and young adults and various youth stakeholders in the region by running focus groups or other engagement efforts. As a formal committee of the CoC Board the YAB makes recommendations to the Board.

During the CCP development process the YAB has been meeting weekly on Saturdays to codesign the work. YAB members have attended Core Planning Team meetings, GSAC meetings, YHDP planning meetings, 2 on-site community planning events, and Listening sessions in regions 1,2, and 4. YAB members have also been participating in 1 on 1 sessions with DCA's Youth Homelessness Specialist to ensure adequate support in the process.

The YAB have been instrumental in codesigning the work with focused energy on the mission, vision, and values of the CCP. They added youth specific questions to the local application and participated in the scoring, interviewing, ranking, and selecting of project applications as outlined in our Project selection process.

Specific decision-making authority of the YAB includes:

- The YAB approves the CCP
- The YAB selects the projects to be funded
- The YAB makes recommendations to selected projects that must be implemented to the extent they are feasible within the statutory and regulatory guidelines.
- The YAB will provide letters of support for the selected projects.

Once the CCP is approved and the local project applications are selected. The YAB will play an integral role in the implementation of the selected projects. They are a vital component of the continuous quality improvement process. They will also modify their meeting cadence to align with the needs of the YAB. The chair and vice chair will provide guidance and direction in this shift of the work to ensure that the needs of the YAB are met including professional development, mentorship opportunities and system connections.

YHDP Core Planning team: The YHDP Core Planning Team(CPT) was convened to ensure community coordination in the CCP development Process in the BoS CoC. Specific responsibilities include updating the Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness, coordinating with the YAB on planning efforts, providing insight in the project type prioritization and key considerations, ensuring regional specifics are included and managing the region's overall approach to youth homelessness. The CPT is composed of YAB members, State Agencies, RHY providers, local homeless providers, DCA staff and other interested parties.

During planning, the CPT met weekly and participated in 2 onsite community planning sessions. They also assisted in convening listening sessions in their region to bring forth local gaps, challenges, and solutions. They were actively engaged in developing the CCP including writing, editing, and suggesting. Once the CCP is submitted, projects are submitted and implemented the core planning team will be dissolved.

Youth Homelessness Advisory Group: The Youth Homelessness Advisory Group (YHAG) was responsible for the YHDP planning and application submission process in the BoS CoC with many members transitioning to the CPT once strategizing had begun following the announcement as an awarded community. As such, meetings have been suspended during the CCP development process and will reconvene once we are through the CCP submission process and YHDP is up and running with selected and funded projects. Meetings will be held at least quarterly though likely more often. Specific responsibilities include providing feedback on the efficacy of the Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness, discussing challenges and successes, coordinating with the YAB and GSAC on process improvements, and managing best practices on the region's overall approach to youth homelessness. Providing an additional layer of support for YAB members and committing to upholding the principles and values of YHDP. Membership of the YHAG is fluid and determined by CoC Staff but will consist of 6-10 members representing youth serving agencies in the BoS CoC such as:

- Safe Harbor
- Advocates for Children
- Open Arms
- Youth Empowerment Success Services (YESS)
- Hope thru Soap, Inc.
- Project Infinity, Inc.
- Rainey Day Fund

Safe Harbor is a RHY provider serving the coastal region of southeast Georgia. They participated on our core planning team and hosted a listening session with DCA Staff, local providers, and their youth. They provided the content for the Region 5 overview in our CCP and provided additional input and feedback on the total CCP. They participated in the onsite session where goals, objectives and action steps were determined.

Advocates for Children is a RHY provider serving counties Northwest of Atlanta. They participated on our core planning team and hosted a listening session with YAB, DCA Staff, local providers, and their youth. They provided the content for the Region 1 overview in our CCP and provided additional input and feedback on the total CCP. They participated in the onsite session where goals, objectives and action steps were determined. They worked directly with their youth to develop the origin of the mission and vision of our CCP.

Open Arms is a RHY provider serving Southwest Georgia based in Albany. They participated on our core planning team and hosted a listening session with DCA Staff, local providers, and their youth. They provided the content for the Region 4 overview in our CCP and provided additional input and

feedback on the total CCP. They participated in the onsite session where goals, objectives and action steps were determined.

Georgia State Agency Collaborative: The Georgia State Agency Collaborative (GSAC) is a small group focused on high-level state agency collaboration. The GSAC provides input to the YHAG and YAB for the Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness. It is responsible for mapping the resources designed to assist youth and young adults experiencing homelessness such as childcare, education, employment, and mainstream benefits. This collaborative meets on a quarterly basis but during the CCP development process they convened monthly. State agencies provided vital data and input for the CCP development process and participated in the onsite activities where goals and action steps were determined.

Additionally, the GSAC is tasked with creating the overall strategy related to Youth Homelessness Prevention and Diversion. This group works to continue the development of cross system partnerships and training. Membership of the GSAC is fluid and determined by CoC staff. It consists of 6-10 members representing state agencies including:

- Technical College System of Georgia (TCSOG) (workforce development)
- Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS)
- Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)
- Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD)
- Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)
- Georgia Department of Education (DOE)

The TCSOG is crucial to the homeless response system. This entity oversees workforce development, Technical Schools, GED, and provides a variety of post-secondary options for YYA. The TCSOG network of technical schools is a crucial place for outreach and engagement to ensure YYA have access to resources to support their housing needs. TCSOG provided feedback and input on the CCP development process. Technical schools will be incorporated as referral partners in our CE system so we can create a referral flow between housing, workforce development, and education.

The DFACS is a critical provider of mainstream benefits and supports for young people. The agency is committed to supporting the CCP and collaborating on the success of YHDP programming. DFCS provided data, input and feedback on our CCP. The DFCS provided training to our partners on connecting individuals and families to mainstream benefits. We will continue to incorporate these trainings as well as work closely together on transition planning for individuals aging out of care.

The DJJ oversees the strategy for justice involving youth. Members of the DJJ reentry task force worked to provide data and feedback for our CCP. DJJ attended our onsite meeting and participated in the foundational development of our regional overviews and the goals objectives action steps. We will continue to work closely with DJJ to ensure access to resources for justice involved youth.

The DBHDD has long been a partner in the homeless response system. Their Community Service Boards are key partners in accessing behavioral health needs for YYA. They provide Permanent Supportive Housing across the Balance of State. They are committed to more cross training opportunities so providers can navigate the behavioral health pathways of care and behavioral health workers can connect consumers to housing resources. Additionally, 2 members of our core planning team that provided feedback and support in the CCP development process are DBHDD employees with lived experience.

The DECAL oversees the state's head start and childcare initiatives. They provided crucial data for our CCP specifically incorporated into our statement of need, as well as feedback on the content. They are committed to training with our providers as childcare is a crucial need for our parenting youth population. We expect to streamline access to childcare for YYA through this partnership.

The DOE oversees the public education system in Georgia. They provided key data points for our statement of need and our CCP. They distributed a needs assessment to their network of liaisons; these results were also incorporated into the CCP. McKinney-Vento liaisons will be incorporated into the CE system to ensure that YYA in schools have access to the housing resources needed to support their educational goals. We also collaborated with the DOE on a cross systems convening where partners, providers and interested parties shared resources

Partner List

This chart shows the level of involvement our partners play in the YHDP work. The participants of the Core Planning Team, Youth Action Board, GA State Agency Collaborative, and Youth Homelessness Advisory Group are outlined in the chart below. The work of these groups is more completely defined in the governance section above.

Levels of Involvement in YHDP

| | |
|--|---|
| CPT - Core Planning Team Member PIF - Provided Input/Feedback YAB - Youth Action Board Member CoC - BOS CoC Staff | SAC- GA State Agency Collaborative Member YHAG - Youth Homelessness Advisory Group Member CIP- Broader Community Interested Party |
|--|---|

| Partner | | Region(s) | | | | | Level of involvement in YHDP | | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------|---|---|---|---|------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | CPT | PIF | YAB | COC | SAC | YHAG | CIP |
| Youth Action Board | 11 members | • | • | • | • | | • | • | • | | | | |
| Public Child Welfare Agencies | GA DFCS | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | | | • | | |
| CoC & ESG Grant Program Recipients | Advocates for Children | • | | | | | • | • | | | | • | |
| | FaithBridge Foster Care | • | • | | | | | | | | | • | |
| | Open Arms | | | | • | | • | • | | | | • | |
| | Ninth District Opportunity | • | | | | | • | • | | | | | |
| | SafeHarbors Children's Center | | | | | • | • | • | | | | • | |
| Local and State Government | GA Dept of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities (GA DBHDD) | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | | | • | | |
| | GA Dept of Community Affairs (DCA) | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | | • | • | | |
| | GA Dept of Early Care and Learning (GA DECAL)/ GA Head Start Association | • | • | • | • | • | | • | | | • | | |

| Partner | | Region(s) | | | | | Level of involvement in YHDP | | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----------|---|---|---|---|------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | CPT | PIF | YAB | COC | SAC | YHAG | CIP | |
| | GA Dept of Education (GA DOE) | • | • | • | • | • | | • | | | | • | | |
| | GA DHS Division of Family & Children Services (GA DFCS) | • | • | • | • | • | | • | | | | • | | |
| | GA Dept of Labor (GA DOL) | • | • | • | • | • | | • | | | | • | | |
| | Technical College System of GA (TCSG) | • | • | • | • | • | | • | | | | • | | |
| | GA Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) | • | • | • | • | • | | • | | | | • | | |
| Runaway and Homeless Youth Program Providers | Advocates for Children | • | | | | | • | • | | | | | • | |
| | Open Arms | | | | • | | • | • | | | | | • | |
| | Safe Harbor Children's Center | | | | | • | • | • | | | | | • | |
| Health, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Agencies | GA Dept of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities (GA DBHDD) | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | | | | • | | |
| Early Childhood Development and Child Care Providers | GA DECAL/ GA Head Start Association | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | | | | • | | |
| Local and State Educational Agencies | Forsyth County Schools | • | | | | | | • | | | | | | • |
| | Hall County Schools | • | | | | | | • | | | | | | • |
| | GA Department of Education | • | • | • | • | • | | • | | | | • | | |

| Partner | | Region(s) | | | | | Level of involvement in YHDP | | | | | | | |
|--|--|-----------|---|---|---|---|------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|---|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | CPT | PIF | YAB | COC | SAC | YHAG | CIP | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Calhoun City Schools | • | | | | | | • | | | | | | • |
| Institutions of Higher Education | TCSG | • | • | • | • | • | | • | | | • | | | • |
| | TCSG- Embark/University System of Georgia | • | • | • | • | • | | • | | | | | | • |
| | South Georgia Technical College | | | | • | | | • | | | | | | • |
| | Wiregrass Technical College | | | | • | | | • | | | | | | • |
| Non-Profit Youth Organizations | Advocates for Children | • | | | | | | • | | | | | • | |
| | FaithBridge Foster Care | • | • | | | | | • | | | | | • | |
| | Lydia's Place | • | | | | | | | | | | | • | |
| | Open Arms | | | | • | | | • | | | | | • | |
| | Safe Harbor Children's Center | | | | | • | | • | | | | | • | |
| | Hope thru Soap | | • | | | | | • | • | | | | • | |
| | Youth Empowerment Success Services (YESS) | | • | | | | | • | • | | | | • | |
| Privately Funded Homeless Organizations | Community Outreach Training Center | | | | • | | | • | | | | | | • |
| | Tenacious Charities | • | | | | | | • | | | | | | • |
| Organizations that serve culturally specific (Black, Latino, Indigenous, people with disabilities, LGBTQ, etc.) communities | GA Dept of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities (GA DBHDD) | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | | | • | | | |
| Continuum of Care Board | Advocates for Children | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | | | | • | |

| Partner | | Region(s) | | | | | Level of involvement in YHDP | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-----------|---|---|---|---|------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|--|
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | CPT | PIF | YAB | COC | SAC | YHAG | CIP | |
| | GA Department of Education (State DOE Rep) | • | • | • | • | • | | • | | | | • | | |
| | GA Department of Labor (State DOL Rep) | • | • | • | • | • | | • | | | | • | | |
| Workforce Agencies | GA Department of Labor | • | • | • | • | • | | • | | | | • | | |
| | Technical College System of GA (TCSG) | • | • | • | • | • | | • | | | | • | | |

In addition to the work already described RHY providers Safe Harbor Center, Advocates for Children, and Open Arms hosted listening sessions where CoC Staff, YYA with lived experience and community partners could share regionally concerns, challenges, and successes. The knowledge and information gained from these listening sessions is included throughout the CCP but specifically in the regional write ups and the goals objectives and action steps.

Future Partners:

- Juvenile and Adult Corrections and Probation
- Local and State Law Enforcement and Judges
- Public Housing Authorities
- Affordable Housing Providers
- Landlords
- Local Advocacy, Research, and Philanthropic Organizations
- Community Development Corporations
- HIV serving organizations

Through the CCP development process, gaps were identified within the homeless response system but additionally in the ways in which the BoS CoC communicates and collaborates with entities working toward the same goals. An upcoming mid-May Cross Systems Convening will connect representatives from the housing, education, workforce, child welfare, and juvenile justice systems together to collaborate around more holistic and supportive services serving youth. This event will provide insight on ways to expand a similar collaborative space for the benefit of other prospective partners, notably those connected to housing infrastructure and development. With rising rents and low housing supply, developing relationships with those who more firmly control these sectors will allow all involved entities to better achieve their goals and principally support youth in identifying and securing suitable housing resources.

Goals, Objectives, & Action Steps + YHDP Principles

The overarching goals below were derived from a collection of community-based work synthesized into broad themes. This work was shaped through surveys, interest forms, listening sessions, core planning meetings and YAB engagement over a 3 month period. These broad themes were brought to the Balance of State CoC onsite planning event April 12 through April 14, 2023. The event was attended by a broad array of partners. The Technical Assistance team, CoC staff, Youth providers, state agency collaborators and Youth Action Board members worked to refine these broad Goals into Objectives and Action Steps. Attendees participated in group discussion activity to capture input and feedback on broad goals and then general objectives and action steps necessary to achieve goals. It was determined by the community that the four core outcomes of stable housing, permanent connections, education/employment, and social emotional well being are encompassed within these goals

In the charts below, objective indicators and measures are listed as *To Be Determined* (TBD) under most goals. These indicators and measures will be defined when the GA BOS begins the YHDP Continuous Quality Improvement process in the late summer or early fall of 2023.

| Goal 1: Deepen Understanding of youth homelessness | | |
|--|--|---|
| Objective | Indicator | Measure |
| Objective 1a: Develop a clearer definition of what homelessness looks like in the different regions. | Execute the Youth PIT Count/listening sessions scheduled documented | Results of PIT count(quantitative) Results of listening sessions (qualitative) |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |
| Organize youth-led focus groups/listening sessions with youth who have experienced homelessness; ensure they are compensated equitably for their time and expertise. | YAB, YHAG, YHDP Agencies | Within the first year |
| Conduct a state-wide youth Point in Time (PIT) count with expanded data collection. | YAB, COC, Community Outreach Partners | year 2 |
| Objective | Indicator | Measure |
| Objective 1b: Strengthen quantitative and qualitative data collection to improve service delivery. | TBD | TBD |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |

| | | |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| Complete youth needs assessment | YAB, COC, YHAG, YHDP agencies | Within the First Year |
| Develop youth survey tools that capture qualitative data on program participant experiences. | YAB, YHAG | year 2 |
| Develop a mechanism for collecting public data including but not limited to : kids count, Mckinney- Vento, school, child welfare, DVHDB, GPSN, SHINES, youth PIT. | GSAC, CoC | year 2 |
| Operationalize data sharing agreements between Atlanta and GA BOS counties to better understand how YYA participate in other systems.. | HMIS Lead, Georgia HMIS Steering Committee | Within the first year |
| Objective | Indicator | Measure |
| Objective 1c: Make data driven decisions. | TBD | TBD |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |
| Develop a Youth Led Continuous Quality Improvement process that regularly reviews at system-level data and strategies and supports | YAB, YHDP Partners, YHAG, HMIS Lead | Within the first year |
| Identify or develop data collection tools or assessment to get youth specific data | HMIS Lead, CoC | Within the first year |
| Use data to determine stable housing needs, ed/employment needs, and social emotional well-being needs. | HMIS Lead, CoC | Within the first year |
| Create a pool of partners/mentors to increase permanent connections and provide professional development. | YAB, GSAC, YHDP Partners, YHAG, COC | year 2 |

Goal 2: Improve Access to Individualized Services and Supports

- Increase access to:
 - Stable income and employment
 - Education, school liaisons, training and GED programs
 - Financial management and credit repair/building
 - Child care and transportation, food, and medical care
 - Substance use treatment, therapy and counseling
 - Mentorship and peer support
 - Legal services for minors - emancipation

| Objective | Indicator | Measure |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| Objective 2a: Improve Access to Accurate and Up to Date Information on Available Resources | TBD | TBD |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |
| Create a 211-like phone number that connects to youth specific services across the state or regions | United Way, CoC, YAB, Local Communities | Year 2 |
| Disseminate Find Help GA, which is the state resource phone number now. Includes live chat, mobile app, and website. https://findhelpga.org/ (Find Help GA is a state-wide resource with referral capabilities.) | YHDP Agencies, CoC Providers, | within the first year |
| Create App to Expand upon the supports available through Find Help GA (youth led/managed, review Find Help Georgia App) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Includes disability accessibility - Advertise App on social media platforms (AI) | YAB, YHAG, Community Partners | Year 2 |
| Objective | Indicator | Measure |
| Objective 2b: Increase awareness of youth specific available services to current resources like 211 or findhelpga.org | TBD | TBD |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |
| Strengthen relationships with community partners through regular meetings and case conferencing | GSAC, COC YHAG, YHDP agencies, YAB | within first year |
| Provide annual child care system overview training opportunities for state and local housing partners to build awareness of federally funded services available to support parenting youth who are experiencing homelessness (CAPS & Head Start) | GA Dept of Early Care & Learning (contact Allison Setterlind) | within first year |
| Objective | Indicator | Measure |

| | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------------|
| Objective 2c: Establish New Partnerships to Expand Access to Services and Supports | TBD | TBD |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |
| Create partnerships/network of resources (HUB) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Libraries, Family connections and Community Action Agencies Music, coffee, Arts, youth specific places, wifi, fast food | YAB, YHDP, YHAG, community partners | end of year 1 |
| Leverage events such as Job Fairs/Recreational events to connect YYA to resources and host Resource events in housing communities and middle/high schools for parents and youth | YAB, School system, YHDP agencies. | end of year 1 beginning of year 2 |
| Provide quarterly events for other community partners (businesses, landlords, health care, educators, after-school programs, daycare, transportation, faith community, mental health safe spaces, etc) for information sharing and new resource development. | YAB, YHDP Partners, and YHAG | within the first year |
| Create partnerships with Philanthropy to support long-term sustainability in service delivery | COC and YHAG, YHDP Partners, All signers of CCP | year 2 |
| Objective | Indicator | Measure |
| Objective 2d: Make youth-centered improvements to the coordinated entry system. | TBD | TBD |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |
| Restructuring of rural CES system in unimplemented areas without ESG/CoC funding to make CE system more accessible | COC and YAB | within year 2 |
| Increase points of access to CES - develop youth-specific access points | COC, YAB, YHDP agencies | within year 2 |
| Enhance expeditious access to shelter/housing. | YHDP Partners and Community Outreach Partners | within year 1 |
| Develop Youth Centered Assessment tool incorporated into CE workflows | YAB, HIMS Lead, YHAG | within year 2 |

Goal 3: Create an Equitable, Person-Centered System of Care

| Objective | Indicator | Measure |
|---|--|---------------|
| Objective 3a: Comprehensive Training for Service Providers and System Partners | TBD | TBD |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |
| Initial and ongoing training on Trauma-Informed Care, Implicit Bias, Cultural Competency/Humility. Ensuring accessibility to training for smaller agencies (funding and capacity support) | YHAG, YHDP Partners and COC, | within year 1 |
| Establishing a Standard of Care which affirm each YYA's identity, free from bias and harassment | YAB, YHAG, YHDP Partners and COC, | within year 1 |
| Develop an accountability structure for tracking training as well as implementation of training topics (this could be youth surveys) | COC and YHAG | within year 1 |
| Develop a solution-oriented grievance structure for YYA to receive direct and immediate support when treated with inequitable practices. | YAB CoC YHAG | within year 1 |
| Objective | Indicator | Measure |
| Objective 3b: Promote Youth Leadership at all Levels | TBD | TBD |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |
| Develop and train the YAB (leadership training empowerment) | COC GSAC, CoC Board with YAB | within year 1 |
| Objective | Indicator | Measure |
| Objective 3c: Promote Acceptance, Belonging, Safety, and Security | TBD | TBD |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |
| In Person Community Sessions to provide information about real life youth experiences to create a more real understanding of homelessness for youth | Youth Lead with support provided by any who can/should | Ongoing |
| Review & update hiring practices to incorporate staff to reflect the service population, including lived experience and disabilities | YHDP, YHAG and Community Outreach Partners | within year 1 |
| Provide quarterly trainings for peer supports and families supporting youth experiencing homelessness on services available in the community | YAB and Community Outreach Partners | within year 1 |

| Objective | Indicator | Measure |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Objective 3d: Provide Tailored Services while Promoting Equity and Inclusion | TBD | TBD |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |
| Review/Update Language Access Plan (LAP) and researching options for translation and interpretation services (Boost Lingo) | CoC and YHAG | within year 1 |
| Tailored support for LGBTQ youth | YAB and Community Partners | within year 1 |
| Develop queer friendly spaces | YAB YHDP agencies | year 2 |
| Educate and Advocate for equity and inclusion to local officials/politicians | Community Partners Coalitions | within year 1 |

Goal 4: Expand Housing Options for Youth

| Objective | Indicator | Measure |
|--|--|---------------|
| Objective 4a: Develop housing options that are reflective of community needs. | TBD | TBD |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |
| Expand RRH capacity with access to longer stays. | YHDP partners | within year 1 |
| Create TH/RRH project(s). | YHDP Partners | within year 1 |
| Improve strategies for family (including chosen family) mediation and reconciliation. | YHDP YHAG and Community Partners | year 2 |
| Support non-traditional housing options, such as staying with friends and family when safe and able, dorms, group homes, and semi-independent housing. | YAB, CoC, YHDP agencies and Community Partners | Year 2 |
| Expand holistic services offered to YYA in Housing programs | YAB YHDP agencies, CoC | Within year 1 |
| Objective | Indicator | Measure |
| Objective 4b: Expand Housing Partnerships | TBD | TBD |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |
| Leverage public housing resources such as Foster Youth to Independence (FYI), Family Unification Program (FUP), and Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) to expand permanent housing opportunities for youth. | CoC, PHAs | within year 1 |
| Partner with investors and advocate for development of accessible and affordable units | CoC, DCA, YAB, local communities | year 2 |
| Build partnerships with landlords through engagement activities that advocate for youth, improve affordability, & improve habitability; ensure this happens in rural areas. | YHDP providers, CoC, YAB | year 2 |
| Objective | Indicator | Measure |
| Objective 4c: Educate youth tenants. | TBD | TBD |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |
| Host fair housing events to reduce housing discrimination and inform tenants of their rights | CoC, YAB | within year 1 |
| Educate youth on first time homeownership, as opposed to renting or leasing. | YHDP YHAG and Community Partners DCA | year 2 |

Goal 5: Improve Crisis Response

| Objective | Indicator | Measure |
|--|--|---------------|
| Objective 5a: Increase Access to and Expand Capacity of Emergency Housing/Shelter | TBD | TBD |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |
| Review current shelter policies and identify restrictive practices | COC YAB YHDP Community Partners | within year 1 |
| Expand Capacity for Youth-specific emergency/crisis housing | COC HOME-ARP YHDP Community Partners | year 2 |
| Create a quarterly touchpoint with hotels/motels to understand and improve relationships | YHDP agencies Community Partners | within year 1 |
| Objective | Indicator | Measure |
| Objective 5b: Increase Outreach Services | TBD | TBD |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |
| Expand Outreach Capacity, including outreach to surrounding counties to create awareness of availability of services (cross over between counts of youth mobility) | YHDP COC Community Outreach Partners YAB | within year 1 |
| Improve access to youth DV services and incorporate youth safety planning | CJCC Dv providers CoC | within year 1 |
| Adding peer supports to outreach efforts/programming (youth led outreach) | YAB YHDP YHAG Community Outreach Partners | within year 1 |

Goal 6: Strengthen System Capacity and Coordination

| Objective | Indicator | Measure |
|--|------------------------|---------------|
| Objective 6a: Understand the continuum of services that exist across the Balance of State. | TBD | TBD |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |
| Develop a tracking system/survey to understand capacity and gaps across the BOS and including rural areas. | COC, HMIS Lead | year 2 |
| Improve connections with schools, technical colleagues, and other educational institutions. | COC GSAC YHDP YHAG | within year 1 |
| Objective | Indicator | Measure |
| Objective 6b: Ensure service providers understand standards of practice when working with YYA. | TBD | TBD |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |
| All providers meetings that focus on youth needs to improve partnerships and understanding | YAB YHDP COC | Year 1 |
| Develop a mechanism to identify YAB-approved services and agencies | YAB COC | Year 2 |
| Objective | Indicator | Measure |
| Objective 6c: Strengthen coordination and improve partnerships across agencies | TBD | TBD |
| Action Steps | Responsible Parties | Timeline |
| Provide cross system training on resources available to Youth and Young adults | CoC GSAC YAB | within year 1 |
| Identifying mentoring programs and ensure that mentors are chosen and natural | CoC, GSAC, YAB, Embark | within year 1 |

YHDP Principles

As we seek to transform the homeless response system for youth, our community has defined and illustrated the following principles and how they will be prioritized in selection of new projects. The YAB saw the need to include an additional principle focused on the holistic development and support of youth experiencing homelessness, recognizing the healing and restorative impact of mindfulness practices on overall wellbeing and development. These principles will guide and direct YHDP-funded projects in their provision of services to youth participants.

Equity

Equity discussions are often focused on the end user, but must be demonstrated in all aspects of a process: from prioritizing and valuing lived experience, to acknowledging larger inequities within systems that we navigate daily. Youth homelessness is often a result of systemic inequities such as poverty, racism, and lack of access to affordable housing. Addressing these underlying factors and promoting equity in access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities is crucial to preventing and ending youth homelessness.

Providing culturally competent services and support are essential for meeting the unique needs of homeless youth from diverse backgrounds. Providing resources such as language interpretation, culturally sensitive counseling, and safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth can help to promote equity and improve outcomes for these youth. Confronting and addressing disparities in access to services such as mental health care, substance abuse treatment, and education (and providing equal access to these resources for all youth, regardless of their background or circumstances) is key to achieving equity in addressing youth homelessness.

Engaging with marginalized communities and involving them in the development and implementation of community coordinated plans is essential for promoting equity in addressing youth homelessness. Partnering with community organizations and advocates, conducting outreach to underrepresented populations, and providing opportunities for meaningful participation in decision-making processes. Collecting and analyzing data on youth homelessness can help to identify disparities and areas where equity needs to be promoted. Using this data to inform decision-making and allocate resources can help to ensure that resources are distributed equitably and that all youth have access to the services and support they need to prevent or end homelessness.

Positive Youth Development (PYD) and Trauma Informed Care (TIC)

Positive youth development (PYD) is an approach that focuses on nurturing the strengths and potential of young people, rather than solely addressing their problems or deficits. We believe that all young people have the capacity to thrive, given the right conditions and opportunities. PYD is a strengths-based, holistic approach that aims to build the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical capacities of young people, in order to help them lead fulfilling and productive lives.

One of the key principles of PYD is that young people should be actively involved in their own development—having a say in the programs and activities that are designed to support their growth, and

knowing that their perspectives and opinions are valued and respected. This approach helps to build young people's sense of agency and ownership over their own lives, and can lead to greater engagement and commitment to personal growth.

Another important principle of PYD is that it is a collaborative and multidisciplinary approach. This means that a range of professionals, including educators, counselors, coaches, and mentors, work together to support young people's development. This interdisciplinary approach allows for a more holistic understanding of young people's needs and challenges, and can lead to more effective interventions and supports.

The BoS CoC is committed to positive youth development by recognizing and nurturing the strengths and potential of young people. We aim to help YYA to develop the skills and competencies they deem necessary to lead fulfilling and productive lives. By providing young people with opportunities for growth and development, and by working collaboratively across disciplines, PYD integrated into programs can help to create a brighter future for all young people.

All YHDP funded projects must incorporate PYD in their service delivery. It is the expectation of the CoC that at a minimum all YHDP funded projects will utilize a strengths based approach to their service delivery. PYD implementation training will be provided to the YHDP funded providers, other CoC funded providers, and the general CoC membership. The multidisciplinary support implemented by the projects must be coordinated and cohesive in nature; this includes connection with educators, counselors, coaches, and mentors. Providers will view YYA as a whole person that has unique needs beyond just housing. This will be enhanced and refined through the quality improvement process incorporating feedback from the YAB in that refinement.

Trauma-informed care principles will guide our youth coordinated entry experience, youth outreach, navigation, and advocacy. This will be accomplished by coordinated intake practices limiting the trauma of repeatedly telling your story. We strive to be empathetic, kind, and provide assistance with a true understanding of individuals' experiences. This includes support for prioritization of employing youth with lived experience and adding opportunities for youth to give back to the system.

We understand that trauma affects youth behavior and decision-making, and we will practice de-escalation to help youth maintain access to services. Trauma informed care

Just a Kid

Abused and forgotten

Just a kid that was marked on.

Lost and confused in a dark room.

Just a kid wondering what she did wrong.

Scared and wounded.

Just a kid who believed she was worthless.

Crying with hate.

Just a kid who put her feelings into cutting herself.

Wondering what to do.

Just a kid who hid her scars, and

Acted like everything was okay.

Just a kid who got taken away from her family.

Just a kid who saw the yellow Safe Place Sign.

Just a kid that went to Flowering Branch, and

Learned she isn't just a kid.

Written by a 15-year-old
who found her safe place at Advocates for Children,
Flowering Branch Children's Shelter

promotes safety, trustworthiness/transparency, peer support and mutual help, collaboration and mutuality, empowerment voice choice, and cultural sensitivity.

Trauma-informed care is grounded in the understanding that experiences of trauma can have significant and lasting effects on an individual's physical, emotional, and psychological health. The approach emphasizes the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment that promotes healing, empowerment, and recovery.

Trauma-informed care is based on a set of core principles that guide how providers interact with people who have experienced trauma. The implementation of the following principles will be driven by conversation with YYA receiving services anchoring youth choice and trauma-informed care.

The CoC will provide training, included but not limited to cultural competency, adultism, and social identities, to YHDP funded providers. This will ensure that trauma-informed care principles are embedded in program design as well as adhered to and maintained through program implementation.

How YHDP funded projects must implement the principles of trauma-informed care is outlined here:

- Safety: Staff must ensure that youth feel safe and secure in their environment, both physically and emotionally, without assuming what safety looks like for the individual.
- Trustworthiness and transparency: Staff must build trusting relationships with YYA by being transparent about service practices and procedures. Engaging in conversations and activities to build trust and provide YYA opportunities to work with individuals they trust.
- Peer support: Providers will provide opportunities for youth to connect with others who have experienced similar trauma, and to build supportive relationships with peers.
- Collaboration and mutuality: Providers must work collaboratively alongside the YYA to create a caring plan that meets their unique needs and goals.
- Empowerment and choice: Providers must present youth with choices and opportunities to make decisions about their own care, and support them in their journey towards healing and recovery.
- Cultural, historical, and gender issues: We recognize the impact of culture, history, and gender on youth's experiences of trauma, and take steps to provide care that is sensitive to these factors.

Family Engagement

When meeting with youth and having problem solving conversations from the start, we will first seek to reunite families who have become disconnected. Family reconnection can be an option that allows the YYA to lean on family support as an alternative to emergency shelter and the homeless response system. Understanding that families become disconnected for many reasons and each have their own unique circumstances, reconnection requires a sensitive trauma-informed approach.

Diversion and Prevention resources will be available to reconnect youth to their family, including those family members that may be out-of-state, allowing them to work with problem solving specialists in the CoC that are providing outreach and case management.

All youth-led households who access coordinated entry will be screened for diversion assistance first, where a problem-solving conversation may uncover the opportunity to reconnect with family support. Realizing that this will not be an option for all youth, we agree collectively that the first problem solving conversation should be to assist in this reunification if it is a possibility. When possible, family connection should be a part of the youth's individual support plan for them to be successful in their journey to self-sustainability.

Housing First

The Housing First Approach for Youth is a homeless assistance approach that prioritizes providing permanent housing solutions to YYA experiencing homelessness, meeting their immediate basic needs and providing holistic supportive services for them to improve their quality of life. All projects in the Balance of State CoC follow housing first principles, including YHDP and youth specific projects. Such projects are guided by a low- or no-barrier approach, notably not requiring that program participants have income and not discriminating based on prior criminal record, substance use, or parenting status. Youth will be referred to best-fit project types and have seamless access to transfer between projects in order to support long-term placement in housing. Dedicated housing navigators with established landlord relationships combat barriers to housing and present youth with real choices in their housing intervention. Providers will be accountable to housing first principles.

Unsheltered Homelessness

HUD estimates that 50% of youth experiencing homelessness are unsheltered.

Outreach to unsheltered YYA is vital to the success of our youth homeless response system. By funding youth driven outreach services that meet young people where they are we will decrease unsheltered youth homelessness in our communities. We will work to reduce the unsheltered homelessness population ages 18-24 by increasing youth outreach and engagement efforts, identifying youth and young adults who are living in a place not meant for human habitation, known as "unsheltered homeless persons" or the "unsheltered population". Our values of respect and holistic care approaches reflect the youth-centered methods. We respect that these young adults are individuals, with varying identities, cultures and experiences, and those identities inform how they move through our statewide communities. We expect these outreach teams to include YYA with lived experience as outreach workers and be well connected to resources in their community. While there are currently only 5 youth focused outreach programs in the BoS, we plan to increase this number with YHDP funds. Youth service providers are well connected to local McKinney Vento liaisons and technical schools to ensure that unsheltered youth engaged in the educational system have access to services and housing support. These partnerships and collaborations will be further strengthened with YHDP funding.

Youth Choice

Young people who are experiencing homelessness face a range of challenges, from lack of access to basic needs such as food and shelter to mental health issues, addiction, and discrimination. Youth choice means that young people who are experiencing homelessness are actively involved in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the project. Youth choice will be embedded in all YHDP funded projects. By giving young people a voice in the process, projects aim to create a sense of

ownership and empowerment among participants, helping them to develop the skills and confidence they need to navigate their way out of homelessness.

Youth Choice will be integrated into project design on several levels. At the individual level, young people will choose the range of services and resources to support their basic needs and help them move towards stability. This can include access to emergency shelter, food, and clothing, as well as assistance with education, employment, and healthcare. In addition, young people can choose mentoring or counseling services to help build self-esteem, develop life skills, and overcome the trauma and emotional challenges associated with homelessness. Youth will have active decision making power over the providers they want to work with and the services that will help them reach their goals. YYA have the autonomy to choose what housing and services best meet their needs and take control over their individualized plan for success.

At the community level, the CoC will work to raise awareness and expand collaboration to address the root causes of youth homelessness. This includes working with local government, businesses, and other organizations to create more affordable housing, expand access to mental health services, and reduce barriers to education and employment for young people who are experiencing homelessness. Through these efforts, we will work to create a more supportive and inclusive community that values the well-being and potential of all young people, regardless of their circumstances. By expanding services, programming, and partnerships youth will have a real choice in providers and service models. In addition the CoC will provide authentic youth collaboration training to providers. This training will be codesigned by the YAB and be required for all funded YHDP providers.

Individualized & Client-Driven Supports

Collectively we understand that youth are individuals with varying identities and intersections, and those identities inform how they move through our systems. Youth will be guided to their own path through Assessment and Navigation. As each youth leads their own individualized journey through the program(s) they will be able to see their growth as they are making progress toward their goals and path to client-driven success.

Social and Community Integration

The Balance of State YYA homeless response system is a diverse community spread out across the state of Georgia, that is able to integrate varied cultures respectfully, where people from all backgrounds coexist and support one another's efforts to impact homelessness for our youth. By connecting YYA with supportive services through socially supportive engagement, we reinforce youth in building the foundation they need to be thriving members of their communities in the BOS. All youth experiencing homelessness in the past or current, will have opportunities to contribute to the homeless response system in their own communities. These opportunities include participation on the YAB, youth led projects, youth focus groups, youth peer support groups, mentorship, and employment by the system with Community Partners and the COC.

Coordinated Entry

The geography of the Georgia Balance of State Continuum of Care is divided into regions. In each region, there are multiple physical access points. CE access points must be easily accessed, in convenient physical locations, and offer non-physical access points as needed. Access may occur in person, through any designated access point or community outreach teams. Young adults/youths seeking services can also call a toll-free number from anywhere in the state and be connected with a local agency that is trained on the assessment, prioritization and referral process.

Assessors, through the use of a prevention and diversion screening tool, determine emergency housing needs and if alternative housing options other than emergency shelter/emergency housing entry are available. Young adults who can solve their homelessness without housing assistance are diverted out of the system and referred to other resources as needed. Young adults/youths in need of prevention services are referred to appropriate and available resources.

The CE process will allow for quick access to emergency services with as few barriers to entry as possible. Information gathered from the assessment is used to determine the most appropriate housing and/or service intervention. Young adults/youths are matched to a housing intervention and a housing program based on program eligibility, prioritization, geography, and client choice. Once the recommended and available interventions have been identified, eligibility confirmed, and the household has decided which program they are interested in, an electronic referral to the provider will be completed. After the assessor makes an electronic referral to the housing provider, the assessor will complete a warm hand off to the provider.

Currently, there are a lack of youth-specific Coordinated Entry Access Points in the BoS. Integrating navigational services into youth-funded projects will ensure that youth have the same access to the Coordinated Entry System described above as their adult counterparts. In addition to navigational services, a youth-centered trauma-informed assessment tool will be developed to better serve this population and more quickly connect youth to the resources that most fit their self-determined needs.

Holistic Healing & Sustainability Training

To address the root causes of homelessness and provide long-term solutions, it is essential to provide homeless youth with holistic healing and sustainability training.

Holistic healing is an approach that takes into account the whole person – mind, body, and spirit. It recognizes the interconnectedness of different aspects of a person's life and seeks to promote balance and harmony. Homeless youth face a range of challenges, including trauma, mental health issues, and substance abuse. To address these challenges, they need access to a variety of resources and support.

One critical element of holistic healing for homeless youth is the practice of meditation. Meditation has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety, improve mental health, and promote overall well-being. By teaching homeless youth how to meditate, we can help them develop healthy coping mechanisms and reduce the risk of mental health problems.

✦ **SAFE SPACES FOR EVERYONE** ✦

Foraging and nutrition education is another critical component of holistic healing for homeless youth. Many homeless youth do not have access to healthy, nutritious food, which can lead to a range of health problems. By teaching them about foraging and nutrition, we can help them learn how to find and prepare healthy, sustainable food.

Yoga is another essential element of holistic healing for homeless youth. Yoga is a low-cost, low-impact exercise that can help improve physical health, reduce stress and anxiety, and promote overall well-being. By providing yoga classes to homeless youth, we can help them develop healthy habits and improve their overall health.

Financial literacy classes are also critical for homeless youth. Many homeless youth struggle with financial management, which can make it challenging to break the cycle of homelessness. By teaching them about budgeting, saving, and investing, we can help them develop the skills they need to become financially independent.

Free counseling is also essential for homeless youth. Many homeless youth have experienced trauma, abuse, or neglect, which can have long-term effects on their mental health. By providing counseling services, we can help them heal from these experiences and develop healthy coping mechanisms.

Creative centers that are safe spaces are also critical for homeless youth. These centers can provide a variety of resources, including art supplies, a dance studio, and a computer lab. By providing these resources, we can help homeless youth develop their creative skills, express themselves, and build a sense of community.

In conclusion, homeless youth need holistic healing and sustainability training to overcome the challenges they face. By teaching them about meditation, healthy coping mechanisms, foraging, nutrition education, yoga, financial literacy classes, free counseling, and creative centers, we can help them develop the skills and resources they need to build a better future for themselves. It is our responsibility as a society to ensure that all young people have access to the resources and support they need to thrive

New Project List

The Balance of State CoC hosted an onsite planning event April 12 through April 14, 2023. The event was attended by a broad array of partners. The Technical Assistance team, CoC staff, Youth providers, state agency collaborators and Youth Action Board members worked in person on core elements of the Coordinated Community plan including Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, and new projects. Attendees participated in an activity to capture input and feedback on prospective project types including key considerations, required community components, and critical challenges for each project type to be successful. The outcome is that almost all projects are a priority except Host Homes and Permanent supportive housing.

While many projects are needed to address the challenges that youth and young adults experiencing homelessness face there is a clear lack of dedicated affordable housing for this population. With this in mind we have adopted a priority grouping structure in our local application process. The first priority grouping will be RRH and Joint TH/RRH projects. The second priority grouping will be SSO projects. The third priority grouping will be PSH projects. The highest scoring project(s) will be selected, and low scoring projects may be dropped to a lower grouping. Projects that pass eligibility and quality threshold review, may be selected as funding availability allows. Each application submitted will need to pass a capacity and threshold review to be scored by review teams and interviewed by the YAB. Applications are reviewed and scored by independent reviewers, the CoC Program Manager and the Youth Action Board. Following application scoring review and YAB interviews the YAB will meet to select approved projects as funding availability allows.

It is clear from community input, and YAB discussions that the top priority is Permanent Housing Projects. Specifically Joint Transitional Housing Rapid Re-housing projects and Rapid Re-Housing. The Joint component project is a very exciting opportunity for our community and one that is expected to be very successful for the YYA population. Joint TH/RRH provides greater flexibility that is much needed within all regions of the BoS. It creates the opportunity for youth to have an active voice in housing interventions. Youth determine their level of comfortability and readiness for RRH while receiving consistent support across components. Providers need to incorporate Positive Youth Development and Trauma Informed Care into their service delivery. We also expect strong partnerships with workforce development and the Technical College System of Georgia to present participants with opportunities to attain educational and employment goals. We are prioritizing 75% of our funds to priority group 1 Joint TH/RRH and RRH with the majority of that money for the Joint TH/RRH Project type.

While TH/RRH is the preferred project type in priority group 1, standalone RRH also included within priority group 1. RRH meets the individualized needs of youth by providing the amount of assistance on a case by case basis. As needed providers may enter into master leasing agreements (YHDP special activity) to ensure rapid placement into permanent housing Providers need to incorporate Positive Youth Development and Trauma Informed Care into their service delivery. We also expect strong partnerships with workforce development and the Technical College System of Georgia to present participants with opportunities to attain educational and employment goals. YYA may receive up to 36 months (YHDP special activity) of rental assistance and supportive services.

The second priority grouping consists of Supportive Service only projects. Diversion, Drop In Centers, Navigation and Outreach projects will be eligible to apply. Many of these service interventions provide important intervention at the front door of our system. Implementation of these projects present the opportunity for YYA that are in category 2 of homelessness to receive interventions that prevent them from becoming literally homeless. While Drop in Centers create scalability challenges they provide a positive intervention for their localized community. Successful implementation of a Drop in Center presents the opportunity to share a holistic equitable model with other local communities to implement with local money. Drop in centers create safe, welcoming, engaging spaces for youth to connect, create, and release. Provide opportunities for youth to connect with peers and form supportive networks. Offer educational and job readiness resources that promote self-sufficiency. Develop partnerships with local artists and community organizations to enhance offerings. Creative outlets as well as youth driven life skills and professional development opportunities are additional key components. These centers must be well connected to outreach and navigation to ensure youth are connected to needed resources. We are prioritizing 25% of our YHDP portfolio to fund SSO projects.

Diversion projects present a great opportunity at the front door of our homeless system. By presenting youth centered housing problem solving to YYA that are at risk of homelessness we hope to prevent them from becoming literally homeless. Diversion must be youth centered and can prevent lengthy invasive assessments. Providers will need to be trained on reunification strategies and well connected to preventative resources in their community. Strong working relationships with local high schools, colleges, and universities are required for successful implementation.

Navigating systems is a great challenge for YYA in the BoS, even in communities where there are resources and housing interventions. If YYA cannot access or navigate those services then it's as if the services don't exist. To make this project type more youth-driven and engaging, young adults with lived experience should be involved in the navigation process. This could involve training and employing youth as peer navigators, who can provide guidance and support to their peers in navigating complex systems. This can help to build trust and rapport, while also providing young people with positive role models. These projects provide direct support to YYA as they engage the coordinated entry system and leverage non HUD resources for support. Strong connections with community partners, workforce development and education providers will be foundational for successful navigation projects.

Outreach to YYA is a vital program. It is often hard to quantify the youth homelessness population because it is such an invisible population. For outreach services to be youth driven and engaging they should be designed to meet young people where they are. This could involve incorporating youth-driven, art, fun, educational housing, and engagement is essential to honoring the mission and vision of this work. Excluding these things can limit the effectiveness of the project and miss opportunities for youth to feel empowered and engaged in their own success. Incorporating youth-driven strategies for improving education and employment connections and creating organic connections to lasting support networks can provide young people with more ownership of their future. Including art and fun activities can help build community and foster positive self-expression. Educational housing can provide opportunities for young people to continue their education while having a safe and stable home.

The community feels the Permanent supportive housing is an important housing intervention that serves a very vulnerable population. But it also can be expensive to operate and really requires skilled

staff with experience in supporting persons with disabilities. The CoC has a current portfolio of 41 PSH projects across the state and plans to design and implement training for those providers on improving service delivery for Youth and Young Adults. There are also 2 additional PSH projects that were funded under the Rural Homelessness initiative 44 of those units are spread across 5 counties in the southwest Georgia region 4. 10 of those units are dedicated to Youth and Young adults and 2 units dedicated to Parenting Youth. The Balance of State CoC recognizes the importance of PSH but also its limitations and in turn has decided to offer an opportunity to fund PSH but in a lower priority grouping than the other projects.

The GA HMIS Lead will support the YHDP Implementation by assisting the YHDP funded agencies with ensuring accurate youth data collection, analysis of data quality, and verifying YHDP specific data elements are available in the HMIS system. Program evaluation support and the development of YHDP reporting assistance will also be provided. The CoC will set aside \$85,000 - \$187,000 for an HMIS project.

Across all project types incorporating art, fun, and educational elements could enhance the program's effectiveness and engagement with youth. Engaging youth in creating and designing their living spaces or incorporating art installations could foster a sense of ownership and pride in their living arrangements. Introducing educational and employment programs that are fun and engaging can increase youth's motivation to participate and improve their future prospects. Excluding these elements dishonors the vision and mission of the work as it fails to incorporate youth's voices and preferences in creating an environment that fosters stability, growth, and opportunity.

The community feels that for Host Homes to be successful there needs to be a strong middle class to step up as prospective Hosts and there needs to be youth choice in matching Youth to Hosts. For these reasons and challenges, the Balance of State will not be funding Host Homes with YHDP funds as there are other priority needs that scale easier and better.

| Project Type | Estimated Funding Levels |
|---|----------------------------------|
| PH - Joint Transitional Housing Rapid Rehousing | Approx. 75% of Funding Available |
| PH - Rapid Rehousing | |
| SSO - Diversion | Approx. 25% of Funding Available |
| SSO - Drop In Center | |
| SSO - Navigation | |
| SSO - Outreach | |
| HMIS | \$85,000 - \$187,000 |
| Total 2-year award | \$11,699,223 |

Permanent Housing Projects (approximately 75% of funding)

| Project Type | Joint Transitional Housing/Rapid Rehousing |
|---|---|
| Summary of Project and Supportive Services Description | <p>TH-RRH provides short-term crisis housing for youth who enter the TH portion of the program. It also provides medium/long-term permanent housing for youth who transition directly from TH into RRH or from homelessness into RRH. A youth has a choice of which program they wish to access and both TH and RRH portions must be available. Many youth who have no rental history and/or multiple barriers find the support provided with TH an easier launching pad into permanent housing.</p> <p>Within the TH housing component we expect to provide short term crisis housing with an average length of stay not to exceed 6 months.</p> <p>Within the RRH component we expect to provide up to 36 months (with a YHDP special activity) of housing and supportive services as needed to ensure YYA are able to maintain housing once subsidy ends. While traditionally RRH leases are in the participants name as needed agencies will enter into master leasing agreements(YHDP special activity) to ensure rapid placement into permanent housing.</p> <p>Supportive services will be holistic youth centered and focus on education, employment and daily life activities. Service delivery models will follow Positive Youth Development and Trauma Informed Care principles. Strong case management and landlord engagement are essential to the success of this project type.</p> |
| Target population and number served | Youth Headed households ages 18-24 in category 1, 2, and 4 of HUD's definition of homelessness |
| Target # of Housing Units | estimate 50 to 100 households or more annually |
| Staffing | Project should have adequate staffing and embedded supportive services. Anticipated addition of 8 to 10 staff with a staff client ratio of 1:15 maximum |
| Projected Cost | approximately \$3,000,000 - \$4,000,000 |

| Project Type | Rapid Rehousing |
|---|---|
| Summary of Project and Supportive Services Description | <p>RRH is a permanent housing program where a youth may receive up to 36 months of rental assistance and supportive services, with up to six months of aftercare once the rental assistance ends. Supportive services often focus on income maximization and stability planning. Traditionally the participant enters into a lease directly with the landlord.</p> <p>We expect to provide up to 36 months (with a YHDP special activity) of housing and supportive services as needed to ensure YYA are able to maintain housing once subsidy ends. While traditionally RRH leases are in the participants name as needed agencies will enter into master leasing agreements(YHDP special activity) to ensure rapid placement into permanent housing.</p> <p>Supportive services will be holistic youth centered and focus on education, employment and daily life activities. Service delivery models will follow Positive Youth Development and Trauma Informed Care principles. Strong case management and landlord engagement are essential to the success of this project type.</p> |
| Target population and number served | Youth Headed households ages 18-24 in category 1, 2, and 4 of HUD's definition of homelessness |
| Target # of Housing Units | estimate 30 to 50 or more households annually |
| Staffing | Project should have adequate staffing and embedded supportive services. Anticipated addition of 2 to 4 new staff with a staff client ratio of 1:15 maximum |
| Projected Cost | approximately \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 |

HMIS YHDP Implementation Support

| Project Type | Homeless Management Information System |
|---|--|
| Summary of Project and Supportive Services Description | <p>The GA HMIS Lead will support the YHDP Implementation by assisting the YHDP funded agencies with ensuring accurate youth data collection, analysis of data quality, and ensuring YHDP specific data elements are available in the HMIS system. Program evaluation support and the development of YHDP reporting assistance will also be provided. If less than 20 agencies receive funding only 1 staff will be required but if 20 or more agencies are funded 2 staff will be required for support. Some youth providers are not currently using HMIS so it will be a priority of the HMIS team to get them on the system and up to speed quickly.</p> |
| Target population and number served | N/A |
| Target # of Housing Units | N/A |
| Staffing | 1 to 2 FTE to support the data needs of the YHDP implementation |
| Projected Cost | Approximately \$85,000 to \$187,000 |

Supportive Services Only (up to 25% of YHDP funds)

| Project Type | Supportive Services Only (SSO) Diversion |
|---|--|
| Summary of Project and Supportive Services Description | Support offered at the front door of the system to assist youth in finding or maintaining safe & appropriate housing before entering an episode of homelessness. Diversion is a Housing Problem Solving technique that focuses on strategies to help young people identify housing options and avoid an episode of homelessness. Supportive services within diversion will be youth centered and focus on reunification if possible and connection to mainstream resources solutions to prevent entering into the homeless response system. |
| Target population and number served | Youth that are category 2 of HUD's homeless definition. 50 or more youth served annually |
| Target # of Housing Units | N/A |
| Staffing | Staffing patterns should be consistent with need in the community. Diversion is meant to be a short term intervention and should see a staffing ratio of 1:20. Addition of 2 to 5 new staff expected. |
| Projected Cost | Approximately \$150,000 to \$300,000 |

| Project Type | Supportive Services Only (SSO) Drop-In Center |
|---|---|
| Summary of Project and Supportive Services Description | A physical space designed to offer basic needs assistance, connection to other systems, and diversion service. Youth centered holistic programming should be offered including a variety of creative interventions and outlets. Life skills classes, professional development, educational and employment related services should be offered. |
| Target population and number served | Youth Headed households ages 18-24 in category 1, 2, and 4 of HUD's definition of homelessness, 50 youth or more served annually |
| Target # of Housing Units | N/A |
| Staffing | Project staffing should have adequate staffing to deliver programming and supportive services to participants. For YYA engaged in case management staff client ratio of 1:15 maximum. Addition of 2 to 5 new staff expected. |
| Projected Cost | Approximately \$150,000 to \$300,000 |

| Project Type | | Supportive Services Only (SSO) Navigation |
|---|--|--|
| Summary of Project and Supportive Services Description | Supports offered to assist young people who are at risk of or experiencing literal homelessness, navigate complex systems, and provide direct support to youth in crisis as they engage with the coordinated entry system. | |
| Target population and number served | Youth Headed households ages 18-24 in category 1, 2, and 4 of HUD's definition of homelessness, 50 youth or more served annually | |
| Target # of Housing Units | N/A | |
| Staffing | Project staffing should have adequate staffing to deliver supportive services to participants. For YYA engaged in case management staff client ratio of 1:15 maximum. Addition of 2 to 5 new staff expected. | |
| Projected Cost | Approximately \$300,000 to \$500,000 | |

| Project Type | | Supportive Services Only (SSO) Outreach |
|---|--|--|
| Summary of Project and Supportive Services Description | <p>An opportunity to engage youth who are unsheltered, providing basic needs assistance, and connections to necessary resources, including shelter & housing.</p> <p>Outreach services should be designed to meet young people where they are. Outreach teams should include youth with lived experience and be well connected to resources in the community. Outreach services need to be youth centered and interventions should have built in youth choice.</p> | |
| Target population and number served | Youth Headed households ages 18-24 in category 1, 2, and 4 of HUD's definition of homelessness, 50 youth or more served annually | |
| Target # of Housing Units | N/A | |
| Staffing | Project staffing should have adequate staffing to perform outreach duties. Outreach teams should be limited to 2-3 staff members per team. For YYA engaged in case management staff client ratio of 1:15 maximum. Addition of 4 to 6 staff expected. | |
| Projected Cost | Approximately \$300,000 to \$500,000 | |

Permanent Housing (if additional YHDP funds are available)

| Project Type | Permanent Supportive Housing |
|---|---|
| Summary of Project and Supportive Services Description | <p>PSH is a non-time-limited, permanent housing subsidy combined with a high level of supportive services. It is a model that is most effective when combined with a Housing First approach and is typically designed for folks with the highest needs, long experiences with homelessness and a household member with a disability.</p> <p>The inclusion of youth-led design and input in the project's development could provide more relevant and effective support for youth. Incorporating art and other creative elements could enhance the space's welcoming and inclusive environment for youth with disabilities. The project type would benefit from championing the voices of those with lived experiences as they have the most valuable insight into the kind of supportive services that are most effective. Excluding youth's voices would result in a project that fails to meet the unique needs of this population and violates the vision and mission of the work.</p> |
| Target population and number served | Youth Headed households ages 18-24 in category 1, 2, and 4 of HUD's definition of homelessness |
| Target # of Housing Units | 10 households or more served annually |
| Staffing | Project should have adequate staffing and embedded supportive services. Anticipated addition of 1 to 2 new staff with a staff client ratio of 1:15 maximum |
| Projected Cost | *if funding available, approximately \$250,000 |

Supportive Services Only (Not YHDP Funded)

| Project Type | Supportive Services Only (SSO) Coordinated Entry |
|---|---|
| Summary of Project and Supportive Services Description | An opportunity to improve Coordinated Entry System processes to be youth-centered. |
| Key Considerations/ Components | <p>We will not be utilizing YHDP funds for CE but we still plan to complete the following leveraging other funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity focused on youth specific, culturally competent coordinated entry. • More tailored process for youth to better meet their needs, including youth specific questions/assessment and a single point of contact for youth. • DCA plans to expand the CE Team to 5 total members leveraging HOME-ARP \$\$ • Team of 5 would be remote workforce embedded in local communities creating capacity |
| Target population and number served | N/A |
| Target # of Housing Units | N/A |
| Staffing | additional 3 DCA staff initially |
| Projected Cost | Costs associated with staffing and training will be covered by DCA |

| Project Type | Supportive Services Only (SSO) Host Homes |
|---|---|
| Summary of Project and Supportive Services Description | A short-term, family-based setting that can offer youth a safe alternative to shelter. |
| Key Considerations/ Components | <p>We will not be utilizing YHDP funds for Host Home interventions.</p> <p>Home environment means youth won't be on the streets and can be comfortable with access to basic needs Youth identifying hosts that are safe (as opposed to stranger matching) Some YYA would prefer this to a shelter environment</p> <p>To make this project more youth-driven and engaging, hosts should receive training that helps them understand how to support young people's unique needs, backgrounds, and experiences. This could include cultural competency training, trauma-informed care training, and education on LGBTQ+ issues. Additionally, hosts should be encouraged to involve youth in decision-making processes and activities in the home, such as meal planning or outings, to create a sense of belonging and community.</p> |
| Target population and number served | TBD |
| Target # of Housing Units | N/A |
| Staffing | TBD |
| Projected Cost | TBD |

Signature Pages:

The signatures below attest to our participation, approval, and support for the Georgia Balance of State CoC's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program's 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.

1. Continuum of Care (CoC)



Chad Cheshire, CoC Board Chair



Maxwell Ruppensburg, CoC Board Vice-Chair



Joshua Gray, CoC Program Manager

2. Georgia State Agency Collaborative (GSAC)


Allison Setterlind (May 9, 2023 15:18 EDT)

Allison Setterlind, Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning


Cathy L. Smith-Curry (May 9, 2023 19:24 EDT)

Cathy Smith-Curry, Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice

3. Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) providers



Rachel Castillo, Advocates for Children


Rosalynn Fliggins (May 9, 2023 00:01 EDT)

Rosalynn Fliggins, Open Arms, Inc.


Leslie Hartman (May 9, 2023 15:11 EDT)

Leslie Hartman, Safe Harbor Children's Center

4. Public Child Welfare Agency



Carmen Callaway, Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family & Children Services

5. Other Core Planning Team members


Shaheedah El-Amin (May 9, 2023 15:16 EDT)

Shaheedah El-Amin, Rainey Day Fund


Ebony Harris (May 9, 2023 15:34 EDT)

Ebony Harris, Youth Empowerment Success Services


Paula M. Howell (May 9, 2023 19:13 EDT)

Paula Howell, Project Infinity, Inc.


Megan Roberts (May 10, 2023 10:06 EDT)

Megan VandeBogert, Hope Thru Soap, Inc.

Brian P. Kemp
Governor



Christopher Nunn
Commissioner

May 12, 2023

The Honorable Marcia Fudge
Secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
451 7th Street SW
Washington, DC 20410

Dear Secretary Fudge,

The Georgia Balance of State Youth Action Board would like to express our strong support for our current CCP. We endorse the CCP's mission and vision, which aims to uplift youth voice, actions, and vision with equity and honesty. We believe in the importance of true youth collaboration and integration within new projects outlined in the CCP, and we are excited to work alongside other community partners to pave the way forward for programs that have genuine youth engagement and involvement within our communities.

We are encouraged by the hard work and planning that has gone into this project, and we believe that with the dedication and efforts of everyone involved, we can make a real difference in the lives of young people in need. It is crucial to provide resources for those experiencing daily traumas such as homelessness, lack of transportation, and food insecurity, among others. While we are grateful that some members of the community are starting to treat and see us as equal partners, we also acknowledge that some stakeholders in this process, primarily operating under the primary stakeholder, continue to do the opposite of compensating, crediting, and valuing us as true authors of change.

We want to make it clear that we do not expect to be treated and seen as equal partners on all levels or to be compensated, credited, and valued at the same level as other community partners. However, we are committed to being engaged now and ongoing to support and access the execution of our community's plan. We will use the resources available to us and our lived experience to assist in the improvement of the system for other youth and young adults. Our hope is that they have an easier time going through a more responsive, functional, and accessible system with tools designed to respond to their needs.

Thank you for your consideration and ongoing support for this important work.

Yours in power and partnership,


Ebony Morre Oates (May 12, 2023 15:46 EDT)

Ebony Morre Oates, YAB Chair


Immanuel Laidlaw (May 12, 2023 15:49 EDT)

Immanuel Laidlaw, YAB Vice-Chair

Georgia Balance of State Youth Action Board

May 12, 2023

Date

May 12, 2023

Date



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