

Needs of Waterbury/Litchfield CAN Region to End Youth Homelessness

1. Engagement and Outreach

- a. How confident are you that you are reaching all youth and young adults?
We do not believe that we are reaching very many homeless youth or young adults within our CAN. We need to get a better handle on the actual young adult homeless population. In 2015, we discovered through our School Estimation Surveys and our Youth Count we had a population of students at the high school and youth in the community that identified as homeless. In Torrington, over 107 students at the high school identified as unstably housed. We are still doing outreach and public awareness to locate these students in efforts to bring resources to them. We are also growing our YETI to address this issue of outreach and identification.

- b. What programs exist dedicated to outreach for youth?

Waterbury Youth Services Drop In Center
Homeless Hospitality Center (18+ only)
Project Safe Place
Gathering Place (primarily 18 and over)
Newly created Care Closet at Torrington High School
Torrington Area Youth Service Bureau

We have an active youth service bureau in the Torrington and Waterbury area. More collaborative work needs to be done in the upper northwest corner and the surrounding areas of Waterbury to bring more YSB's into the YETI. In addition, we have a very involved McKinney-Vento liaison that helps to outreach to youth in Torrington. We recently started a Care Closet at Torrington High School to help unstably housed youth access basic needs. This could be the possible site for a youth drop-in center and/or CAN intake site for youth. In addition, the Waterbury and Torrington McKinney-Vento Outreach Coordinators have a scheduled meeting to discuss youth needs in the region.

- c. What engagement/outreach programs exist that include youth and have specific attention paid to youth?

WYS Drop In Center
Project Safe Place
Path /CHD
DMHAS Young Adult Services
There are also numerous youth serving organizations in Waterbury, and some in the outlying towns, which serve youth, but do not have a focus on youth homelessness.
McKinney-Vento Liaisons within the schools
Torrington and Waterbury have folks dedicated at the school level to homeless outreach through a McKinney-Vento Sub-grant
Local Youth Service Bureaus

- d. Drop-in centers for youth /young adults? Formal or informal?

WYS Drop In Center
Homeless Hospitality Center (18+ only)
Project Safe Place
Immaculate Conception Drop-in Center
We have informal places in the community that youth go to but they are not drop-centers.

In Torrington, we do have a homeless outreach drop-in center called the Gathering Place. Although, youth will go there we do not have a significant population of youth that seek the services there. We are learning youth are not comfortable going there. We are exploring the possibility of our new Care Closet in Torrington as a possible drop-in center as it is a large space and has resources for youth already in place.

- e. If you could have drop-in places, where would be the best place to locate? How would youth get there?
- Downtown
 - Recreation Centers throughout the city
 - Library
 - Waterbury Mall (probably won't allow this, but many youth congregate there)
- In Torrington, the high school and/or community programming like New Opportunities or the Torrington Area Youth Service Bureaus would be an appropriate place for youth. The high school is convenient for youth enrolled there the other two locations are downtown and walkable if youth are in that area.
- f. Do mobile services exist in this region that serve youth (such as mobile food, mobile healthcare, etc.)? In Torrington, the only service that exists that is mobile is the mobile crisis prevention. Youth utilize this service if they are experiencing a mental health crisis. Waterbury is lacking youth specific mobile services.
- g. Where do unstably housed youth and young adults go for help in your region? Youth are utilizing an array of different services to get what they need including:
- Waterbury Youth Services
 - Youth Service Bureaus
 - 211- Although the use among youth is low.
 - Shelters
 - School guidance counselors and social workers
 - DCF
 - Parent Liaisons and School McKinney-Vento Coordinators
 - Utilizing the Youth-Help.org website, and CCEH website.

2. Triage

- a. Do you have coordinated access sites dedicated to young adults? – No; working on this issue right now as a region. Folks from Waterbury/Litchfield CAN attended the Next Step Tool training including members from the local Youth Service Bureaus. We are exploring site options for youth CAN intakes. In addition, we are exploring possible funding options for a youth navigator or outreach person who can aid in this effort.
- b. Diversion
- i. Do you have funding specific to youth/young adults for diversion? – Be Homeful funds in Waterbury area. Some diversion funds in Torrington and Waterbury can be used for this population.
 - ii. Do you have funding for young families – Be Homeful funds (primarily Waterbury area). In the Torrington area, the MOU for the BeHomeful funds is being worked out at this time. Our local cap agency, New Opportunities, is also trying to work on diversion funds to help youth and families. The local FISH shelter has access to these funds as well. The McKinney-Vento Coordinator also has access to funds at times and helps families and youth

who are homeless or in transition. The McKinney-Vento Coordinator is always trying to fundraise and solicit funds from the community to help with diversion and/or other basic need support for youth and families.

- c. Mediation services in the region – RHY? DCF? Other?
WYS Drop in Center/YFES Social Worker
SFIT Program (must meet program criteria)
The McKinney-Vento liaison, school social workers, CAN intake providers, school counselors naturally do mediation with families and youth. Fortunately, Torrington and Waterbury was able to send 4 folks to the STRIVE mediation training. This will enable our families access to skilled providers.
- d. Do you have navigators specific to youth?
No. ***Having a youth navigator is a priority in our CAN.*** We know we don't have resources to housing funds so a navigator would help to outreach, support youth and establish need.
- e. Emergency Housing/Shelter
 - i. Youth Specific (under 18)
None (other than referring to DCF)
 - ii. Young families
Waterbury area- Salvation Army & St. Vincent De Paul (not young family specific)
Torrington area- FISH, YMCA, Susan B. Anthony (DV)
 - iii. Young adult specific
None
 - iv. Serves young adults/youth but does not have special services dedicated to them
Waterbury area- Salvation Army & St. Vincent De Paul
Torrington area- FISH, YMCA, Susan B. Anthony (DV)
 - v. Serves adults but has specific accommodations such as private bathrooms, designated areas, etc. for young adults
None
 - vi. Other emergency housing options used? (host homes, churches, relative search, DCF, DMHAS, CSSD, DOC)
Safe Haven (DV)
SFIT
PARC at CJR (Girls only; referred by Juvenile Court)
Wellmore (Substance Abuse/not youth specific)
Operation Overflow, if needed (protocol to be worked out)
A process needs to be established in order to best serve youth in housing crisis situations.
Our YETI will take this on as a priority.
- f. If there are no shelter or emergency beds available, what do you do for the above populations?
Diversion tactics are used
Refer to other CAN region programs
Refer to statewide youth outreach/shelter programs

- g. What are some of the barriers to using these emergency housing options such a prioritization, specific demographic capacity, young adult choice - refusals?
All of the above, lack of patience for/understanding of the process
We also struggle greatly with transportation often youth are unable to get these programs and/or get there for intake.

h. Transitional Housing Usage

- i. What are your TH resources in your region?
1. Criminal justice? – TBD
 2. HHS funded? - None
 3. DCF? – CHAP/CHEER (DCF involved only)
- ii. Do you utilize TH for emergency housing? – No
- iii. How do you prioritize for TH? – N/A
- iv. How do you prioritize for single young adults? – We don't, other than as usual for all adults
- v. How do you prioritize for young families? – We don't, other than as usual for any family

3. **Permanent housing options: What does your region have?**

- a. Youth under 18 (DCF, family reconnection, other?)
DCF, Family Reconnection, SFIT
- b. Young adults (RRH, PSH, other (such as security deposit assistance, PHA preference?)
RRH – only if homeless and meets criteria
- i. RRH anything dedicated specifically to youth/young adults/young families?
The Start Program for young adults
Nothing for youth or specifically for young families
- c. What are the barriers to accessing these resources? Possible issues include: prioritization, length of time homeless v. youth status, involvement with CAN, systems v. provider driven
All of the above and status of homelessness
- d. Affordable housing – what is your supply? What are your barriers to access? (such as need security deposit assistance)

Barriers include: Need for security deposit, behind in utility bills, income, child care, transportation, criminal history, education level, language barrier, and other challenges.

Our supply is limited and often requires a security deposit.

Torrington has a pool of unfair landlords and housing practices.

Outreach to landlords has to happen in order to address the barriers to affordable housing and fair housing practices.

4. **Community needs questions:**

- a. How do you think the community could serve homeless youth better, without additional funding? Do you have a specific suggestion, strategy, or idea for improving services?

Better awareness of issue/resources in youth programs and the schools

We need to build upon things done in the schools already such as the school estimation surveys, Youth Counts, and the School Engagement Project which were all a success.

Our YETI needs to be more active in the following:

Finding a location for Youth CAN intakes with the Next Step Tool

Implementing the Youth Count 2018

Implementing a Public Awareness Campaign on Youth Homeless

Funding a Youth Navigator

Outreaching to youth who are homeless

Calling youth on the CAN by-name list

Developing host families

- b. What exists already and do you need more in any of the above categories?

We need a person dedicated to moving this agenda forward in the community. It has become bigger than the one or two people that have been working on it. In addition, we need the YETI to come up with clear action steps on what needs to be done.

- c. How would you alter existing models to better suit needs of youth/young adults?

Beds just for young adults in adult shelters (not ideal; would prefer separate YA shelter)

An intake place for youth only and/or resource center

- d. Thinking creatively, if you had flexible funding, what assistance would help youth/young adults stay safe during housing crisis and/or help them get permanently housed in your region?

Intergeneration/multigenerational model of housing

Offer funds to family where couch surfing is taking place to make situation more permanent

Brief hotel stay for youth

Youth navigator needed for following up with youth

Focus on prevention work

Focus on diversion

- e. If you had \$200,000 to spend on ending youth homelessness, what would be your housing priorities (outreach/engagement – permanent housing) broken down by percentages?

Young Adult Shelter or additional services for YAs in adult shelters & a Homeless Youth Navigator

- f. What training do you think would be most helpful? For whom?

Training for CAN providers in prioritizing youth for housing placement

Best practices from other communities/states

Awareness for other non-homeless youth serving programs about youth homelessness

Diversion and mediation training for the entire CAN