

Existing Services for young adults (15-17 and 18-24) experiencing homelessness

Sound Community Services (including AXS Center)

- Young adult drop in center offering a variety of services.
- Outreach/In-reach in schools, shelters, and streets (limited)
- Serves 18-24, connects under 18 to CT Strong
- CAN is currently collaborating with Sound to develop a way to go out and reach those who are identified by them.

CT Strong

- 5 year DCF pilot
- Under 18, including some limited outreach.
- Norwich Youth and Family Services
- Housing data is part, but not the purpose of their outreach and tracking efforts
- They go onto the streets and in schools, but also follow along with families connected to their program.

Reliance Health

- There is an unequal distribution of outreach services in Norwich
- Less in New London and the outlying areas of the region.
- There aren't enough staff, but when they are outreaching they are finding youth and young adults.
- 14-17 year olds generally are not being identified as much.
- 18-24 have all been prioritized and matched to housing services when identified.
- This may be because there are simply less of this age group (as would be supported by the 2017 Youth Count.)
- Out CT and NCSS are helping to outreach to LGBTQ youth and young adults who need assistance.

United Way pilot

- United Way of SE CT has funded several small pilots (including one at the New London Homeless Hospitality Center) to better reach youth experiencing homelessness.

Thames River Family Program

- Transitional housing program with a focus on parenting youth.

Jefferson Commons (operated by the Connection)

- Includes permanent supportive housing units set aside for youth.

New London County Coordinated Access Network (CAN)

- Providing access to homeless related services via referral from 211. (65 youth attending intake appointments this fiscal year.)
- Emergency shelter for youth (over 18) experiencing homelessness.
- Access to core CAN services including rapid rehousing, diversion and supportive housing.

Waterford Country School

- S-Fit program

Safe Futures

- Domestic violence resources
- Educational resources in schools

Noank Community Support Services

- CHAP program

AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT

- School engagement and integrating identification efforts with the schools.
- An issue with identification is that the youth or young adult frequently will go off radar, even if entered onto the by-name-list
- There is a struggle to stay continuously engaged, especially when channels of communication may frequently change (such as address, phone numbers, or contacts)
- If a youth is matched to services but cannot be found, their placement can be held for up to 30 days depending on the program and as long as due diligence has been done to find them.
- Transportation once identified or once connected to a program can be a major barrier.
- Outreach and Engagement resources do exist, though there is room for improvement. Generally, there is a sentiment that if there was something to readily connect them to quickly and effectively as soon as they are engaged this would bring more youth and young adults who need services out for assistance. (“Build it and they will Come” Approach)

- Marketing or Education Outreach efforts or Public Relations campaign could be useful in schools to encourage youth to self-identify and reach outlying regions in the area.

Couch surfers (14-17)

- Schools and DCF doesn't want to engage with them and youth are resistant to their involvement.
- There are no Runaway and Homeless Youth providers in this area.
- There are currently resources for diversion for families and a small amount for individuals, could apply to a young adult or family under 25.
- Waterford Country School--Some issues have been found around the use and success of utilizing S-FIT beds.

Areas of Improvement

- The Community Care Team and Matching Meetings have a mix of people and don't always communicate effectively around youth.
- No current diversion funding designated for homeless or unstably housed youth or young adults
- Current funding comes out of Rapid Re-Housing funds.
- There is a need for resources for parenting youth and young adults
- There are not enough foster homes for the late adolescents who would be in care with DCF. There may be nowhere to go if home is deemed unsuitable.

Youth Navigator Role:

- Could connect across the region's service centers and identify and engage, as well as connect youth and young adults immediately to services.
- Known in the youth-serving organizations as point of contact.
- Trained in Diversion with flexible diversion funding and family mediation training.
- Outlying towns have no transportation or outreach efforts.
- Either the youth navigator or a separate staff could conduct mobile outreach in these regions.

Triage (Emergency Shelter)

- No Runaway and Homeless Youth providers in the area.
- Crisis Respite for youth and young adults.
- Emotional health and/or trauma informed crisis housing and triage.
- Sober Houses: Need for emergency housing for youth and young adults coming out of treatment for sobriety.

- Emergency Housing or home for youth and young adults could be a collaborative effort and plan for the Southeast and Northeast as a group to serve 14-24 year old.
- Additional housing and caseworkers are needed for this population.
- There is a need to build planning process with the Department of Corrections to make sure people aren't leaving juvenile detention to homelessness or being discharged from halfway homes to homelessness
- Early case planning when possible, but can be a challenge.
- Exit interviews exist, but many people just say what they think people want to hear so they can get out as quickly as possible.
- The True Unit: assists with new releases. Includes those with prior experience incarcerated.

Supportive Housing

- Generally, with the exception of a small group of high needs youth and young adults, Permanent Supportive Housing should be avoided for this age range.
- Rapid Re-Housing with additional supports and casework for youth population
- Non-Time limited supportive housing
- Perhaps Permanent Supportive Housing with an exit plan and timeframe.
- There is more need for short-term housing options
- Percent that need more permanent housing options appears to be very small in this region.

Host Homes

- Particularly for under 18
- Is there a model for avoiding DCF licensing procedures and other barriers?

Transitional Housing

- This may be an additional need particularly for parenting and pregnant youth and young adults.

Congregate Living and Shared Housing

- Particularly in areas without much affordable housing.

Results of YETI Voting

- Outreach in Outlying Areas (Mobile Outreach): 4 Votes
- Youth Navigator (outreach to known youth and diversion): 13 Votes
- Drop-In Center:
 - o Under 18 (maybe with CT Strong): 1 Vote
 - o 18 – 24 (in outer region): 1 Vote

- Outreach Coordinator & Marketing in Schools: 12 Votes
- Re-Entry Emergency Housing and Substance Sober Housing: 4 Votes
- Young Adult Emergency Housing: 6 Votes
- Emergency Housing (NE/SE)
 - o 18-24: 2 Votes
 - o Under 18: 6 Votes
- Diversion funding for youth and young adults: 14 Votes
- Shorter Term Housing (RRH, host homes, TH, etc):
 - o For Single Youth Only: 7 Votes
- Longer Term Housing (including PSH with exit Planning): 3 Votes
- Affordable Housing and Shared Housing: 5 Votes