

# THE ITHACA/TOMPKINS COORDINATED COMMUNITY PLAN 2022



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# **Introduction:**

## **YHDP Vision**

The Ithaca Youth Action Board (YAB) envisions ending youth homelessness with an equitable, youth-led canopy of mutual aid, a network of resources that share the fundamental belief that everyone deserves housing, providing standards of safety that the current systems have failed to uphold, valuing homeless youth as people, and centering a housing-first framework that is trauma informed, anti-racist, and abolitionist. Ensuring the safety of homeless youth involves building community through a foundation of youth power and equity, all youth not only having equitable access to resources but an equitable share of their voice in the discussion.

## **YHDP Mission**

The Ithaca YAB works to create a homeless response system that radically embraces harm reduction by creating pathways that help homeless youth navigate systems to make all experiences of homelessness one time and brief. Centering abolition through intervening in the systematic incarceration and oppression that keep homeless youth disenfranchised, implementing trauma-informed practices, and ensuring anti-racism while promoting youth voices with lived experience into positions of power and authority will allow a housing first system with a radically safe future.

## **YHDP Statement**

The writing of the CCP has been both re-traumatizing and healing for us. Although we had to relive past and present trauma, we have never before been given the power over our own resources in such a large way. Not only has it been specifically meaningful for us to be able to work on this document, but we know that it has also ensured that the CCP addresses the actual needs of homeless and housing insecure youth in Ithaca. We have gone through the system, and we know what needs to be changed.

This centering of youth voices cannot end here. Just because we are no longer writing a document, and the money is being allocated to outside organizations, our voices must still be

heard. The projects and programs that we have been working hard to envision and write about will not reach their full potential if they do not utilize the knowledge of the YAB as well as the youth within these developments. We have the wisdom to make these systems work. We only hope that we will continue to be given the opportunities to use our experiences to help our community, so that no one else will have to go through what we have gone through.

## **Personal Testimony from a YAB Member**

With this grant, we have the opportunity to fundamentally change the ways in which the homeless and housing insecurity system operates, to stop the cycle and provide the necessary resources for homeless youth to recover and find healing in a safe and welcoming environment. The money from this grant has the ability to completely revolutionize the homeless and housing insecurity response system in Tompkins County.

The money from the grant is revolutionary, as is the grant writing process itself. Ithaca is the first community that has been awarded the YHDP grant where youth themselves have written portions, if not the majority, of the components beyond coming up with the concepts represented within the CCP. Although this sounds remarkable, there could have been a much greater impact. I am the young adult that participated most heavily in the writing process, compiling the ideas from the other Youth Action Board members together into the amazing CCP that exists today. Although the majority of the ideas did not come from me, I was the one that learned how to collect them into a cohesive document; I was the one who learned how to write a grant.

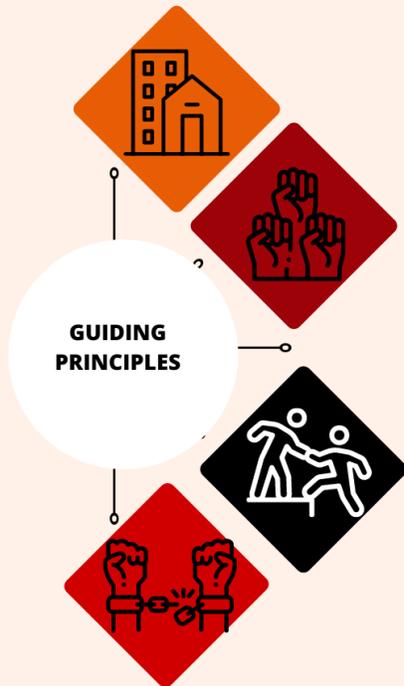
I, however, do not have the life experience of the average youth and young adult experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity within Tompkins County. I was privileged enough to be afforded exorbitant amounts of educational support and time to dedicate to academics throughout my childhood, and this continues to this day as I pursue my Bachelor's degree. I became homeless after coming out as transgender, as it was necessary for my mental health to leave my home. I did not become homeless due to a cycle of poverty or housing insecurity within my family. Although I am not insinuating that my experience was easy, it is important to acknowledge and recognize the immense privilege I have been afforded throughout my life in

this regard. It is also important to acknowledge that I am white, which has also afforded myself and my biological family enormous privilege, contributing to the reason that I was afforded such resources to explore my education and foster my writing capabilities.

Due to my life experience, I was prepared to write this grant, and so I did, collecting the ideas of my peers into a document that makes me proud. I can now put this experience on my resume, and will be afforded future employment opportunities due to the combination of this invaluable experience as well as my lived experience with homelessness. But I was not offered writing help or training, and neither were my peers. My peers, the other YAB members, are brilliant people. They have the expertise that was communicated within the CCP, but they have not been offered the same academic opportunities throughout their life that I have. Now, I alone am the one with the skillset to pursue grant writing later in my career because they were not offered the resources to fully participate in the writing of this document, a document that is composed of their ideas and life experiences, knowledge that can only be gained from going through the system.

If we truly want to end the cycle of homelessness and housing insecurity within our community, to fully commit to the mission and vision of this grant, we must seize these opportunities. We are embarking upon a multi-year journey to completely transform the current system, and in doing so, we will be providing care and resources to homeless and housing insecure youth on a scale that we have never reached before. We must foster opportunities for learning within this process, as one way to fight and end youth homelessness is to ensure that homeless and housing insecure youth have the job skills necessary to receive employment. Not only is this a way to ensure jobs for the people within our programs, but it is also necessary to the functioning of our developments. People with lived experience are the most valuable employees with the highest level of understanding of the ways in which the system should work to help the highest number of people. If they wish to pursue jobs within the sector, we must ensure that youth and young adults are able to find jobs within the homeless and housing insecurity system and have their talents fostered, both for the benefit of their careers as well as the efficacy of the system as a whole.

# YHDP GUIDING PRINCIPLES



**01** | **Housing First**  
Valuing the availability and accessibility of resources before any bureaucratic resources.

**02** | **Anti-racism**  
Uplifting BIPOC voices, constantly evaluating and changing systems and mindsets to value the lives and perspectives of BIPOC.

**03** | **Trauma-informed**  
Ensuring that all individuals working within or connected to the homelessness system understand, acknowledge, and are educated on the trauma that is foundational to housing insecurity and homelessness.

**04** | **Abolition**  
Intervening in the systemic incarceration and oppression that keeps homeless and housing insecure youth disenfranchised.

# ITHACA YHDP CORE VALUES

1

## YOUTH POWER AND EQUITY

Centering youth voices in every discussion with an acknowledgement that we have the experience necessary to make revolutionary change in the system, ensuring that all homeless and housing insecure youth have access to crucial resources.



2

## COMMUNITY

Fostering solidarity and connection among homeless and housing insecure youth.



3

## MUTUAL AID

Commitment to interdependent survival, valuing everyone's needs regardless of the monetary cost.



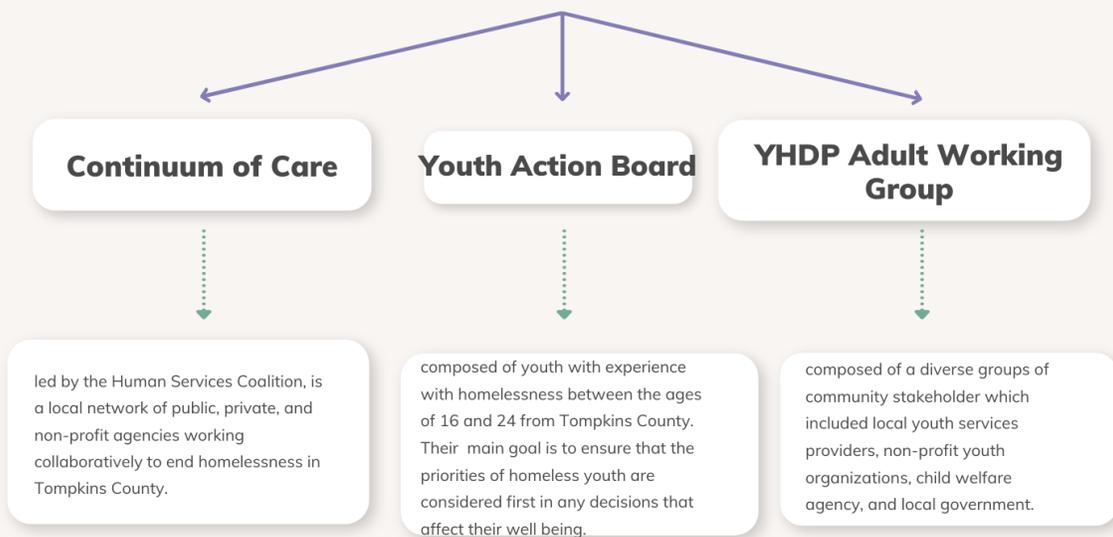
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## SAFETY

Radical harm reduction and creating pathways to help young people navigate systems that are violent.



## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



## **YHDP Governance Structure:**

The governance structure and the approval process of the YHDP Plan is a consensus based with three main bodies in the decision-making process for collectively voting on all final YHDP projects and plans. These three bodies are the CoC, the YAB, and the YHDP stakeholder group. The YAB will have double the voting power of the other bodies in the decision-making process to emphasize the importance of youth perspective and expertise in the YHDP process.

**Continuum of Care:** The Ithaca / Tompkins County Continuum of Care System (CoC NY-510), led by the Human Services Coalition, is a local network of public, private, and non-profit agencies working collaboratively to end homelessness in Tompkins County. This collaborative process is accomplished through bi-monthly CoC meetings as well as several sub-committees that address issues including the development of new supportive housing, barriers to entry into housing and homeless services, and at-risk youth. The Human Services Coalition also serves as the collaborative applicant in the Continuum of Care Program Competition which funds several supportive housing projects in the City of Ithaca.

**Youth Advisory Board:** The Youth Advisory Board is composed of youth with experience with homelessness between the ages of 16 and 24 from Tompkins County. The Board's main goal is to ensure that the priorities of homeless youth are considered first in any decisions that affect their well being. They want to amplify the voices of homeless youth and engage in equitable work in order to best serve the community from which they come, decreasing the population of homeless youth and providing safer and more diverse pathways for the entire community. They provide invaluable insight, oversight, experience, and participation in the YHDP planning process, including writing and developing the grant materials as well as the project ideas.

**YHDP Adult Working Group:** is composed of a diverse group of community stakeholders which included local youth services providers, non-profit youth organizations, child welfare agencies, and local government. The YHDP Adult Working Group operates as a consensus-based group that centers the voices and needs of young people while understanding their role as content experts within systems and structures that are designed to address the needs of teens and young

adults. Over the past year, this group has committed time to weekly meetings to discuss our community’s commitment and action-oriented steps towards solving systemic problems, while also having facilitated open discussions around identity, lived-experiences, and how to follow the lead of our YAB. The YHDP Adult Working Group has worked in collaboration with the YAB, meeting weekly and asking for their input, feedback and approval for all action oriented goals towards addressing youth homelessness.

**YHDP Partners & Key Stakeholders**

<b>Partner</b>	<b>Partner’s Name &amp; Role</b>	<b>Involvement</b>
Youth Action Board	Bree Abuja-Sandoval- They/She Alice Goddard-She/Her Jordyn Jennings- She/Her Angeliyah Maldonado she/her Sage Niver- He/They Gio Pagliaro -He/Him Kelvin Sample He/Him Charlie Spearman- She/They Lee - They/Them Anaya Ward - she/they Troy Washington-He/Him	Actively wrote the majority of the CCP, lead partner in the creation and development of the RFP. The YAB will be part of the Review Committee, ensuring projects meet the threshold prior to the adult partner rank and review.
Public Child Welfare Agencies	Martine Gold, Program Development Specialist Tompkins County Department of Social Services	Member of the YHDP Adult Working Group, participated in the planning and review of the CCP, provided data on youth services within Tompkins County.
Continuum of Care and Emergency	Amy Furman, Supportive Housing Director, Tompkins Community Action	Member of the YHDP Adult Working Group, participated in the planning and review of the CCP.

Solutions Grant Program Recipients		Tompkins Community Action has three support housing programs in the City of Ithaca.
Local and State Government	Bridgette Nugent, Deputy Director, Tompkins County Youth Services	Member of the YHDP Adult Group Working, participate in the planning and review of the CCP
Runaway and Homeless Youth Program Providers	Kate Shanks-Booth, Director of Tompkins County Youth Services & Tompkins County RHY Coordinator  Rick Alvord, Operation Director/Interim Executive Director the Learning Web, Andrea Champlin, the Learning Web	Members of the YHDP Adult Group, participate in the planning and review of the CCP, provided data on youth services within Tompkins County.  Members of the YHDP Adult Working group, participate in the planning and review of the CCP. Provide supportive services to teens and young adults. Some of their clients have participated in the YAB and focus groups.
Health, Mental Health, and Substance Abuse Agencies	Mike Ellis, Director of Youth and Outreach Services, Family and Children's Services of Ithaca Matt Dankanich, Community Health Worker, REACH Medical	Members of the YHDP Adult Working Group, participate in the planning and review of the CCP
Juvenile and Adult Corrections and Probation	Tompkins County Corrections Division	Attended YHDP Adult Working Group Meetings

Public Housing Authorities	Tompkins Community Action	Partner in early development phase; 100 Day Challenge.
Affordable Housing Providers	Hillary Opperman, Real Estate Development Associate, Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services	Partner in early development phase; 100 Day Challenge. Each of these organizations have shown commitment to addressing teen homelessness by being a partner in early initiatives to create equitable solutions for our young people.
Early Childhood Development and Child Care Providers	Childcare Development Council	Partner in early development phase; 100 Day Challenge.
Non-Profit Youth Organizations	Meryl Phipps, Executive Director The Village at Ithaca, Sophie Sparrow, Social Worker The Village at Ithaca  Charlene Santos, Youth Program Leader: Youth Employment Service The Ithaca Youth Bureau	Members of the YHDP Adult Working Group, participate in the planning and review of the CCP. The Village at Ithaca has been a sanctuary and safe place for our YAB to feel emotionally and physically supported. The Village provided educational support to youth and young adults throughout Tompkins County  Members of the YHDP Adult Working Group, participate in the planning and review of the CCP. Representative of youth employment agency that provides job readiness resources and opportunities to youth

		and young adults throughout Tompkins County.
Landlords	Ithaca Neighborhood Housing, Ithaca Housing Authority	Partner in early development phase; 100 Day Challenge. Each of these organizations have shown commitment to addressing teen homelessness by being a partner in early initiatives to create equitable solutions for our young people.
Privately Funded Homeless Organizations	Michaela Cortright, Deputy Director and Samaritan Center Director, Catholic Charities Tompkins/Tioga	Member of the YHDP Adult Working Group, participated in the CCP development. This organization works with vulnerable members of the community battling housing instability and insecurity.
Local Advocacy, Research, and Philanthropic Organizations	Tommy Miller Director of Family Empowerment Services, Catholic Charities Tompkins/Tioga and Coordinator of Family	Attended YHDP Adult Working Groups meetings, provided perspectives and testimonials of the needs of diverse families that their organizations serve who battle homelessness and housing instability.
Community Development Corporations	Hillary Opperman, Real Estate Development Associate, Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services	Partner in early development phase; 100 Day Challenge. Each of these organizations have shown commitment to addressing teen homelessness by being a partner in early initiatives to create equitable solutions for our young people.
Organizations that serve culturally	The Village at Ithaca, The Learning Web	Representation from each of these organizations have been part of the

specific (Black, Latino, Indigenous, people with disabilities, LGBTQ, etc.) communities		development and review of the CCP from the beginning. Each organization has had their young people at the table to provide their voices and perspectives as it relates to youth homelessness
Continuum of Care Board and Staff	Liddy Bargar, Simone Gatson	Participate in the discussion, review and approval of the CCP.

## **Community Context**

Tompkins County has a population of 101,702 with approximately 40% of the population living within the city of Ithaca and the remaining population living in rural outlying areas (2021 US Census Quick Facts). The County consists of 492 square miles which contains a small urban center, the City of Ithaca, which is home to Cornell University, a major Ivy League research university, and Ithaca College, a small liberal arts college. Tompkins County is an anomaly among NY state counties in that while the area appears relatively affluent, it is difficult to rely on median statistics when trying to understand the quality of life within the county and the difficulties faced by our homeless residents. Amidst the beautiful gorges and ivy-covered educational institutions live significant numbers of residents who are homeless, who are living below the poverty level, and who are under-educated, unemployed or under-employed. Based on 2020 statistics, Tompkins County has an overall poverty rate of 16.9% with a much higher prevalence in the City of Ithaca (39.2%) where the majority of homeless youth are found. Along with this poverty rate is one of the highest rental rates in Upstate New York, which is a major factor in homelessness in general, and particularly in youth homelessness.

## **Community History with a Youth Homeless System**

In January of 2019 NY-510 was selected to participate in the 100 Day Challenge to End Youth Homelessness sponsored by A Way Home America and Rapid Results institute. The 100 Day

Challenge asks communities to work across sectors to design and implement a plan to prevent and end youth homelessness with an accelerated timeline and with an eye towards measurable impact, intense collaboration and sustainability. The 100 Day Challenge to End Youth Homelessness required our community to more closely examine our data and use that data to guide our decisions throughout the challenge timeline. Additionally, participation in this process increased front-line staff in youth serving agencies' access to leadership opportunities by challenging our team members to take on new and different roles.

The 100 Day Challenge first asked our continuum of care to bring together a group of system leaders invested in pushing the needle towards ending youth homelessness. Our system leader group included representation at a decision maker level from Tompkins County administration, Tompkins County legislators, Tompkins County Department of Social Services, Tompkins County Planning and Sustainability Department, Ithaca Urban Renewal Agency, City of Ithaca Common Council, The Advocacy Center, The Learning Web, Planned Parenthood, Tompkins Community Action, Ithaca Housing Authority, Youth Employment Services, Catholic Charities, Opportunities Alternatives and Resources, 211, McKinney-Vento liaisons, members of the faith community, local philanthropy foundations, and people with lived experience.

The system leaders provided initial guidance for the challenge including: Create connections with local landlords to increase their willingness to rent to young people, explore increasing affordable childcare, create a community movement to better support youth experiencing homelessness, support youth to access all mainstream benefits for which they are eligible, explore the development of a youth community center/safe space for teens and youth and improve the completeness and accuracy of data about youth experiencing homelessness.

The challenge team set a goal to house 40 youth from the coordinated entry list and support reunification goals for the young people who desire to return to their families of origin or choice. As another initiative the team set out to create "circles of support" composed of caring adults chosen by the youth who could work together to better support young people in their individually identified goals including increasing educational attainment, employment goals, drivers' licenses and access to additional services including mental health and substance use treatment.

The 100 Day Challenge team engaged non-traditional partners in this work including owner operators of local Air BnBs, who were surveyed about the viability of longer-term leases for youth and the local student population who were assessed for their interest in sub-letting or apartment sharing with youth who were experiencing homelessness.

Throughout the challenge the team was able to pilot ideas and initiatives, conduct research, and learn about best practices from our cohort. Among the greatest take-aways from our participation in the 100 Day Challenge to End Youth Homelessness was a renewed commitment to cross sector planning. Participants reported feeling better connected with the entire community, more knowledgeable about resources and gaps in services and better able to support youth experiencing homelessness. The core team of the 100 day challenge has continued meeting as the Youth committee of the CoC.

## **Current Housing and Housing Services**

The primary avenue for ensuring affordable and stable housing for individuals and families who are low income and face multiple barriers has been Housing and Urban Development funded public housing and voucher programs. These have not kept pace with the need for long-term housing support in Tompkins County. Currently both agencies that issue HCV's, Ithaca Housing Authority and Tompkins Community Action, have between a one to two and a half year wait for issuing new vouchers. In total, there are 23 transitional units, 23 SRO permanent supportive housing units, 72 permanent supportive housing studios/apartments, and 28 other rooms/cottages with 12 transitional apartments and 29 permanent supportive housing units specifically for youth. Two housing agencies provide 2,220 HCV and Mainstream vouchers along with Tenant Based Rental Assistance. Since 2019, Ithaca Housing Authority in conjunction with Tompkins County Department of Social Services and The Learning Web has been able to support youth formerly in foster care and parents involved in Children Services with Family Unification Vouchers (these are all currently in use with a long wait list).

The Learning Web operates the Youth Outreach Center which serves as a hub for 150+ homeless youth each year to obtain emergency assistance, assistance with housing and employment, and other independent living assistance. While these numbers are impressive, it is important to

realize that in permanent supportive housing, over a third of residents are remaining in these housing options for 3 to 5 years or more. The remaining units and rental supports do not come close to meeting the needs of the 541 individuals that have sought out emergency shelter services in the past year that include the 81 youth that spent time in the emergency shelter (but these numbers do not take into account for the majority of youth that do not utilize the emergency shelter). These numbers have overwhelmed the emergency shelter resources of 20 year-round beds and 16 seasonal beds with upwards of 100 individuals and families supported in motels in Tompkins and surrounding counties daily during these winter months, and over 50 still supported as of July 2021.

## **Research Study**

To document the community, scope and nature of youth homelessness, the 2019 Independent Living Survey was conducted by Cornell University's Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research (BCTR) in conjunction with the Tompkins County Continuum of Care (CoC), the county's planning entity for homeless services and Learning Web, an established agency that provides housing, employment, independent skill building and advocacy for homeless and at-risk youth. Since 2003, this community-based participatory research project has been conducted every four years.

For this project, a study team was formed in the fall of 2018 to plan for the 2019 follow-up study. The team engaged 17 youth researchers that were formerly homeless and are/were current or past participants in The Learning Web's Youth Outreach Program. The youth researchers were involved in all aspects of the project, from designing the survey, to recruiting subjects, collecting the data, interpreting the findings, and presenting results to community stakeholders. Cornell researchers from the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research (BCTR) assisted in the planning meetings, training of research assistants, analyzing the data and generating project reports. Youth researchers earned an hourly stipend for participating in all planning meetings and a flat rate per survey completed. The prominent role of youth researchers made it possible to reach those individuals not connected to programs or services, the invisible and underserved sector of the homeless youth population.

Youth researchers administered surveys to the target group of community youth during the period between February and April 2019 in the community or as well as in the Youth Outreach Drop-in Center. The youth researchers, along with the study team, and other homeless youth met to discuss and interpret the findings at a data dialogue session held prior to finalizing this report. The study team including youth researchers then presented the findings to key community stakeholders including the County legislature, Homeless and Housing Task Force and others involved with youth and addressing homelessness in our community. The average age of study participants was 21 years old and ranged from 17 to 24 years old.

### **Ethnic and Racial Demographics of Participants of the Study**

Tompkins County has limited racial and ethnic diversity with 77% of the population self-identified as White/non-Hispanic (2020 US Census Quick Facts). Youth participating in the Independent Living Survey are from diverse racial backgrounds with more than half being young people of color. In the survey, youth identified themselves as 42% white, 40% black, 10% Hispanic, 3% Pacific Island/Hawaiian, and 5% other. And over 70% of Learning Web Youth Outreach participants who reside primarily in the City and Town of Ithaca self-identify as youth of color.

### **Key Findings and Themes within Study**

Young people approach shelter differently than adults, often preferring uncertain, transient housing to emergency shelters and residential programs which they associate with a loss of control and independence. Given that choice, they are rarely captured in traditional measures used to assess the prevalence of homelessness, such as point-in-time counts and shelter utilization data. Efforts to count or describe homeless youth that rely primarily upon these sources vastly underestimate the true extent of the problem. Through this project, research assistants were able to reach 144 young people which represent only a fraction of the homeless youth that live or spend considerable time in Tompkins County. The following details some of the many challenges faced by homeless youth and how they cope with these challenges.

# Systems Involvement



Sixty seven percent of youth from the ILS study have a history of involvement with institutional systems, ie. foster care, jail, group home.

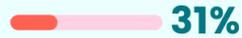


About 60% of youth reported having been in jail or prison

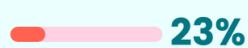
**Involvement in systems continue with 74 children in foster care/institutional settings involved with TCDSS at the end of 2020.**

**The 2019 ILS respondents reported more systems involvement than in prior years.**

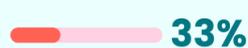
Group Home



Juvenile Detention



Foster Care



Thirty six percent of younger respondents and twenty six percent of older respondents of ILS study reported not having some type of systems involvement.

Respondents who checked the 'other' box indicated being in a mental health facility.

## HOMELESS YOUTH INDICATE WHERE THEY STAYED IN 2019

35% have stayed on someone else's apartment

35% have stayed at several people's apartments/couch surfing

35% have stayed at an emergency shelter

21% have stayed with a relative

22% have stayed in a vehicle

20% have stayed in a room paid by a voucher

18% have stayed in a motel paid for by someone else

19% were incarcerated in jail

17% stayed in a hotel they paid for.

12% have stayed in a location outside such as a tent, barn, park, or bridge

10% have stayed at an abandoned building

9% have stayed at the jungle (homeless encampment)

7% have stayed at a places of business such as a laundry mat

5% have stayed at a transportation site.

# What Youth Say They Need

Besides assistance in securing stable housing, youth identified



Clothing



Food



Transportation



Education



hygiene essentials



Budgeting



## **Statement of Need:**

### **A. At-Risk Unaccompanied Youth Estimate: 2,000**

There are approximately 2,000 at-risk unaccompanied youth between the ages of 15 and 24 in Tompkins County. According to the Voices of Youth Count study at Chapin Hill, one in ten young adults between 18 and 25 years of age, and at least one in 30 adolescents between the ages of 13-17, will experience some form of homelessness. Of the total number of youth in Tompkins County between the ages of 15 and 24, we can conservatively estimate that 10% have at least one of the following risk factors for experiencing homelessness:

- **Youth experiencing poverty:**

According to the Tompkins County Youth Services Spring 2021 report, **14.3%** of children and youth were living under the poverty line. **3,501** households were receiving Food Stamps/SNAP assistance within the past year. **35%** of the **10, 406** students within the school districts of Tompkins County receive free lunch, and **5%** receive reduced lunch.

- **Youth experiencing family homelessness and housing insecurity:**

In 2018, **7.6%** of 12<sup>th</sup> graders indicated having changed homes **5-6 times** since kindergarten. **4.6%** of 12<sup>th</sup> graders indicated having changed homes **7+ times** since kindergarten. Between 2019 and 2020, **75 students** within the school districts of Tompkins County had been reported as experiencing homelessness.

- **Youth involved or formerly involved in the child welfare system:**

In 2019, there were **63** children/youth between the ages of 0-17 that were in the foster care system. There were **184** reports of abuse/maltreatment of children/youth of the ages 0-17.

- **Youth involved or formerly involved in the juvenile justice system:**

In 2018, the Tompkins County Youth Services data shows that **105** young adults between the ages of 18-24 had committed property and violent crimes. There

were **77** youth in 2018 that committed property and violent crimes. In 2019, there were **15** Pre-Pins and **48** PINS referrals to Probation by the school districts of Tompkins County.

**B. Unaccompanied Youth Estimate:**

- In 2021, the Point in Count indicated that there were **18** unaccompanied youth, and in 2020, there were **21** unaccompanied youth counted.

**C. At- Risk Pregnant and Parenting Youth Estimate: 40**

In 2019, the Tompkins County Youth Services data reports there were **12** pregnancies of youth between the ages 15 and 17; there were **35** pregnancies of youth between the ages of 18 and 19. There were a total of **26** teens births in 2018.

**D. Pregnant and Parenting Youth Experiencing Homelessness: 30**

Of the **114** participants of the Independent Living Survey conducted in 2019, **22%** of the participants, age 21 and under have children or are pregnant. **25%** of the participants, 21-24, have children or are pregnant.

## **Housing, Education & Employment, Social and Emotional Wellbeing Needs**

### **Social and Emotional Well-Being Needs:**

- Easy access to individual or group trauma-informed therapy
- Collective of youth-vetted therapists
- Easy access to psychiatry services
- Collective of youth-vetted psychiatrists
- Improved access to therapy, mental health services, and other health care resources for youth who are minors without requiring guardian or parental consent
- Trauma-informed adults at schools
- Access to necessary medications
- Access to health insurance and necessary medical care
- Access to all necessary social services

- Social workers or emotional support staff at every housing development to aid in resource navigation, medication management, transportation help, group therapy work, and general availability to meet the immediate social and emotional wellbeing needs of youth

### **Education & Employment Needs:**

- Multiple avenues for completing school work
- Equitable access to education through online options
- Free and subsidized access to child care
- More essential products in school and in the community (i.e. hygiene essentials, school supplies, and work attire)
- Gender-affirming clothing drives
- Culturally Responsive Learning (CRL)
- Safe educational environments for housing-insecure/LGBTQ+/BIPOC youth
- Eliminate address requirements on job applications
- Access to print job applications for youth without consistent access to internet/technology or technological skills
- Access to literacy and life skills resources
- Greater presence of emotional support in schools
- Easier access to job coaching

### **Housing Needs:**

- Short term housing (transitional housing)
  - Equitable access to short term housing options
  - Housing First
  - Youth shelter
  - Stipends for hotel and motel rooms
  - Reforms and improvements to the adult shelter system in order to serve youth
  - Confidentiality
  - Structured housing reentry - creating plans with all youth in short term housing for transition into permanent housing

- o Changes to the Learning Web to improve communication, programming and accessibility
- Long term housing (permanent housing)
  - o Equitable access to short term housing options
  - o Housing First
  - o Changes to the Arthaus program to be more responsive to youth needs
  - o More varied permanent housing options, such as apartments, shared living, and individual living situations
- Subsidized housing
  - o Easier access to subsidized housing
  - o Increase in subsidized housing options
  - o Available rental assistance
- Pet friendly housing
- Improve organization, communication and updates regarding Coordinated Entry (CE)

## **USICH Youth Framework and Four Core Outcomes**

In 2010, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) released *Open Doors*, the nation's first federal strategic plan to prevent and address homelessness in this country. In 2012, an amendment was added to this strategic plan that would focus exclusively on educational outcomes for youth as well as sustainable solutions for unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness.

The USICH Framework to End Youth Homelessness has four core outcomes for youth and young adults:

**Stable Housing-** Through the implementation of the projects, consisting of Transitional Housing-Rapid Rehousing (TH-RRH); Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH); Transitional Housing (TH), Rapid Rehousing (RRH), a drop-in center, outreach to unsheltered homeless youth, and an improved youth-centered coordinated entry program, youth and young adults experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity will be provided ample and diverse resources

to ensure they achieve a state of stable housing in a low barrier fashion that is quick and centers their specific needs.

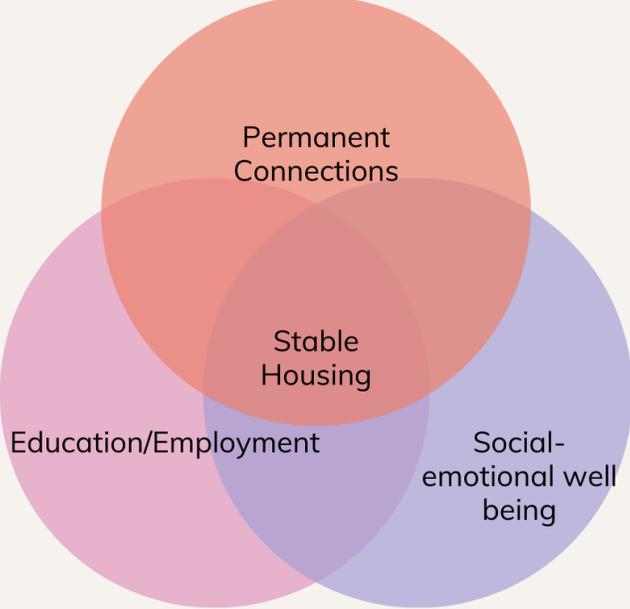
**Permanent Connections-** Through the implementation of the drop-in center project as well as centering the necessity of a roommate matching service and housing in diverse locations near YYAs' support systems, homeless and housing insecure youth will be able to maintain their previous connections as well as forge new connections and community.

**Education/Employment-** By implementing the drop-in center with a focus on educational and employment support, providing transportation for YYAs to access their employment and work environments, as well as providing housing in a large amount of locations to ensure that YYAs can choose the location that best suits their needs and is near their educational and employment environments, the educational and employment needs of homeless and housing insecure youth will be addressed.

**Social-emotional well-being-** By providing live-in, trauma informed staff at all of the housing developments (TH-RRH, TH, RRH, and PSH), as well as mental health support in the housing developments and the drop-in center, including transportation to any appointments, while also fostering well-being through providing a sense of community and stability and providing housing that is open to individuals with pets and emotional support animals, the social and emotional well-being needs of YYAs will be addressed.

USICH Framework to End Youth Homelessness

**FOUR OUTCOMES**



## **Goals, Objectives, & Action Steps**

The following goals were developed by the YAB. Throughout this process, we have led with genuine intention to provide our youth with the opportunity to speak truth to power and to be able to voice their needs, wants, and goals. Focus groups discussions around the experience of our YAB led to the development of these goals. Youth empowerment has been the heart, soul, and driving force. These goals will be used to guide the ongoing implementation of the CCP, and will hold as a community accountable to the thriving future of our youth and young adults.

### **Social and Emotional Well-Being:**

Social and Emotional Wellbeing- Ensuring that all homeless and housing insecure youth in Tompkins County have access to the necessary resources to maintain their social and emotional wellbeing through therapy, psychiatry, trauma-informed adults at school, health insurance, access to all social services, and hiring an emotional support staff/caseworker to work at every housing development that serves youth. We want a drop-in center (SSO) that creates a healthy and productive diversion to unsheltered/street living.

**Objective 1:** Provide easy access to individual or group trauma-informed therapy for all homeless youth who want it through a collective of youth-vetted therapists.

**Action Step 1:** Hire a dedicated person to help homeless youth find therapists (combined with the position of the social Worker/Emotional Support Staff at every housing development for youth) and a combination of peer advocates to fill this role.

**Action Step 2:** Contact a collective of youth-vetted therapists to form a collective of therapists to provide care.

- Determine what the youth vetting process will look like.
- Define how older adult partners can support the vetting process.
- Ensure youth engagement and involvement in hiring processes for therapists serving YYA who are experiencing homelessness and who are unstably housed.

**Action Step 3:** Offer available group therapy sessions at housing developments for youth who want it (can be assigned as an option instead of carceral punishment).

**Action Step 4:** Policy advocacy to lower the barriers for minors to receive therapy and other mental health services without parental or guardian consent.

**Action Step 5:** Evaluate current policies for accessing therapy to ensure that they are as low barrier and trauma-informed as possible.

**Action Step 6:** Use YHDP to provide funding to support new therapist positions.

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- Ithaca Therapist Alliance / Listserv
- Ithaca Free Clinic
- Tompkins County Mental Health Department (TCMH)
- TCMH Personalized Recovery Oriented Services (PROS) Program
- Mental Health Association
- Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)
- Franziska Racker Center
- Community Recovery Services
- Alcohol and Drug Council
- Youth Action Board (YAB)
- Mike Ellis, Family & Children's Services of Ithaca

**Timeframe: Fall 2022-Spring 2025**

<b>HUD Key Principles</b>			
Equity	Positive Youth Development	Trauma-Informed Care √	Family Engagement
Housing First	Youth Choice √	Community Integration √	Coordinated Entry

**Objective 2:** Train all staff and vet new staff to ensure that all school staff are trauma-informed.

**Action Step 1:** Train current employees at all Tompkins County schools in trauma-informed care, current options in the homeless response system, how to talk to and about homeless youth, etc.

- This needs to be a change at the systems level for all schools in Tompkins County.
- Incorporated trauma-informed training into new staff onboarding and orientation.
- Tap into school social work teams and school psychologists to help ensure that trauma-informed best practices are being maintained and established, ongoing support and oversight.

**Action Step 2:** Have YAB members or other trusted and trained officials sit in on every new hiring of school officials to ensure that new hires are trauma-informed and educated on housing related topics.

**Action Step 3:** Ensure that local institutions of higher education such as TC3, Ithaca College and Cornell have informed people in housing to ensure that housing insecure students find resources that they need

**Action Step 4:** Have all schools (K-12 and colleges) publish housing resources on their website that are easily accessible to students.

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- Village at Ithaca
- Youth Action Board (YAB)
- Local colleges/universities, including TC3, Ithaca College and Cornell
- School social workers & psychologists
- Vice superintendent
- McKinney-Vento liaisons
- Family and Children's Services of Ithaca
- Tompkins County Mental Health Services
- Mental Health Association

- Tompkins County Youth Services Department

**Timeframe:** Fall 2022 – Fall 2024

**HUD Key Principles**

Equity	Positive Youth Development ✓	Trauma-Informed Care ✓	Family Engagement
Housing First	Youth Choice ✓	Community Integration ✓	Coordinated Entry

**Objective 3:** Provide easy access to psychiatry through a collective of youth-vetted psychiatrists to ensure that all homeless youth have access to necessary medication.

**Action Step 1:** Hire a dedicated person to help homeless youth find psychiatrists (combined with the position of the social Worker/Emotional Support Staff at every housing development for youth) and a combination of peer advocates to fill this role.

 This person can also ensure that people are on top of their medication schedules (taking their meds, calling before meds run out, knowing the amount of medication left, etc.)

**Action Step 2:** Contact a collective of youth-vetted psychiatrists to form a collective of psychiatrists to provide care (probably need less psychiatrists).

- Determine what the youth vetting process will look like.
- Define how older adult partners can support the vetting process.
- Ensure youth engagement and involvement in hiring processes for psychiatrists serving YYA who are experiencing homelessness and who are unstably housed.

**Action Step 3:** Provide timely access to medication-collaborate with REACH, the Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC) or other medication providers to ensure that homeless youth are not stuck without access to necessary medication over the weekends/for different periods of time.

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- Family and Children’s Services of Ithaca

- REACH
- Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC)
- Local psychiatric nurse practitioners
- Well-Being Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine
- Youth Action Board (YAB)

**Timeframe: Fall 2022 – Spring 2025**

**HUD Key Principles**

<b>Equity</b>	Positive Youth Development ✓	Trauma-Informed Care ✓	Family Engagement
<b>Housing First</b>	Youth Choice ✓	Community Integration ✓	Coordinated Entry

**Objective 4:** Work with 2-1-1, a collective of youth-vetted doctors, healthcare organizations in the Tompkins area, and the YHDP hired resource navigator to ensure that all homeless youth have access to health insurance and necessary medical care.

**Action Step 1:** Work with REACH, FLIC, or the Free Clinic for immediate care.

- Navigators who can respond outside of typical business hours, including weekends.
- Options to connect to doctors and resource navigators via text.

**Action Step 2:** Contact a collective of youth-vetted doctors to form a collective of doctors to provide care/primary care (possible stipend system).

- Determine what the youth vetting process will look like.
- Define how older adult partners can support the vetting process.
- Ensure youth engagement and involvement in hiring processes for doctors serving YYA who are experiencing homelessness and who are unstably housed.

**Action Step 3:** Work with providers with a high level of knowledge about how other systems overlap and form barriers to accessing necessary health insurance/health care to address barriers and increase access for youth.

**Action Step 4:** Hire a dedicated person to help homeless youth find doctors (combined with the position of the social Worker/Emotional Support Staff at every housing development for youth) and a combination of peer advocates to fill this role.

- Can help youth already with health insurance navigate and utilize their health insurance.
- Can help youth without health insurance navigate the healthcare system as well, call 2-1-1, get people situated with health insurance.

**Action Step 5:** Expand access to free and low-cost health care through partnerships with local free clinics and school-based health care.

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- 2-1-1
- Ithaca Free Clinic
- Catholic Charities
- Human Services Coalition – Community Health Advocates (HSC-CHA)
- Tompkin County schools / school nurses
- REACH
- Finger Lakes Independence Center (FLIC)
- Melissa Dhundale, MD - Cayuga Medical Center
- Youth Action Board (YAB)

**Timeframe: Fall 2022 – Spring 2025**

**HUD Key Principles**

Equity	Positive Youth Development	Trauma-Informed Care √	Family Engagement
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Housing First	Youth Choice ✓	Community Integration ✓	Coordinated Entry
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**Objective 5:** Ensure that all homeless and housing insecure youth have access to all necessary social services by utilizing the YHDP hired resource navigator, creating and sharing a resource guide throughout the community, and providing for needs that youth have due to the lack of social services for youth under certain age ranges.

**Action Step 1:** Hire a dedicated person to help homeless youth navigate social services and resources (combined with the position of the social Worker/Emotional Support Staff at every housing development for youth) and a combination of peer advocates to fill this role.

- Helping specifically neurodivergent, mentally ill, disabled homeless youth navigate the Department of Social Services and other social systems to ensure that they understand the available resources

**Action Step 2:** Ensure that social services are available to everybody, not just those over 18.

- For SNAP and other programs are not available to people under a certain age, ensuring that we provide a comparable program so that nobody goes without resources
- Specifically, ensuring that everyone has access to food

**Action Step 3:** Make an accessible resource guide of the available resources that is easily understandable. Distribute to all schools and every organization that interacts with youth in Tompkins County.

**Action Step 4:** Create a specific “track” or group of providers in the biggest County agencies that has a suite of specialized training to better serve youth.

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- Tompkins County-Department of Social Services
- Youth Action Board (YAB)
- Tompkins County Youth Services Department

**Timeframe: Fall 2022 – Spring 2025**

HUD Key Principles			
Equity	Positive Youth Development ✓	Trauma-Informed Care ✓	Family Engagement
Housing First	Youth Choice ✓	Community Integration ✓	Coordinated Entry

**Objective 6:** Hire a staff person for every housing development for youth to aid in resource navigation, medication management, transportation help, group therapy work, and general availability to meet the immediate social and emotional wellbeing needs of homeless and housing insecure youth in these developments.

**Action Step 1:** Hire a collective of people to serve in this role across agencies to:

- Navigate therapists, psychiatrists, doctors, and social services.
- Help people with the bus system and general transportation needs so they get where they need to go, including school and jobs.
- Be available during most hours if youth have a crisis or need to talk.
- Possibly be at the group therapy session if they are not facilitating.

**Action Step 2:** Recruit people with lived experience to serve in resource navigation staff positions.

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- Youth Action Board (YAB)
- Tompkins County Action (TCA)
- Learning Web

**Timeframe: Fall 2022 – Fall 2023**

HUD Key Principles			
Equity	Positive Youth Development ✓	Trauma-Informed Care ✓	Family Engagement

<b>Housing First</b>	Youth Choice √	Community Integration √	Coordinated Entry
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## **Education & Employment:**

Education and Employment- Ensuring that all homeless and housing insecure youth in Tompkins County have access to the necessary resources to achieve and maintain their education and employment through diverse avenues for completing schoolwork, access to childcare, providing necessities, increasing emotional support in schools, implementing culturally responsive learning, eliminating address requirements on job applications, increasing access to life skills courses, and increasing access to jobs for minors.

**Objective 1:** Ensure that homeless and housing insecure youth have equitable access to education by having online options and making sure access for everyone is being maintained.

**Action Step 1:** Provide online options for completing school work.

**Action Step 2:** Give out routers / internet access points in schools.

**Action Step 3:** Create spaces throughout the community that are staffed and offer on-site support for internet access, online course support, and tutoring.

**Action Step 4:** Abide by and implement review of Individualized Education Program (IEP) and 504 plans.

**Action Step 5:** Explore opportunities to replicate small-scale projects that provide support in schools at the county level, such as Beverly J. Martin Elementary School's *Housing For School Success* Program that provides support through social workers to help students remain in school.

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- Vice superintendent
- McKinney-Vento liaisons
- Ithaca City School District / Schools
- Alternative and charter schools (New Roots)
- Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3)
- Tompkins County Youth Services Department
- Beverly J. Martin Elementary School
- Private internet providers

**Timeframe:** Fall 2022 – Fall 2023

HUD Key Principles			
Equity	Positive Youth Development	Trauma-Informed Care	Family Engagement
Housing First	Youth Choice ✓	Community Integration ✓	Coordinated Entry

**Objective 2:** Make sure all youth that need child care have access to resources through subsidized/free payment plans, qualified workers helping with finding daycares, expanded age limits, and meal security within the daycare is essential.

**Action Step 1:** Have the Department of Social Services (DSS) implement payment planning.

**Action Step 2:** Create more FREE / affordable after school spaces that support ages K-6.

**Action Step 3:** Have a collective of volunteers safe/vetted to help in childcare emergencies.

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- Department of Social Services (DSS)

**Timeframe:** Fall 2022 – Fall 2024

HUD Key Principles			
Equity	Positive Youth Development	Trauma-Informed Care	Family Engagement
✓			

Housing First	Youth Choice	Community Integration √	Coordinated Entry
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**Objective 3:** Ensure that hygiene essentials, school supplies, and work attire are available for all homeless and housing insecure youth through a give-and-take system and holding clothing drives, specifically gender-affirming clothing drives.

**Action Step 1:** Offer a stipend/voucher for places in the Tompkins County area for living essentials. Provide dedicated management of that service/program to ensure access.

**Action Step 2:** Create mutual aid blue cabinets but for hygiene essentials.

**Action Step 3:** Create clothing exchanges / clothing drives.

**Action Step 4:** Offer hygiene essential / clothing closets in all schools K-12. Consider confidentiality and privacy concerns for accessing closets for youth who access them.

**Action Step 6:** Implement that all adult partners' places have spaces for hygiene needs, school supplies and work-attire. Spaces with these things need to make them accessible every day, not just one item every three months.

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- Catholic Charities
- The Village at Ithaca
- Learning Web
- No More Tears / No Mas Lagrimas
- Ithaca City School District / Schools
- Mutual Aid group
- Youth Action Board (YAB)

**Timeframe: Fall 2022 – Fall 2023**

**HUD Key Principles**

Equity √	Positive Youth Development	Trauma-Informed Care	Family Engagement
Housing First	Youth Choice √	Community Integration √	Coordinated Entry

**Objective 4:** Implement more in-depth learning sessions and mandatory staff meetings on culturally responsive learning (CRL) while incorporating housing-insecure/LGBTQ+/BIPOC experiences to ensure that all educational environments are safe for homeless and housing insecure youth and address their needs.

**Action Step 1:** Create mandatory school sessions for trauma-based care, homelessness understanding, allyship training (how to talk to and with youth experiencing homelessness) and cultural awareness for ALL STAFF, possibly students as well.

**Action Step 2:** Find qualified resources to host the sessions - ex: Village, DSS, Learning Web, etc. to inform and bring awareness.

**Action Step 3:** Expand service offered by the Village at Ithaca to sit in on new hirings to ensure employees being hired by schools meet guiding principles for working with homeless and housing insecure youth.

**Action Step 4:** Incorporate youth with lived experience into school staff hiring boards / practices.

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- Ithaca City School District / Schools
- The Village at Ithaca
- Tompkins County Youth Service Department
- Learning Web
- Youth Action Board (YAB)

**Timeframe: Fall 2022 – Fall 2023**

HUD Key Principles			
Equity √	Positive Youth Development	Trauma-Informed Care √	Family Engagement
Housing First	Youth Choice	Community Integration √	Coordinated Entry

**Objective 5:** Eliminate address requirements on job applications, as the need for an address can be othering and act as a barrier for homeless and housing insecure youth, and ensure all applications are printed out for better access to those without internet/less technological skills to ensure that all homeless and housing insecure youth have access to employment.

**Action Step 1:** Take off the address aspect of applications.

**Action Step 2:** Make sure all businesses have access to a paper copy of applications.

**Action Step 3:** Eliminate the homeless verification on applications to decrease invasiveness and increase speed at which youth can be connected to immediate resources.

- DSS application for assistance requires an address and communication via mail.
- Benefits applications are complicated and difficult to complete (plain language); applications are often rejected.

**Action Step 4:** Improve and prioritize getting access to essential documents (photo ID/birth certificate).

**Action Step 5:** Bring DSS staff to give trainings to agencies/YAB on how to complete forms correctly the first time, including proper language to complete applications.

**Action Step 6:** Offer a DSS advocate to support youth under age 21 in navigating the DSS application process.

**Action Step 7:** Launch case conferencing on DSS applications.

**Action Step 8:** Improve communications with DSS through departments.

**Action Step 9:** Train DSS staff on homelessness eligibility/qualification.

**Action Step 10:** Utilize photo ID on Medicaid benefits cards.

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- Department of Social Services
- Local businesses
- Marty Gold, Department of Family Assistance
- Amy Furman, Tompkins County Action
- Sophie Sparrow, Village at Ithaca
- Youth Action Board (YAB)

**Timeframe: Fall 2022 – Fall 2026**

HUD Key Principles			
Equity √	Positive Youth Development	Trauma-Informed Care √	Family Engagement
Housing First √	Youth Choice	Community Integration √	Coordinated Entry

**Objective 6:** Hire and conduct vetting of people to help with increasing homeless and housing insecure youth’s literacy skills as well as basic life skills and knowledge to provide homeless and housing insecure necessary resources for succeeding in the workforce.

**Action Step 1:** Implement a life skills program that will work with you consistently until YOU feel like you don't need it.

**Action Step 2:** Find volunteers/workers that would like to help 1:1 with a person to build their life skills.

**Action Step 3:** Implement life skills program/course/meeting in schools (grades 9-12).

**Action Step 4:** Provide more resource rooms in schools to address the serious break down in literacy understanding for grades 9-12.

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- Ithaca City School District / Schools
- Youth Action Board (YAB)

**Timeframe: Fall 2022 – Fall 2023**

**HUD Key Principles**

Equity	Positive Youth Development	Trauma-Informed Care	Family Engagement
Housing First	Youth Choice	Community Integration √	Coordinated Entry

**Objective 7:** Ensure that all homeless and housing insecure youth are emotionally supported in school by giving the youth all options of their available resources, as youth deserve full autonomy in the aspects of who they want to confide in/trust.

**Action Step 1:** Help youth build a circle of support that is created by youth and can include professionals as well as other trusted community members and peers.

- Safe, comfortable meeting places are also needed to foster a circle of support model.
- Circle of support should be available beyond and outside of school hours/topics.

**Action Step 2:** Utilize a circle of support model and advocacy to help ensure that youth have a choice in their school counselors and that matches are not made arbitrarily (i.e. alphabetically).

**Action Step 3:** Develop mentorship and peer support programs to connect students with others who have shared experiences and can provide support/guidance.

**Action Step 4:** Increase transparency and communication with youth regarding mandatory reporting, including trainings on youth / student rights and protections for youth fleeing domestic violence.

**Action Step 5:** Work with schools to enact systemic changes to ensure that any staff / faculty in school who is available as a resource to students is aware of young peoples’ rights re: runaway youth and protection of information from being shared with parents.

**Action Step 6:** Ensure that McKinney-Vento liaisons are coordinating with partners in the community and that they are not “wearing too many hats”. Promote hiring of persons with lived experience when McKinney-Vento liaison positions become available.

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- The Village at Ithaca
- Learning Web
- Family and Children’s Services of Ithaca
- Unbroken Promise
- Advocacy Center
- Greater Ithaca Activities Center (GIAC)
- Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County
- Tompkins County Youth Services Department
- Ithaca City School District / Schools
- McKinney-Vento liaisons
- Youth Action Board (YAB)

**Timeframe: Fall 2022 – Spring 2024**

<b>HUD Key Principles</b>			
Equity	Positive Youth Development	Trauma-Informed Care	Family Engagement
	√	√	

Housing First	Youth Choice √	Community Integration √	Coordinated Entry
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**Objective 8:** Ensure that all homeless and housing insecure youth have access to necessary job coaching by cutting down qualifications to make sure that everyone (housing-insecure, re-entry people, people with disabilities, etc.) that feels they need coaching can receive it.

**Action Step 1:** Recruit mentors/job coaches for youth who have lived experiences of homelessness or other barriers.

**Action Step 2:** Explore job coaching for entrepreneurship options and trainings.

**Action Step 3:** Increase funding for new and existing job coaching programs to allow for decreased caseloads and more time spent with each person.

**Action Step 4:** Increase utilization of summer employment programs and subsidized employment programs.

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- Local business owners
- Summer Youth Employment programs
- Tompkins County Youth Services Department
- Youth Action Board (YAB)

**Timeframe: Fall 2022 – Spring 2025**

**HUD Key Principles\*\***

Equity √	Positive Youth Development	Trauma-Informed Care	Family Engagement
Housing First	Youth Choice √	Community Integration √	Coordinated Entry

## **Housing & Shelter:**

Housing-Ensuring that all homeless and housing insecure youth in Tompkins County have equitable access to housing resources through increasing short- and long-term housing options, providing increased access to subsidized and free housing, increasing access to pet friendly housing, and establishing an organized system for cataloging and communicating available housing resources.

**Objective 1:** Ensure that all housing insecure and homeless youth who need short term transitional housing have equitable access and have their needs met with a housing first, quick system by providing a youth shelter and stipends for motel rooms, reforming the adult shelter to ensure safety, maintaining confidentiality, and creating plans with all youth in short term housing for transition into permanent housing.

**Action Step 1:** Ensure easier ways to enter the system, decrease bureaucracy, support, rapid rehousing.

**Action Step 2:** Identify funding opportunities to provide youth shelter, including:

- Buying Albany Street building to provide much needed safe transitional housing
- Operating the space with no security guards-makes spaces unsafe
- Having case management workers
- Offering on-site crisis intervention; not penal, but restorative justice
- Operating low-barrier
- Explore hybrid drop-in center and youth shelter in one location (mixed funding source between YHDP and other funding)

**Action Step 3:** Invest in stipends to provide hotel rooms when there are no other safe, immediate housing options and for people for whom shelters or group settings are not safe or appropriate.

- Look for an example from the Village at Ithaca.
- Ensure that motels will accept homeless and housing insecure youth, even if they are under 18 without issue.

**Action Step 4:** Reform the adult shelters to ensure safety for youth.

- Should have youth programming implemented to allow youth to learn about life skills
- On-site crisis intervention to ensure the safety of youth that do end up at the adult shelter
- Youth support

**Action Step 5:** All youth in short term housing are ensured confidentiality. No information about their place of residence is shared to unsafe people in their lives.

**Action Step 6:** Promote structured housing reentry for youth in short term housing.

- Community partner involvement with all youth in short term housing to create a plan and provide guidance to help them enter permanent housing and find more stability.
- Support and relationship building is consistent-not a new person every time there is contact.

**Action Step 7:** Increase communication, programming, and accessibility at the Learning Web.

- Check Ins every week with homeless and housing insecure youth in their programs.
- Ensure that there are not different people checking in with homeless and housing insecure youth in order for youth to feel safe and build relationships.
- Make changes to reduce waitlists and increase accessibility.

**Action Step 8:** Allocate funds that could go to a host home system to these other, safer options.

- Ensure host homes are not the only housing option available to youth in need.
- Work with host home providers to make host homes more youth-driven, youth-designed and responsive to youth needs.

**Action Step 9:** Provide youth with rental assistance and support when exiting crisis housing and shelter to ensure they do not exit back into homelessness.

**Action Step 10:** Ensure safety questions are asked when DSS is engaged and that the process of engaging with DSS in crisis situations is trauma-informed, supportive, and prioritizes youth choice and safety.

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- Village at Ithaca
- HMIS Lead
- Learning Web
- Catholic Charities
- Department of Social Services (DSS)
- Tompkins County Youth Services Department
- Youth Action Board (YAB)

**Timeframe: Fall 2022 – Fall 2026**

HUD Key Principles			
Equity	Positive Youth Development	Trauma-Informed Care	Family Engagement
Housing First √	Youth Choice √	Community Integration √	Coordinated Entry

**Objective 2:** Long term housing (permanent housing)-Ensuring that all housing insecure and homeless youth who need long term housing have equitable access and have their needs met with a housing first, quick system by reforming Arthaus and increasing housing options through individual and shared living situations.

**Action Step 1:** Support Arthaus in continuing to reform some project design to be more responsive to needs of homeless and housing insecure youth.

- Increase communication and have landlords more readily available.
- Ensure staff have a better understanding of the community by hiring people with lived experience and providing trainings on homeless and housing insecure youth.

- Have educated and informed on-call staff to reach for emergencies who are trauma-informed.
- Make rent more affordable for homeless and housing insecure youth.
- Utilize a more lenient application process.
- Get rid of security guards.

**Action Step 2:** Increase and provide more varied permanent housing options through apartments.

**Action Step 3:** Increase and provide more varied permanent housing options through shared living situations.

- Team of people that help match homeless and housing insecure youth that would live well together.
- Helping homeless and housing insecure youth in shared living situations keep house rules and live comfortably together.
- Increase the amount of bedrooms available in units.
- Allowing multiple people to live together comfortably in units.

**Action Step 4:** Increase and provide more varied permanent housing options through individual living situations.

- Monthly check-ins with the same case manager to ensure safety, trust, and that homeless and housing insecure youth are getting necessary support and resources (similar to TCA).
- Increase the amount of bedrooms available in units in individual housing situations / complexes, including multiple bedroom units for young parents.
- Eliminating unnecessary requirements for the amount of people allowed to reside in each unit that are harmful to young parents and families (beyond those required for housing standards).
- Work through complications of shared housing and establishing separate leases with landlords.
- Revisit ideas from 100-Day Challenge around youth-led roommate matching.

**Action Step 5:** Utilize YHDP funding to help support new permanent housing projects.

**Action Step 6:** Ensure all youth housing sites are implementing safety considerations for youth who are survivors of domestic violence and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC).

**Action Step 7:** identify staffing, funding and resources to help youth address documentation barriers to housing (IDs, social security cards, birth certificates).

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- Arthaus
- Cornerstone Property management
- Tompkins County Action (TCA)
- Tompkins County Youth Services Department
- Residents
- Youth Action Board (YAB)

**Timeframe:** Fal 2022 – Fall 2026

HUD Key Principles			
Equity	Positive Youth Development	Trauma-Informed Care	Family Engagement
Housing First √	Youth Choice √	Community Integration √	Coordinated Entry

**Objective 3:** Ensure that all housing insecure and homeless youth who need subsidized/free housing have equitable access and have their needs met with a housing first, quick system by ensuring easier access through less intense requirements for subsidized housing and increasing subsidized housing units.

**Action Step 1:** Provide easier access to subsidized housing through less intense income and work requirements and making Section 8 and DSS more accessible. Redefine income to align with experiences of income for youth wherever possible.

**Action Step 2:** Ensure that if homeless and housing insecure youth cannot pay their rent, they are assisted, regardless of whether they meet the specific requirements (rent assistance).

**Action Step 3:** Increase subsidized housing in more places that are affordable.

**Action Step 4:** Ensure free or subsidized housing is not reliant on the amount of hours worked.

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- All youth-serving agencies and providers
- Legal community
- Faith-based organizations
- Salvation Army
- Medical community
- Youth Action Board (YAB)

**Timeframe: Fall 2022 – Fall 2026**

**HUD Key Principles\*\***

Equity	Positive Youth Development ✓	Trauma-Informed Care ✓	Family Engagement
Housing First	Youth Choice ✓	Community Integration ✓	Coordinated Entry

**Objective 4:** Ensure that all housing insecure and homeless youth have equitable access to housing by ensuring that pet friendly housing options are available, as many homeless and

housing insecure youth have pets and do not have access to resources to get documentation certifying their pets as emotional support animals.

**Action Step 1:** Make it easier for homeless and housing insecure youth to get access to documentation for emotional support animals.

**Action Step 2:** Have a pet floor or pet floors in housing in case people are allergic.

**Action Step 3:** Connect with landlords who currently accept pets about how they do so and to provide support as partners.

**Action Step 4:** Partner with the Street Dog Coalition, REACH, and the Tenants Union to advocate for increased housing options for people with pets.

**Action Step 5:** Work with therapists to support and advocate for the importance of animals for emotional and mental well-being and combatting isolation during experiences of homelessness.

**Action Step 6:** Work with existing youth-serving programs such as the Learning Web to accept clients with pets.

**Action Step 7:** Provide youth with pets with access to respite services and animal training programs.

**Action Step 8:** Change the landscape of how providers and agencies think of animals and pets to understand the important emotional and mental connection between pets and clients.

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- Street Dog Coalition
- Tenants Union
- Therapist coalition for homeless youth
- Mental health professionals
- Outreach worker
- Learning Web

- REACH
- TCA
- Youth Action Board (YAB)

**Timeframe: Fall 2022 – Spring 2024**

HUD Key Principles			
Equity	Positive Youth Development	Trauma-Informed Care √	Family Engagement
Housing First √	Youth Choice √	Community Integration	Coordinated Entry

**Objective 5:** Ensure that all homeless and housing insecure youth receive increased communication about and access to their resources by making the housing list more organized and up to date, having people check in on the status of all youth on the list, and creating a new list specifically for youth.

**Action Step 1:** Increase organization and updates around the CAT assessment and housing list.

- List of questions similar to homelessness risk assessment, put information into a database that is sent to all homeless resources in Ithaca, who all look over the list for the possibility of providing them resources (permanent housing).
- Tally up point system, ranked in the list by amount of risk points.

**Action Step 2:** Improve communication to keep youth on the housing list knowledgeable about their place on the list through designated points of contact at each agency.

**Action Step 3:** Provide youth on the housing list with resources while they wait.

**Action Step 4:** Make the housing list more accessible for youth.

**Action Step 5:** Create a new housing list and CE list review meetings specifically for youth, including for youth under age 18.

**Action Step 6:** Increase on-site staffing at youth-serving agencies to provide immediate connections as needed.

**Action Step 7:** Provide a case manager connection for every youth on the housing list.

- Provide crisis intervention training
- Drop the need for certain degrees for case managers, focus on lived experience
- Shift priorities to focus on relationship building with clients (look to Village at Ithaca YAB Advocate position for example) and maintaining contact

**Action Step 8:** Conduct outreach and engage more community organization in housing list review and case conferencing.

**Action Step 9:** Expand Coordinated Entry training for all youth-serving staff and organizations.

**Action Step 10:** Increase outreach to youth regarding what Coordinated Entry is, how it works, and how to connect.

**Action Step 11:** Connect with the data team around technical assistance for Coordinated Entry.

**Action Step 12:** Continuously consider and evaluate technology needs of youth and needs of youth in rural areas to ensure they can connect to Coordinated Entry and maintain connection with case managers and programs.

**Partner(s) Responsible:**

- Human Services Coalition
- Tompkins County Youth Services Department
- Village at Ithaca
- Youth Action Board (YAB)

Timeframe: Fall 2022 - Fall 2023			
HUD Key Principles**			
Equity	Positive Youth Development	Trauma-Informed Care √	Family Engagement
Housing First	Youth Choice	Community Integration	Coordinated Entry √

## **Guiding Principles**

**Equity-** Ensuring that all staff are trained in implicit biases and trauma informed care will allow for marginalized YYAs to receive safe and equitable care. The roommate matching system will also include questions surrounding identity and allyship, ensuring that all matched individuals are respectful of each others’ identities. If any discriminatory practices are reported within the developments or the drop-in center, steps will be taken to rectify the situation, providing accommodations to the victims and changing staff.

**Positive Youth Development** - To ensure positive youth development, classes on life skills as well as other areas will be offered to ensure that all youth feel prepared to be successful in their living situation as well as having their talents fostered. The educational and resume help offered at the drop-in center will help youth succeed in school and at work. The community environment provided by the drop-in center will assist youth in finding and maintaining a support system that they may not have had access to previously.

**Trauma Informed Care** - The comprehensive training provided to all staff of the housing developments and the drop-in center, as well as the vetting of all healthcare professionals, will ensure that YYAs receive trauma-informed care.

**Family Engagement** - The community support at the drop-in center will ensure that YYAs develop a chosen family, which is especially important as many YYAs experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity do not have a safe relationship with their biological family. The diversity of locations offered for housing within the TH, RRH, TH-RRH and PSH options

will allow YYAs to stay close to their pre-established support systems and chosen and/or biological families.

**Housing First-** All housing developments will utilize a housing first system so that all YYAs have access to immediate safe, secure, stable, and equitable housing.

**Unsheltered homelessness-** The drop-in center will ensure that unsheltered YYAs have access to necessities and will be offered housing resources and assistance entering the improved, youth-centered coordinated entry system. Outreach staff will provide outreach to unsheltered youth, specifically in widely-known encampments. This outreach will ensure that unsheltered YYAs are offered necessities, access to housing resources, as well as a sense of connection and community.

**Individualized and Client-Driven Support-** The differing options between TH-RRH, TH, RRH and PSH allows YYAs to pick the service that best responds to their needs in terms of intensity of support, service type, and length of housing.

**Social and Community Integration-** The drop-in center will host community building activities within the building itself for YYAs, such as dinners and performances, as well as events within the greater community, such as park and garden outings. Transportation will also be provided to events within the region to ensure that YYAs are able to participate in activities to build community and foster their interests.

**Coordinated Entry-** The new and improved coordinated entry system will have a specific list of resources for youth and employ caseworkers to ensure that the needs of the youth on the list are being met and that open communication is maintained.

## **Special Populations: Impact and Strategy**

**LGBTQ+ and Gender non-conforming-** The needs of the LGBTQ+ YYA population is specific, in that they need an increased level of community support due to an increased prevalence of rejection as the reason behind their housing situation. They also need access to equitable and gender/sexuality affirming healthcare, including both mental and physical health, as well as gender/sexuality affirming clothing. If living in a group environment, their safety must be protected, specifically against any discriminatory sentiment. In order to ensure safety in all

aspects of their life, they must also have access to safe and affirming educational and employment options. To ensure that they receive an increased amount of community support, the drop-in center will have specific events and programming for LGBTQ+ youth that is run by local adult LGBTQ+ leaders, as well as have access to specific LGBTQ+ peer mentors. In the drop-in center as well as the housing developments, there will be a concerted effort on ensuring that all paperwork is filed under their preferred names, and all employees and staff are trained on respecting pronouns and preferred names. The YAB vetting process for all healthcare professionals included in the coalition serving YYA will be screened for LGBTQ+ affirming care as a necessity. The roommate matching services will include questions on identity, including LGBTQ+ identity and allyship, to ensure that future roommates are safe and comfortable living together. If any discriminatory sentiment is reported in any of the housing developments or the drop-in center, there will be immediate action and steps to rectify the situation. Within the clothing exchanges at schools and the drop-in center, there will be an emphasis on providing gender-affirming clothing. The training of school staff in the area will have a specific focus on LGBTQ+ acceptance, as well as training on pronouns and preferred names. For safe employment environments, local employers will be sent a survey that asks whether they are LGBTQ+ friendly that will be cross referenced with the knowledge of community elders, and if any YYA does not have an affirming experience, staff at the drop-in center will help them find a new job.

**Minors-** Due to their age, confidentiality, informed care, and access to resources that are often age-restricted are dire needs for homeless and housing insecure YYA in the community. At each housing development as well as the drop-in center, youth will be able to communicate if any individuals are unsafe and should not receive information about their location, their well-being, and any resources they are accessing. This communication will be valued and respected, and if the YYA desires, this information will also be communicated to their educational environment as well as their job to ensure their safety. By requiring multiple trainings for all staff within the housing developments and the drop-in center on in-depth informed care provided by educators, youth, and community leaders, as well as vetting the health professionals in the coalitions, informed care will be enforced and provided. By ensuring that all housing developments are open to the widest age range of YYA possible, as well as having the drop-in center open to everybody, YYAs should no longer be denied services because of their age.

**Justice involved-** Justice involved YYAs need to have the least amount of contact with the criminal justice system as possible, as well as transportation to any legal meetings, and legal assistance. By ensuring that there are no security guards at any of the housing developments or the drop-in center, and that YYAs will be diverted from contact with the criminal justice system whenever and wherever possible, justice involved YYAs will be separated from the criminal justice system as much as possible within the community. Transportation offered for appointments will extend to legal appointments, ensuring that justice involved YYAs have this need met. To ensure that YYAs receive necessary legal assistance, staff will be provided a list of pro-bono legal consultants that they can refer the YYA to in order to receive help.

**Foster care involved-** Foster care involved youth need to be in safe and affirming environments. In order to ensure the social and emotional needs of foster care involved YYAs are met, it is our goal to increase the vetting for foster parents to ensure that they are safe to foster children as well as lack any discriminatory sentiment. Once selected, we will work towards providing these foster parents training on proper care as well as social and emotional health and well-being for traumatized, marginalized youth. We will work towards ensuring that YYAs in foster care will have access to the mental and physical health services offered to YYAs in other housing developments, so that they receive necessary care. YYAs can also report unsafe behavior or discrimination from foster parents to staff at the drop-in center to ensure they are removed from any unsafe environments. To ensure that there are more foster parents, allowing each to properly care for the needs of the YYA in their homes, we will work towards increasing calls and trainings for foster parents in the area. In order to achieve these goals, we will engage with DSS, opening up conversation as to how the needs of foster care involved YYAs will be addressed

**Victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation-** Victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation need access to immediate healthcare, a safe reporting system and advocate system, as well as confidentiality. YYAs who are victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation will have access to the healthcare options available to all youth, as well as transportation to any appointments, and assistance navigating receiving any immediate healthcare necessary outside of the scope of the coalitions from staff at the housing developments or the drop-in center. Ensuring that the YYAs

receive continuity of care from their caseworkers will allow them to have a safe person to report to if need be, as well as an advocate that they know and trust. If a YYA wants a different advocate, they will be given assistance in procuring one. In order to ensure their safety, confidentiality for victims will be especially enforced.

## **Improving Data Quality**

Improving Data Quality- Data is a critical tool within the homeless response system. Historically in Tompkins County we have struggled to adequately track our population of YYA's experiencing homelessness. YHDP brings with it a profound opportunity to improve our ability to have a clear and real-time picture of our young people's path through the homeless response system. Using the momentum of the YHDP planning process the CoC is striving to create ways to better share data with non-HMIS providers including the school system and other agencies. Creating a mechanism to better share data will improve the community's ability to serve YYA's with housing and support services.

Tompkins County is working towards becoming a community with reliable and accurate real-time data about people experiencing homelessness. NY-510 is committed to improving the quality of our HMIS data for youth and young adults. All YHDP projects that are required to enter data into our HMIS will be provided with a license to our system (Servicepoint/Wellsky). They will also be provided extensive individual training that includes optional weekly office hours with the system administrator to trouble-shoot and ask questions. In 2021 we added additional required data points to our intake and exit assessments that ask detailed questions about gender identity, LGBTQ+ status, family composition and family of origin. This data will be monitored, and analyzed as well as shared in aggregate with the public.

## **Proposed YHDP Projects**

### **Description of Selection Process:**

The YHDP adult stakeholders as well as the YAB filled out a form on desired project types and participated in discussion, coming to a consensus on the project types that are both most likely to succeed as well as most needed within the community.

## Transitional Housing

<p><b>Overview:</b> Facilitate the movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing within 24 months. Funds may be used for acquisition, rehabilitation, new construction, leasing, rental assistance, operating costs, and supportive services.</p>	<p><b>Key Elements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Eligible populations: Categories 1, 2, 4</li> <li>● Recipient providing TH can pay for operations of a building they own, or pay for leasing costs</li> <li>● TH units can be master leased units, scattered sites or host homes.</li> <li>● TH can offer an alternative to current shelter options; offer options to youth who have criminal history or no rental history</li> </ul>
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### Ithaca YHDP Definitions:

Transitional housing is low barrier housing with diverse options for youth ages 12-24, including but not limited to a community housing building as well as scattered sites with an emphasis on pet friendly housing as well as housing for young parents, that provide homeless youth immediate access to housing and resources. These resources include mental health professionals present that provide help receiving emotional support animal documentation as well as individual and group therapy, caseworkers that are open for communication on people that should not be present for safety reasons (parents, ex-spouses, abusers, etc.) as well as help with resource navigation with an emphasis on confidentiality, as well as live-in emotional support staff who would assist with medication management and provide a safe space within the building. These staff will be trauma informed and NARCAN certified, providing increased support for more vulnerable people including an individualized check in system that works for

each YYA. Housing available would exist across the county so that YYAs can live in the environment that is best suited to their health as well as the environment closest to their support system, job, and education. All units will be ADA accessible.

## Rapid Rehousing

<p><b>Overview :</b> 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. The participant enters into a lease directly with the landlord.</p>	<p><b>Key Elements:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rental assistance models can be flexible, should align with CoC’s written standards for administering RRH</li> <li>● Young people can choose their own units in the community/private market</li> <li>● Eligible populations: Categories 1, 2, 4</li> <li>● While it is a time-limited resource, there are no indicators for who will succeed in RRH - it is a resource that can work for anyone</li> </ul>
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### Ithaca YHDP Description:

The RRH program’s goal is helping YYAs access permanent, stable, supportive housing for youth ages 12-24, with a specific emphasis on providing pet friendly housing and housing for young parents that is low barrier and housing first. This housing will be scattered site as well as site-based to provide the most diverse options possible. This includes rental assistance that is flexible and need-based, as well as general need-based financial assistance and assistance communicating with landlords. The YYAs in the rapid rehousing program would have access to

a wide array of services, including roommate matching services, transportation to NA/AA meetings as well as jobs and educational environments, and classes on life skills specifically pertaining to living alone. These YYAs would have access to the same caseworkers, emotional support staff, and mental health professionals that work in the transitional housing program. Housing available would exist across the county so that YYAs can live in the environment that is best suited to their health as well as the environment closest to their support system, job, and education. All units within the RRH program will be ADA accessible.

### **Joint Transitional Housing-Rapid Rehousing**

Overview: 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.

Key Elements:

- Eligible populations: Categories 1, 2, 4
- Recipient providing TH can pay for operations of a building they own, or pay for leasing costs
- TH units can be master leased units, scattered sites or host homes.
- TH can offer an alternative to current shelter options; offer options to youth who have criminal history or no rental history
- RRH operates with all the same tenets as a classic RRH program.

### **Ithaca YHDP Description:**

Transitional housing is low barrier housing with diverse options for youth ages 12-24, including but not limited to a community housing building as well as scattered sites with an emphasis on pet friendly housing as well as housing for young parents, that provide homeless youth immediate access to housing and resources. These resources include mental health professionals present that provide help receiving emotional support animal documentation as

well as individual and group therapy, caseworkers that are open for communication on people that should not be present for safety reasons (parents, ex-spouses, abusers, etc.) as well as help with resource navigation with an emphasis on confidentiality, as well as live-in emotional support staff who would assist with medication management and provide a safe space within the building. These staff will be trauma informed and NARCAN certified, providing increased support for more vulnerable people including an individualized check in system that works for each YYA.

The resource navigation aspect of caseworkers' jobs would include assistance transitioning into the rapid rehousing program, where youth would have access to their own units, as well as group living models and models appropriate for YYA with dependents. The YYAs in the rapid rehousing program would have access to a wide array of services, including roommate matching services, transportation to NA/AA meetings as well as jobs and educational environments, and classes on life skills specifically pertaining to living alone. These YYAs would have access to the same caseworkers, emotional support staff, and mental health professionals that they worked with in the transitional housing program to ensure continuity of care and that they retain trust with their support system. Housing available would exist across the county so that YYAs can live in the environment that is best suited to their health as well as the environment closest to their support system, job, and education. All units within the TH-RRH program will be ADA accessible

## **Permanent Supportive Housing**

Overview : 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.

Key Elements:

- Youth would pay a percentage of their income towards rent for an indefinite period
- Units can be site-based (e.g., lease up a bunch of units in an apartment complex) or be scattered site (e.g., youth choose unit in the community)
- Eligible populations: Categories 1, 2, 4

- May be an opportunity to serve youth who are disabled but do not meet chronic homeless definition

### **Ithaca YHDP Description:**

Permanent Supportive Housing with both site-based and scattered site housing units will be available to ensure that homeless youth are able to choose the best housing option for their specific needs. This housing will be non-time limited, available to YYA starting at age 12 and without aging out after YYAs are over 24, as well as low barrier, prioritizing a housing first model for YYA with the highest needs, including but not limited to those with long experiences of homelessness as well as physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and/or chronic mental health issues. These units will be affordable, providing subsidized housing that is not income-based, but instead calculates rent based on the specific circumstances of each YYA. These units would ensure the safety of the residents by providing wrap-around care including but not limited to caseworkers, mental health professionals, emotional support staff, and doctors, but not including security guards to ensure that Ithaca's commitment to restorative justice is upheld. Units offered would include pet friendly housing, housing for YYAs with dependants, as well as YYAs who prefer group living with available roommate matching services. These youth will also have access to transportation to and from their jobs, education, NA/AA meetings, medical appointments, and any other necessary services. Housing available would exist across the county so that YYAs can live in the environment that is best suited to their health as well as the environment closest to their support system, job, and education. All units will be ADA accessible.

### **Supportive Services Only**

Overview: SSOs are a project type where YHDP funds only pay for services, not housing assistance. Examples are outreach services, diversion services, drop-in centers and community-wide or specific partnerships between services. SSO projects can also be used to improve or increase the capacity of a community's Youth Coordinated Entry System.

Key Elements:

- Outreach services identify young people experiencing unsheltered homelessness and help them access crisis and long-term housing
- Diversion offers services that help youth find alternate solutions to shelter/crisis housing or other housing.
- Eligible populations: Categories 1, 2, 4

**Ithaca YHDP Description- Drop-In Center:**

A drop-in center within Tompkins County will provide community building experiences, experiences for joy and learning, as well as necessary resources for homeless and housing insecure YYAs. These services include but are not limited to providing specific days for specific resources to ensure organization such as mental health professionals, medical professionals, and housing navigation; providing a space to congregate and feel safe; providing classes to teach YYAs necessary life skills as well as foster their talents in cooking, music, art, etc.; providing necessities such as clothing and hygiene essentials; holding holiday dinners for YYAs to foster a sense of community and inclusion; providing a space for performances so YYAs can showcase their talents; providing a study space with academic help as well as textbooks, strong Wifi, tech support, a printer, and resume help; full time staff to provide emotional support as well as resource navigation and assistance scheduling necessary appointments; holding NA/AA meetings; and providing transportation. All of this work will be done with an emphasis on confidentiality to ensure the safety of all YYAs.

**Ithaca YHDP Description-Coordinated Entry:**

An improved Coordinated Entry system for YYAs in Tompkins County will include a more thorough list of resources for YYAs that is updated regularly, at least once a month, that employs staff to communicate with YYAs about their position on the list as well as resources available to them at that time. YYAs will be contacted by the same staff members every time to ensure continuity of care as well as staff who are well informed about the YYAs they are assisting. These staff, if wanted by the YYAs, can advocate and contact resources on their behalf as well as assist in filling out paperwork to allow decreased barriers to entry. These staff will also communicate regularly with the organizations and caseworkers on the list that provide resources as well as educational institutions in the area to ensure that everybody working to help fight and

end youth homelessness in Tompkins County is aware of the available opportunities as well as ensuring that the YYAs on the list are provided the best care possible. All of this work will be done with an emphasis on confidentiality to ensure the safety of all YYAs.

**Ithaca YHDP Description-Outreach:**

The outreach program will hire staff to provide necessary resources to unsheltered homeless YYAs, including connections to housing developments and programs. Kits will be developed with basic necessities that staff will have at all times and will be available for homeless youth. These staff will have training on housing developments and have direct connections with the staff of the developments to help the YYAs enter housing programs. The staff will have specific regions they work with in order to develop trust with communities and youth, ensuring continuity of care. These staff should be familiar with the area, with the culture of Ithaca and the resources that exist, and have lived experience in order to provide the best quality of care. Once youth are within a housing development, outreach workers will continue connections with the YYAs they work with so that youth are not cut off from their support systems. These staff will help with more than just necessities, as they will also help with emails and requests to landlords and roommates, navigating the intricacies of housing situations. All of this work will be done with an emphasis on confidentiality to ensure the safety of all YYAs.