

Southern Nevada Homelessness Continuum of Care
Youth Working Group
Tuesday, March 23, 2021 | 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Zoom Teleconference

Champions: Arash Ghafoori and Melissa Jacobowitz, Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth

I. Welcome & Introductions

Attendees: Arash Ghafoori (NPHY); Melissa Jacobowitz (NPHY); Allison Steinzor (NPHY); Kim Moore (HELP); Meg Pike (CCSD); Emily Paulsen (NHA); Tanya Sutton (BitFocus); Ketra Johnson (St. Jude's Ranch); Brenda Herbstman (CCSS); Taisacan Hall (YAC); Celeste Williams (HELP); Felipe Silva (Nevada 95); AJ Huth (The Center); Catherine Huang Hara (CCSS); Summer Thomas-Harris (UNLV practicum student); Nora Saldivar (BitFocus); Andrea Martinez (Nevada 95); Joseph Taylor (Step UP); Danita Osborne (CCSS); Marcus Sherfield (Tech Impact); Karen Gordon (UNLV); Hassan Chaundry (Foresight Companies).

II. Funding Opportunities

Ms. Herbstman shared that the Foster Youth Initiative grant application was submitted by the Nevada Housing Authority. Through this opportunity, 25 housing vouchers would be reserved for former foster youth between the ages of 18 – 24 if awarded. Regarding the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP), there has not been an update from HUD yet. Ms. Huang Hara shared that the 2021 CoC Applications are being reviewed with scoring tools and policies and procedures will be posted for the 20-day comment period. It is anticipated that the CoC NOFA will be announced in May.

III. Young Adults in Charge Update

Ms. Hall shared that the members of the Southern Nevada Youth Action Board have been working with members of Clark County regarding an appreciation stipend plan for members of Young Adults in Charge (YAC). Recently, YAC members submitted a letter of support for Assembly Bill 197 regarding healthcare access for minors experiencing homelessness. YAC members are also exploring creating materials to support youth experiencing homelessness during COVID-19.

IV. COVID-19 Provider Updates

A. Vaccination Plan for Youth

Ms. Paulsen shared that she received news from the Southern Nevada Health District that all people experiencing homelessness are eligible to receive a vaccine in advance of April 5th. Nevada Homeless Alliance in partnership with Touro University, Immunize Nevada, and the City of Las Vegas, is holding Pop Up events for those experiencing homelessness to receive a COVID-19 vaccination cost-free. On the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month vaccination events will be taking place at Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada. A flyer is being finalized regarding the Pop-Up vaccination events and will be sent out through NHA's email list. Individuals do not need identification to receive a vaccination at these events and can fill out a vaccine registration form with the Southern Nevada Health District in place of

identification; accepted forms of identification include State ID, Clarity ID, and School ID. Incentives for receiving a vaccination have been secured in the form of gift cards.

The Help Hope Home website recently posted a service provider tool kit with guidance for helping clients to get vaccinated, “Steps Agencies Can Take to Help People Access the COVID-19 Vaccine.”

Regarding youth experiencing homelessness, service providers agreed that future vaccination events should take place at locations where youth feel comfortable. It was shared that service providers may want to keep a copy of youths’ vaccination card in their case file in the event it becomes lost. Youth could also take photos of the front and back of their vaccination card to save these records on their phones. It was shared that if clients have an ROI signed that vaccination records could be stored on HMIS. For those who have received a vaccination, WebID (a statewide vaccine database) saves information about individuals’ vaccine records. Individuals ages 16 and older can schedule an appointment to be vaccinated through the Health District website. There is also a hotline to schedule an appointment, another option for those who may find navigating the website challenging.

Ms. Huth shared that The Center will be hosting a vaccination event on April 6th from 12 to 4 pm of 200 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The J&J vaccine is a one-shot dose and available to those ages 18 and older. Ms. Moore stated that she has been in communication with the Southern Nevada Health District and is working to schedule a vaccination event at HELP for those experiencing homelessness to receive a J&J vaccination. MCIT would be on-site to help individuals obtain Clarity cards as well. Mr. Ghafoori shared that NPHY partners with Nevada Health Centers and there may be an opportunity for targeted outreach to help youth get vaccinated.

Ms. Martinez shared that Nevada 95 (N95) has been communicating with NHA and UNLV, and received educational materials from them regarding vaccinations. N95 is working on creating questions for a focus group so youth can provide their feedback about health matters. Youth from the N95 steering committee will take a survey, and then the information will be used to organize a larger focus group. N95 will send out more information about this initiative soon.

- SJR: Ms. Charles shared that St. Jude’s opened up all of its locations on an appointment-only basis. They are doing intakes at their drop-in center from Monday through Friday from 10 am to 6 pm. Case management is returning to normalcy with in-person visits in the office and home visits taking place in the community.
- NPHY: Mr. Ghafoori shared that NPHY is slowly reopening programs, expanding opportunities outside of the Drop-In Center, and plans to reopen more beds in the emergency shelter. The majority of NPHY’s staff have been vaccinated.
- The Center: Ms. Huth shared that the Qevolution youth program is still taking place virtually as well as other groups. The Switch Closet is available by appointment. The first virtual sex education event took place recently and will be scheduled for more sessions based on need.
- HELP: Ms. Moore shared that the procedures at Shannon West are the same. They are not accepting in-person volunteers at this time. Youth entering the facility are still being isolated for 72 hours upon intake, and they are tested for COVID at UNLV. If they report negative they can

be enrolled into the broader youth program more quickly. It was emphasized that testing the youth has been successful with results coming back within 24 hours, which helps with retention rates as youth do not feel the stress of isolation as long.

- CCSD: Ms. Pike shared that CCSD has reopened in-person learning. Beginning on March 22nd, students in grades 6, 9, and 12 can return to school under a hybrid model (this model has three cohorts: two cohorts attend school in-person two days a week and attend virtual learning the other three days. The third cohort participates in virtual schooling exclusively). On April 6th, CCSD intends to utilize this model for students in grades 7, 8, 10, and 11. And pre-K through grade 5 will return to five days a week of in-person instruction beginning on April 6th. Operation School Bell is now back in service. Title I HOPE is assisting with youth attending their school of origin and distributing resources of clothing, hygiene kits, and backpacks.

V. Policy Update

Housing and Homelessness Awareness Day will be taking place virtually on April 5th; there will be a virtual rally at 9 am. The deadline to sign up for office visits is March 23rd. There will be a webinar on Thursday, April 1st, “Homelessness and Affordable Housing Advocacy in the 2021 NV Legislature” hosted by the Policy Council on Homelessness. NHA’s upcoming newsletter will provide more information about bills tracked during this legislative session and upcoming legislative advocacy opportunities.

Assemblyman Howard Watts is sponsoring a bill to expand health care access for unaccompanied homeless minors (AB 197). NPHY and SchoolHouse Connection worked together to advocate for this bill and created the bill language. Members of YAC submitted a letter of support for this bill. On March 17th, the Nevada Assembly Health and Human Services Committee held a hearing for AB 197; community partners, including NHA, the UNLV School of Nursing, Dignity Health, SchoolHouse Connection, and NPHY’s Executive Director and NPHY Youth Ambassador provided testimony in support of the bill. Clark County proposed an amendment to the bill and spoke in support along with Washoe County. At this time, there is no opposition to the bill. A work session hearing is scheduled for March 24th.

VI. Training Opportunities

- “Coordinated Entry Virtual Assessor Training: 2020 Process Changes;” must register by April 16th through HelpHopeHome.
- “Identification, Attendance, and Re-engagement: Current Strategies and Plans for Next Year” April Learning Series presented by SchoolHouse Connection, begins April 8th.
- Point Source Youth will be hosting four virtual conferences in 2021: 1st Annual PSY Rural Conference on Youth Homelessness; the 5th Annual National Symposium on Solutions to End Youth Homelessness; the 3rd Annual PSY Southern Conference on Youth Homelessness; and the 2nd Annual PSY Western Conference on Youth Homelessness.
- National Center for Homeless Education “Determining Eligibility for McKinney-Vento Rights and Services (April 20, 2021, 11:00 a.m. PT).
- “Federal Reporting – System Performance Measures” BitFocus training on April 15th and “Release of Information” BitFocus Training on May 12th.
- National Network for Youth: National Summit on Youth Homelessness (March 24-25th).

VII. Open Discussion

Nevada 95 has an art contest open to youth ages 14 – 24; submissions are open through March 31st and there are cash prizes available to the winners of the contest. Visit nv95network.org/events for more details.

VIII. Adjournment

- The next YWG Meeting will take place on April 27, 2021, from 9 am to 11 am.