

Leadership Capacity: The Southern Nevada Homelessness Continuum of Care (CoC), **named NV-500**, is a consortium of 175 organizations who are working together to end homelessness within the State's southern and most densely populated region, Clark County. NV-500 is not applying as a rural community. More than 30 stakeholders came together to develop and support the YHDP proposal. **1-Addressed COVID-19 Challenges:** Beginning in March 2020, the NV-500 and the NV-500 Youth Working Group addressed challenges for youth at-risk of or experiencing homelessness by responding to system-level disparities resulting from the outbreak of COVID-19. As schools shifted to e-learning underserved communities were disproportionately impacted by a lack of technology and Wi-Fi. To keep youth connected to school, providers linked at-risk youth to the Title I Homeless Outreach Program for Education (HOPE) Liaisons who equipped students with Chromebooks and access to internet by parking Wi-Fi buses in low-income zip codes daily. Separately, a long-term challenge exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic was a lack of access to medical services by unaccompanied youth. NV-500 Youth Action Board (YAB) collaborated with youth leaders from the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth (NPHY) Ambassador Program to mobilize youth-led advocacy efforts in support of a bill, AB197, to increase medical access for unaccompanied youth and allowed immediate access to COVID-19 vaccinations without requiring parental consent. When the vaccine was rolled out to individuals experiencing homelessness in March 2021, youth experiencing homelessness were immediately able to access it. YAB created a bi-lingual educational flyer, that included a QR code to schedule a vaccination appointment and distributed it to sheltered and unsheltered youth. **2-YAB initiative:** NV95, a youth leadership body in Southern Nevada, designed and implemented PhotoVoice as a participatory research project that explored the root causes of youth homelessness and its solutions through creative photography. Youth participants submitted a

series of photos along with a narrative to educate policymakers around critical youth issues. Thirteen PhotoVoice projects focused on raising awareness around systemic inequities, six of the projects addressed homelessness or housing projects. In total, 80% of the 15 participants were youth of color and 47% were female. **3-YAB decision-making process integrated into the CoC:** Since 2019, YAB has been a recognized NV-500 Board member with full voting power and has been a decision-maker at the system-level. YAB developed and presented a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statement that both the NV-500 Board and Youth Working Group formally adopted in 2019. In 2020, YAB worked alongside NV-500 staff to provide recommendations for youth compensation. To support youth leadership bodies at the project-level, Shannon West Homeless Youth Center (SWHYC) formed a weekly youth town hall to discuss shelter conditions and services, and as a result of those youth town halls, the SWHYC changed their shelter curfew. NV-500 understands that more groundwork needs to be established to meaningfully engage youth across the different working groups. NV-500 is committed to maintaining and increasing equity, inclusion, and respect while engaging YAB at all levels in order for youth to be equal partners in policy-level decision-making. **4-CoC support for Lead Agency:** NV-500's governance structure supports the collaborative applicant, Clark County Social Service (Social Service), with the YHDP proposal and development of a coordinated approach to end youth homelessness. Working groups that will be involved in the planning and implementation of the coordinated community plan (CCP) are as follows:

NV-500 Board (31 members) Objective: oversees all programs that require direction and/or formal actions to end homelessness in Southern Nevada, including youth homelessness. This Board will provide oversight and final approval of the CCP. YAB is a voting member of the Board and contributes to all agenda items.

Youth Action Board (currently 5 members) Objective: a formal sub-working group of NV-500, focuses on issues related to youth homelessness through advocacy and education. The YAB will play a leading role in the planning and development of the CCP in an effort to center youth-voice and will provide approval on all projects. This group is composed of young people with lived experience under the age of 25 and is youth-led and adult-guided. Efforts are currently underway to expand YAB membership to ensure diversity of representation based upon race/ethnicity, gender/sexual orientation and lived experience.

Youth Working Group (13 members) Objective: focuses on systemic change for youth homeless services through community coordination and collaboration. This working group will be responsible for setting the expectations and training requirements for YHDP projects. YAB is an active member of Youth Working Group with a standing agenda item.

Data and System Improvement Working Group (12 members) Objective: gathers and reviews all homelessness data, Point-in-Time Counts and other community indicators for data-driven recommendations and decisions, including youth-specific matters. This working group will use data to guide the prioritization of YHDP project-types. Youth with lived experience are key informants in this prioritization process.

5-Written Plan: Adopted by NV-500 and the community in 2018, the Southern Nevada Plan to End Youth Homelessness (The Plan) is a five-year comprehensive, community-wide response that focuses on ending youth homelessness in Southern Nevada. Multi-sector partners and youth with lived experience collaborated to identify youth-specific goals, objectives, and strategies to guide the community's efforts and develop the infrastructure to provide housing and services to all youth experiencing or are at-risk of homelessness. The leading partners that helped to develop, finalize, adopt and update The Plan include: **Youth Providers:** NPHY, St. Jude's

Ranch for Children, HELP of Southern Nevada (SWHYC); Clark County Step Up; **Young People:** YAB; **Community Partners:** Las Vegas Sands, Dept of Juvenile Justice Services; **Local Jurisdictional Agencies:** City of Las Vegas, North Las Vegas and Henderson; Clark County; **Educational Partners:** Clark County School District (the District), University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) Greenspun College of Urban Affairs; **Local Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA):** Dept of Family Services; **LGBTQ+ Provider:** the LGBTQ Center of Southern Nevada; **Employment and Education Specialists:** Workforce Connections. **6-Two Youth-Specific Strategies:** One strategy to address youth homelessness was to expand the Safe Place program, a model where young people in crisis receives immediate assistance from trauma-informed providers. The Safe Place program was expanded to include two library districts (28 libraries). A second strategy in The Plan to address youth homelessness was to secure flexible funding for youth-dedicated housing. Local marijuana business licensing fees were used to fund homeless youth shelter (76 beds), transitional (27 units) and rapid rehousing (63 units) programs, to bridge community gaps and increase Southern Nevada’s youth housing capacity. **7-Authentic Youth Collaboration:** NV-500 defines authentic youth collaboration as fostering youth partnerships that are based on trust and allow for honest discussions that engage youth and focus on youth concerns throughout the entire process. Authentic collaboration means a “we” mindset where everyone, especially youth, are part of the team. When it comes to youth homelessness, young people are the subject matter experts, and their insights allow for innovative solutions. YAB members represent and serve as a bridge to other youth in the community who have similar characteristics or experiences. Peer-to-peer connection builds an inclusive process for youth who may otherwise be marginalized. As team members, youth should feel heard, considered and valued. **8-CoC Prioritizes Authentic Youth Collaboration:** The

CoC's prioritization of authentic youth collaboration has fostered an environment that has nurtured growth since 2017. Examples include creation of YAB, implementation of youth-based street outreach, formalizing YAB as a NV-500 Board member, employing youth with lived experiences in housing programs and hiring a youth research associate for the youth assessment. Youth are key informants with valuable insights and unique perspectives regarding their situation and ways in which systems may be improved, and NV-500 is committed to continually prioritizing authentic youth collaboration. The COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the need for youth experts to inform decisions, as conditions were in constant change and providers pivoted based on client and youth needs. Communication and partnerships worked to build equity for all youth throughout this public health crisis. Regularly scheduled youth-based listening sessions have been used to improve the Point-in-Time Count methodology and identify local priorities from the NV-500 Data and Systems Improvement Working Group. YAB and 39 other youth have provided support to this proposal, acting as a lead writer for youth-specific questions and informing all application sections via a series of listening sessions, meetings and application review. These diverse voices have allowed a unique perspective that was not part of the previous application. **9-Prepared, Debriefed, and Supported:** NV-500 implements practices that ensures YAB and other youth are well-prepared and supported to play meaningful roles in CoC decision-making activities. To prepare and onboard youth leaders, ongoing trainings and professional development opportunities are provided. To support youth on specific projects, a NV-500 adult member is identified as a mentor and direct point of contact. The mentor provides one-on-one support through preparatory conversations regarding background information and past efforts via videoconferencing, phone calls, or emails based on youth preference. Youth are informed of funding regulations, terminology and acronyms they are likely to hear during Board and working

group meetings. This preparation builds youth confidence to bring their perspectives forward. Post-meetings, youth debrief with their mentor which provides space for the youth to digest the meeting, discuss additional information and review next steps.

Community Need: 1-Youth-Specific Homelessness Needs Assessment: Southern Nevada is a well-known tourist destination that hosts more than 40 million visitors each year and is a high-risk environment of alcohol, drugs, gambling and nearby legal brothels. Due to high levels of tourism and transiency, youth experiencing homelessness can be hard to detect. In Nov. 2017, diverse cross-sector partners collectively identified and addressed the unique needs of youth. The 2017 youth-specific needs assessment guided the process that created The Plan, a focused, sustainable, community-wide effort that includes specific goals, objectives and strategies to end youth homelessness. Updates to The Plan are monitored and shared out annually at the local youth summit, an updated youth needs assessment is scheduled for completion Nov. 2022. **1a-Lead Agency:** NPHY served as the lead agency for the 2017 youth needs assessment, with support from Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC), young people with lived experience, youth providers, community partners, local jurisdictions, PCWA as well as education and employment specialist. **1b-Youth Involvement:** In 2017, YAB served as a lead and active partner in the process to create all components of The Plan, including the youth needs assessment. YAB met weekly to provide feedback on the design, execution, and writing of the assessment; attended all community-level meetings that shaped the needs assessment; and met with TAC to facilitate the creation of the assessment. For the 2022 youth-specific needs assessment, youth will be involved in all stages and TAC will hire a youth with lived experience as a research assistant. **1c-Disparities:** In 2017, TAC led the community and compared demographic data on race, gender, LGBTQ+, health disparities and system involvement across a

variety of youth data sources to develop a baseline demographic profile to measure equity throughout the system. In May 2021, an equity analysis of the entire homeless system showed parenting youth, ages 18 to 24, experienced a shorter length of time homeless and higher exits to permanent destinations than other subpopulations. As part of the 2021 analysis, the Coordinated Entry System (CES) youth queue demonstrated an overrepresentation of Black youth (52%) compared to a general population of 13.1%. The youth queue also has more people of color than the adult queue. During the 2017 needs assessment, HMIS did not collect gender identity. Since that time, NV-500 efforts have resulted in the capture of gender identity in HMIS upon entry. Since LGBTQ+ data was not collected in 2017, national data from True Colors United has been applied to infer disparities at the local level. LGBTQ+ youth are 120% more likely to experience homelessness than other youth. In the State of Nevada Ending the HIV Epidemic Plan for 2021-2026, the homeless population is specifically identified for disparities around HIV. Youth experiencing homelessness are 16 times more likely to be diagnosed with HIV and seven times more likely to die from AIDS compared to the general youth population. To better understand system involvement, NV-500 looks to national data to understand trends. The National Foster Youth Institute estimates that 50% of the homeless population spent time in foster care and the Coalition for Juvenile Justice estimates that 62% of the homeless population has been arrested at least once. In the 2022 youth needs assessment, equity will be a focus and disparities among subpopulations will be identified through data disaggregation. **1d-Key Findings:** As the needs assessment conducted in 2017 is no longer reflective of Southern Nevada, NV-500 utilizes the annual Point-In-Time Count data to inform current need. The annual Point-in-Time Count provides a single night snapshot of homelessness. According to the February 2022 Point-in-Time Count, there were 304 youth experiencing homelessness and another 115 youth enrolled in rapid

rehousing. Of the 304 youth, 277 were transitional, ages 18 to 24, and 27 were minors. These numbers may be artificially low because youth is an often hard to identify subpopulation. In a 12-month look back of NV-500's system of care, 1,767 unaccompanied youth accessed housing assessments and services. Within the school district, there are currently 14,146 youth who have been identified as housing insecure by the McKinney-Vento liaison who is focused on youth outreach. Additionally, NV-500 engaged in a system modeling project that examined the different community pathways in and out of homelessness. According to system modeling projections and current project utilization rates, the housing type that will serve the most youth and has been prioritized is rapid rehousing. Currently, the youth queue showed 191 youth on a housing waitlist. To account for shared housing and diversion strategies, Southern Nevada needs an additional 130 rapid rehousing units and 30 permanent supportive housing units for high-needs youth. During listening sessions, youth highly recommended that programs should socially engage youth through diverse community activities and for all housing projects to follow the Housing First model. **2-Youth-Focused Intervention:** Youth permanent supportive housing is a youth-focused intervention that is not currently operating in Southern Nevada. Since July 2021 to April 2022, 22.5% of youth accessing the SWHYC Shelter have a developmental disability, and 42% have a mental health diagnosis. These youth often require high intensity interventions which contributes to prolonged periods of homelessness. Even when successfully connected to housing services, these vulnerable youth lack the ability to independently maintain housing. As these youth remain in the homeless system, providers are concerned that this subpopulation will subsequently become adults with a history of chronic homelessness. To address these needs, the entities that compose Southern Nevada's social safety net must wrap youth in mental health and other services along with permanent supportive housing to support equitable outcomes for this

vulnerable population. The 2022 State of Mental Health in America Report ranks Nevada as the worst state in the nation for the sixth consecutive year, when it comes to the high prevalence of youth mental illness and the lowest rate of youth access to care. Regional treatment centers are releasing minors a few weeks before they turn 18, and even with discharge planning, it is difficult to provide appropriate solutions. Permanent supportive housing programs match housing with intensive case management services which includes connections to services for mental health, developmental disabilities and substance use to empower youth to live independently. The biggest barrier that prevents the development of youth permanent supportive housing is lack of dedicated resources towards this solution. **3-Youth Homelessness:** The determination of community-level factors that contribute to youth homelessness in Southern Nevada were identified through the 2017 needs assessment and further supported by 2022 youth listening sessions. The three most prominent community factors are:

System Involvement– Roughly one in five youth who are experiencing homelessness in Southern Nevada entered the homeless system through the foster care system. In 2017, there were over 300 bookings of young adults in the Clark County juvenile justice system, of whom 46% were Black (compared to 13% in the general population). Youth involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems are at an even more increased risk for homelessness.

Economic Hardship– According to County Health Rankings, 29% of Southern Nevada children live in a single-parent household, and 19% of children live in poverty. The teen birth rate for Nevada is 16.8 per 1,000 females, and these parents often experience additional economic hardships as they work to support their families. In youth listening sessions, young adults cited lack of employment opportunities, including jobs that pay a livable wage, as a root cause of homelessness. The Nevada State Apartment Association reported rent in Las Vegas increased

more than 20% in the first quarter of 2022 indicating an increased impact on the economy.

Family Dysfunction, Rejection and Conflict– In the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 18.5% of Southern Nevada high school students reported that they had witnessed a form of domestic violence. In youth listening sessions, domestic violence, sexual assault, LGBTQ+ and feelings of rejection were cited as factors towards housing instability and homelessness. One LGBTQ+ youth shared feelings of “being caged and unable to spread their wings.” Another youth shared that it can be difficult to share feelings with parents, such as depression, because their parents do not really listen and instead respond with insensitive comments like, “Go ‘depress’ those dishes.” Many youth participants identified the adage, “My way or the highway,” as a reason why teenagers find themselves homeless.

4-Addressing disparities across youth subpopulations: In May 2021, the coordinated entry system (CES) was assessed for disparities across subpopulations to identify structural issues of equity. Fifty-two percent of young people who have been assessed for housing and other services were Black compared to 13% of the general youth population. A similar disparity has been identified in the placement and outcomes of youth client. The CES Working Group is collaborating with HMIS vendor to implement a system for on-going monitoring of the number of housing referrals that are approved or denied. This system-level tracking explores project-level data to ensure that programs are consistent with regulations and expectations related to fair housing and civil rights requirements, and to build equity across underserved subpopulations. To further address this disparity, NV-500 has partnered with the Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority to increase access and improve local outcomes for subpopulations who have been historically disproportionately served. Since 2020, a youth landlord engagement specialist has worked with young people and service providers to increase youth-specific housing options for

historically underserved youth populations. Their role is to ensure young people and landlords are educated on fair housing and civil rights requirements. It has also been recognized that the LGBTQ+ community is overrepresented in the youth homeless population. A referral network is being established across medical providers and non-profits, including homeless service providers, to provide additional support for transition age youth, who have tested positive for HIV/AIDS. This program is in response to the Ending the HIV Epidemic, which recognized 20% of all new HIV diagnosis each year occurs in this age bracket. Additionally, through private funds Bright Star offers transitional, shared housing to LGBTQ+ young people to prevent and alleviate homelessness. **5-Transgender, Gender Non-Conforming, and Non-Binary Youth:** At the CoC system-level, NV-500 and the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services are working to thoughtfully integrate sexual orientation into HMIS for outreach, shelter and housing. NV-500 is working with subject matter experts to develop a training plan for case managers to ensure cultural responsiveness throughout the homeless system. Homeless service providers and youth with lived experience have completed the True Colors United training to ensure cultural responsiveness and build equity among peers. NV-500 and providers ensure privacy, respect and safety of transgender, gender non-conforming and non-binary youth through policies that support client choice, which allows youth to receive services and housing based upon their identified gender. Youth shelters maintain gender neutral bathrooms.

Collaboration: 1-Coordinated Entry System (CES): The Youth CES was launched in October 2017 for unaccompanied youth, ages 12 to 24, and since implementation, youth with lived experience have informed many system improvements. **1a-Access Points:** NV-500's CES Policies and Procedures Manual (Manual) promotes a "no wrong door" philosophy and all providers have been cross-trained on the assessment tools for different subpopulations, including

youth. The system is low-barrier and designed to meet youth, and all individuals who are requesting assistance, where they are physically located, including on the streets. Youth specific guiding principles and trauma-informed strategies are integrated in training and the Manual. NV-500 has identified four youth-specific access points with youth providers, where youth can complete assessments and receive services. These sites allow youth to learn about additional resources and youth specific services available at each location. **1b-Prioritization:** As outlined in the Manual, youth are prioritized based on their level of vulnerability as indicated by history of housing or homelessness (number of sheltered/unsheltered homeless episodes); risks (domestic violence, trauma emergency services, exploitation); and wellness (physical, mental conditions, substance use). Community matchers help to manage the queue and connect youth to housing as quickly as possible. Where two or more youth meet all criteria within a single priority category, providers will prioritize servicing youth using the following “tiebreaker” factors: victimization, length of time homeless and pregnant or parenting households. **1c-CES Integration:** PCWA, at-risk providers, and mainstream resource providers can refer and accept referrals from the CES for a variety of funded housing projects. To wrap youth in services, CES and providers coordinate on-site services, including medical and behavioral health care, education and employment and government-support programs to improve outcomes for youth. Cross-sector collaboration between providers, including LGBTQ+ resource centers, PCWAs and other mainstream resource providers, has begun to establish a one-stop portal for data sharing which will streamline client eligibility for housing and other services, reduce trauma and build equity for at-risk youth. A provider-level learning library, available in summer 2022, will support the integration of providers into the CES. **2-Education Providers:** The NV-500 Board provides a seat to the Clark County School District’s Title 1 HOPE/McKinney-Vento Liaisons. These

Liaisons are active members of the Youth Working Group, act as advisors and mentors to YAB, coordinate services between the District and providers and provide resources for students who are experiencing homelessness. One example of this educational partnership is the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) HOPE Scholars initiative. This program is specific to students experiencing housing instability or homelessness and covers tuition, housing and provides additional wrap-around services. Program outcomes indicate that a HOPE Scholar is 50% more likely to graduate in a four-year period than the average UNLV student. A current YAB member is a graduated HOPE Scholar. Today, one full-time and two part-time UNLV staff members support the HOPE Scholar program and its students with barrier-removal and navigation support for institutions of higher education. **3-Other Youth Leadership Bodies:**

- **SWHYC's Youth Town Hall** works to provide client feedback and promote equity through policy changes. For example, due to low utilization rates of shelter beds, the Town Hall was able to realize that the early curfew deterred youth from accessing services, and as a result of their work, the shelter curfew was extended by two hours.
- **NPHY's Ambassadors** are young adults who engage in thoughtful leadership and advocacy both at the local and state level around issues of youth homelessness. Their work has influenced the passing of two state assembly bills related to unaccompanied youth.
- **Department of Family Services' Foster and Adoptive Youth Together** serves current and former youth in foster care, age 12 and older, with initiatives that bridge the gaps of foster care to adulthood and prevent them from entering homelessness. This group has a primary focus in civic engagement and these young adults helped to establish a no-cost admission process to post-secondary institutions in Nevada for youth formerly in foster care.
- **Nevada Partners' Wild N'Out Wednesdays (WOW)** engages in community service,

leadership development and civic engagement. An example of a current youth-led initiative involves a monthly collaborative of WOW youth leaders and local police officers to improve police relations with young people of color while simultaneously building protective factors for youth at risk of homelessness.

4-Connections to Services: Health Insurance Coverage– Service providers use intake assessments that include a question regarding health insurance in order to assess the participant’s access to health care. The Division of Welfare and Supportive Services deploy staff at different providers’ locations weekly, which allows youth to access low- or no-cost health insurance. PCWA and juvenile justice services have dedicated staff to establish insurance coverage and other federal benefits, within three days of youth entering custody.

Sexually Transmitted Infections– The Southern Nevada Health District, LGBTQ+ providers, Nevada State College and youth shelter/drop-in center staff coordinate on-site HIV and STI testing, treatment, resources and prevention education to youth experiencing homelessness. Youth do not require a referral, and walk-in appointments are accepted.

Mental and Physical Health– NPHY, SWHYC and the PCWA each employ a behavioral health therapist to provide assessment and initial services on-site or via telehealth within 72 hours of intake. SWHYC provides transportation for youth for additional mental health services. The Center provides support to LGBTQ+ youth by linking them to providers of similar background. NPHY hosts the Nevada Health Center’s mobile health unit at their drop-in center weekly and serves as an assigned practicum site for social work graduate students.

Substance Abuse Treatment– Youth are also assessed for substance use disorders within 72 hours of intake. Shelter staff refer to treatment services based on client-choice and harm reduction strategies, including crisis stabilization services. Training on naloxone, an overdose

reversal drug, provides valuable information on overdose prevention to this population. Youth with lived experience of homelessness and mental health and/or substance use provide an additional layer of social and emotional support through peer-to-peer efforts.

5-System-Level Discharge Strategy: Child welfare; juvenile and adult justice; and mental and physical health entities each work to prevent youth from being discharged into homelessness. It is recognized by system-leaders that further integration of these systems is needed to ensure that there are no gaps that young people may fall through. This includes engaging all the available community resources at the county and state level, youth with lived experience, family members, friends, wrap-around services, rehabilitation services and alternatives to parole and probation.

Child Welfare: The Independent Living Program is designed to prepare and assist youth in foster care to transition successfully into adulthood. Youth who need additional supports are discharged to the Step Up program for former foster care youth, ages 18 to 21. These programs actively participate in the Youth Working Group, conduct youth-specific Point-in-Time Counts, and serve as a coordinated entry site. Since Step Up started in 2015, 96.8% of participating youth have remained stably housed, which is a huge success.

Justice System: Juvenile justice involved youth receive discharge planning from Field Probation Officers who work to connect youth to stable housing in their family of origin, PCWA foster care system or other supportive programs. In 2016, The Harbor Juvenile Assessment Center (The Harbor) was created to divert justice-involved youth and prevent incarceration, which is a known disparate population in homeless populations. In 2021, The Harbor served 6,406 youth and families who were referred to or voluntarily accessed services across the five locations. To further prevent entry into the homeless system, a cross-over unit modeled on the success of the Step Up program is being established.

Institutions of mental and physical health: Southern Nevada Health District, Southern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services and Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Healthcare are engaged members of NV-500. Desert Willow Treatment Center, a youth psychiatric hospital, develops discharge plans through a multi-disciplinary team of child welfare and juvenile justice experts to ensure youth are not released into homelessness. Typical discharges involve youth being released to family or foster home with stabilization supports. The Healthy Living program, a collaboration between local government, a service provider and three managed care organizations, ensures that frequent users of emergency health care services who are experiencing homelessness are connected to permanent housing upon discharge to improve quality of life and reduce public costs. Program outcomes show that in the first six months of participation clients experienced a 60% reduction in emergency room visits, 55% reduction in hospital admissions and 64% reduction in days of hospitalization. **6-Letter of Support:** Please see the PCWA letter of support attached.

Youth Collaboration: The YAB offered advice and feedback throughout the entire composition of this YHDP application; however, this section was completely drafted by the YAB. **1-YAB**

Mission and Vision: YAB's **mission** is "to eradicate youth homelessness by empowering youth voice via advocacy," with the overall **vision** of "creating opportunities for youth to become self-sufficient, be heard, and positively contribute to society." **2-YAB Structure and Work:**

Participation in YAB is open to youth, ages 15 to 24, with lived experience of homelessness.

One adult acts as the counterpart to YAB and provides support to the team. The work of YAB is described in the handbook that also includes by-laws, Officer roles, expectations, activities, responsibilities, procedures, and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy. YAB is a voting member of the Youth Working Group and has a seat on the NV-500 Board that is available to

YAB Officers who are over the age of 18. Through youth voice, YAB works on advocacy, education, and policy reform at the CoC and state levels. YAB will focus on Southern Nevada's youth homelessness and related issues. **2a-YAB's Length of Existence:** YAB launched in November 2017. **2b-YAB Membership:** The current YAB membership is 5 members. To represent the demographics of youth homelessness and the diverse experiences, the ideal number of YAB members is 12 to 15 young adults. **2c-Frequency of YAB Meetings:** YAB meetings are held monthly, the last Wednesday of the month at 5 p.m. **2d-Decision-Making:** YAB is designed to create equity and promote inclusion. These values are modeled through the decision-making structure of consensus building. Through dialogue, youth address and work through concerns. Also, YAB must have quorum of 51% of members or officers for any voting to occur. When serving as a voting member within the CoC, the YAB representative is trusted to make decisions that reflect the values of YAB and support its mission. **2e-CoC Training:** As part of YAB's onboarding process, new members are provided with the handbook that outlines the values and responsibilities of being a member. The handbook includes information about the structure of the CoC, acronyms, glossary of terms, Southern Nevada supportive housing types, and The Plan. Additionally, members of YAB are encouraged to attend CoC training to learn more about the process and structure of the NV-500. YAB members are also encouraged to attend webinars and trainings hosted by other organizations related to homelessness and youth leadership. YAB Officers and adult supporters provide their contact information to every new member and are available to meet with members one-on-one or schedule a group meeting to answer questions or address concerns surrounding homelessness. **3-YAB Membership:** YAB is currently working to recruit new members as the ideal number of YAB members has been identified as 12 to 15 young adults. Membership this size will allow for representation from

different groups in terms of age, gender, race/ethnicity, LGBTQ+, and lived experiences. Historically, YAB has struggled with membership and attendance at meetings, and this issue has been exacerbated by COVID-19. YHDP will allow the necessary resources to support YAB through a third-party facilitator. This has proven to be a successful model in our community with other youth leadership bodies. Youth providers have leadership groups within their agencies, and YAB is currently conducting in-reaching recruiting events. If awarded YHDP, these diverse youth leadership bodies have indicated they will join the planning and creation of a CCP to end youth homelessness. There were five youth listening sessions across different youth groups, and these youth are committed to supporting YHDP. **3a-Data and Representation:** During the 2022 Point-in-Time Count, individuals counted were also surveyed. Youth survey results showed 62% were youth of color. Parenting youth were 95% females and 79% were Black young adults. Overall, there were six people who identified as transgender. In addition, 5% of youth experienced chronic homelessness. Similarly, YAB members come from all walks of life, and share lived experiences of homelessness such as: staying in a homeless shelter or other housing assistance programs; living in a motel or hotel for long periods of time; sleeping/living out of a car; rotating between staying with friends or different family members; doubling up; couch-surfing; being kicked out of home for being LGBTQ+, pregnant, or other reasons; and not knowing where they will be staying from one day to the next. YAB encourages diversity, equity, and inclusion in its membership and has developed a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy. **3b-Diversity in Recruitment:** YAB Officers lead efforts related to recruitment and are supported by NV-500 partners. They engage YAB members, case managers, and the District's Title I HOPE liaisons to share information about YAB accomplishments and invite youth to meetings in order to ensure that all youth have a voice in the systems that affect them. Youth

Working Group members and youth service providers are encouraged to display YAB information to promote enrollment among youth clients and connect youth to members of YAB directly for information and participation. YAB recently recruited youth from the YHDP listening sessions. Of the 39 youth who contributed to this proposal 82% were youth of color; 45% female and 55% male; 12% parenting youth; 41% had experienced foster care or staying with a relative; and 64% of youth had experienced unsheltered homelessness. **4-YAB**

Compensation: YAB provided a compensation proposal to the NV-500 Board in December 2020. YAB was provided with retroactive stipends for activities performed, including attendance of YAB, Youth Working Group and NV-500 Board meetings; speaking arrangements; project development; and outreach, community events and training opportunities, as outlined in the proposal. These stipends were provided to YAB members via direct cash transfer. YAB members are reimbursed at a minimum of \$20 per hour, depending on the project type. This is \$3.41 above the hourly rate for the areas living wage, as indicated by the MIT living wage calculator. **5-YAB Incentives:** There are additional incentives beyond compensation that motivate youth to participate in YAB. Professional development, advocacy, public speaking, writing, collaboration, community building, analytical thinking, consensus building, etc., are a few examples of skills developed through YAB projects. By being involved with YAB, youth have been afforded access to the state legislative process and have gained a better understanding of the local homeless system of care. Another benefit that comes with being a part of YAB is the ability to network with like-minded peers. **6-Integrating Youth Voice Challenges:** As YAB members, we've identified adultism as the biggest challenge in integrating youth voice into community decision-making structures. The power imbalance between youth and service providers has led to us continuously having to work twice as hard to prove why we should be in

the room and inform decisions that affect us directly. It is also hard to be so young, with all the challenges we face, and maintain a certain image so that we can prove we should be at the table. For youth voice to be fully integrated into community decision-making structures, our experiences need to have inherent value; we need to have a seat at the table; we need to be given authentic means to collaborate from the start of every project; and we need to be valued for our contributions and expertise. We believe YHDP will create opportunities to achieve this by institutionalizing authentic youth engagement throughout the CCP planning stage; project selection and funding; monitoring processes; as well as providing stipends and employment opportunities for YAB.

7-Sustaining YAB Challenges: As youth advocates, some of the biggest challenges to sustaining a YAB are adultism, tokenism, and accessibility to attend events. Additional barriers that may cause youth to leave YAB include believing that the work we do is ‘practice’ for when we enter the ‘real world’; deciding what we can and cannot handle; and re-traumatization through storytelling. Additionally, we’ve seen a fluctuation in YAB membership as it is made up of youth with lived experience of homelessness, which means that if a young person is currently in a homelessness situation, they may find it difficult to attend meetings, trainings, and events due to a lack of transportation and access to technology.

8–Biggest Areas of Risk in Current System: The biggest areas of risk for youth homelessness: parents not explaining the transition into adulthood, such as getting an apartment; family conflicts that cause a youth to run away; domestic violence; generational curse/poor parenting; kicked out for being LGBTQ+; jobs that do not pay high enough wages; high rental fees; substance misuse; inaccessible mental and behavioral support; insufficient teachings on financial literacy; and an overall lack of support systems to get through hardships or emergencies. We have recognized community efforts to decrease barriers for youth such as: establishing provider-leased rapid

rehousing; Youth Peer Advocate job opportunities; legislative advocacy to remove barriers when accessing mental and behavioral health services and vital documents; establishing youth leadership opportunities; and creating pathways to higher education through partnerships with local post-secondary institutions and scholarship programs. **9–Success Defined:** In 2018, Southern Nevada adopted The Plan which has over 60 strategies to ensure that youth homelessness is rare, brief, one-time, and equitably addressed. These strategies outline how our community defines success. If awarded YHDP, we would continue to implement these strategies and explore innovative pathways, such as expanding our community’s abilities to meet youth and their diverse needs by providing multiple avenues to access services including virtual intakes, creating more drop-in centers, and meeting youth at locations of their choosing. YHDP will also support the expansion of housing opportunities to give youth who are still living on the streets a place to feel safe and receive help with clothing, food, school, employment, daycare, and social activities. There should be no wait times, and nobody should have to live without a roof over their head. As young leaders, we believe that youth will see our community’s growth when youth are able to define and strive for their own successful outcomes; receive adequate mental and behavioral support; and exit programs into self-sufficiency with no return to homelessness.

10-Letter of Support: Please see the YAB letter of support attached.

Data and Evaluation Capacity: **1-Percentage of Homeless Beds:** Based on the 2022 Housing Inventory Count (HIC), 100% of all types of homeless beds participate in HMIS or a victim-service provider comparable database. **2-Percentage of Youth Beds:** Based on the 2022 HIC, 100% of all youth beds are covered in HMIS regardless of funding source. **3-Youth Dedication Project HMIS Recruitment:** NV-500 HMIS Sub-Working Group, with support from the HMIS vendor manages the recruitment, outreach and coordination of new agencies, as well as existing

organization's homeless projects in HMIS. NV-500 is able to reach 100% participation in HMIS due to policy mandates applied to all funding streams across jurisdictional partners. A benefit that is highlighted to new agencies is the ability to join monthly client case conferencing meetings held by the NV-500 CES Task Force. Nevada's three CoCs are developing a statewide HMIS agency application to streamline the process for new homeless projects and ensure agencies have a positive and efficient entry into the HMIS system. **4-New Project Support:** NV-500 supports the transition of new homeless projects to HMIS through financial resources, technical assistance and training. NV-500 provides a limited number of licenses and other administrative costs at no charge to participating agencies. Technical assistance and training occurs through a variety of methods, including: targeted one-on-one support from the Nevada specific Community Administrators, new end-user general training, bi-monthly refresher training, bi-monthly office hours, monthly HMIS newsletter, and a vendor sponsored support websites and Technical Support Team. This is done in accordance with the Nevada Statewide HMIS Data Quality Plan. NV-500 provides ongoing HMIS assistance to participating agencies and system-level improvements through working groups and Partner Agency Data Lead meetings. YAB and youth with lived experience provide feedback and recommendations regarding barriers and challenges for youth clients for potential adaptations to the HMIS system. One recent youth recommendation is a client facing portal that allows for assessments to be completed in a more culturally sensitive private manner. **5-Other Youth Data:** NV-500 operates through data-driven approaches and collects youth-specific data from sources beyond HMIS. First and foremost, youth are recognized as a primary data source and serve as key informants. According to one young adult, the "youth mindset is different because they are in these situations [of homelessness], know the other people in it, and know what they are talking about."

- McKinney-Vento school-level data. Title 1 HOPE advocates collect data via a survey of unaccompanied students for the Point-In-Time Count and is provided as de-identified data to NV-500 staff. The data is stored through the District’s database and available upon request.
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data. Administered every two years by University of Nevada, Reno to middle and high school students, this survey collects information regarding risk / protective factors of homelessness. NV-500 and service providers use this data to tailor programming to meet client needs. It is stored online on the University’s webpage and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s website.
- PCWA and court data. Client-level data is collected through intake records via agency staff. This data is stored on the internal, online system of each agency and information is shared collaboratively as relevant.

Understanding how other systems impact youth experiencing homelessness is paramount. The Data and Systems Improvement Working Group prioritizes cross-system data sharing by adding “Current Data Gaps” as a standing agenda item. **6-Performance Monitoring:** NV-500 monitors all of the homeless assistance programs, including youth providers, using a standardized criteria and process. A formal monitoring process is conducted by an external evaluator who reports to NV-500’s Monitoring Working Group and CoC staff. The external monitoring focuses on the following criteria: timeliness and completeness of data reporting and quality; compliance with local, state, and federal regulations; written policies and procedures; financial management; spend down rates; program performance and outcomes; and adherence to proven best practices, such as the housing first principles. The frequency of the external monitoring is annual, prior to the local CoC competition. The process that the CoC utilizes to offer monitoring feedback to providers is through the detailed Annual Report for External Monitoring, which was developed

by the external monitor with input from agencies and persons with lived experience. This report includes the monitoring tools, performance, and spending drawdown and utilization rates. At the exit interview, areas of improvement and recommended trainings are covered so that the CoC can support providers to improve performance. Additional support provided by the CoC comes from the Monitoring Working Group and their monthly oversight of budget spend down rates. Budget expenditures are closely monitored to ensure funding is allocated to meaningful services that promote equity. This year, youth are specifically involved in monitoring of projects through beta testing client interview tools that will be formally adopted in 2023 monitoring.

7-Data Developed Strategy: NV-500 has used data to support the development of an effective intervention involving The Step Up Program which serves youth ages 18 to 21 who were formerly in foster care. Data demonstrated high rates of pregnant and parenting youth exiting foster care. The challenge these youth faced was the limited monthly program stipend of \$773 could not support a young family. In addition, the requirement to work part-time or be enrolled in education presented a barrier. To create inclusive and equitable programming for this already marginalized group, Step Up, PCWA and the Public Housing Authority collaborated to set aside housing vouchers for these young parents. Step Up employed strategies to increase earning potential to help achieve financial stability through education, training and other job-related, skill-building efforts. Step Up continues to problem-solve with young adults around work barriers such as childcare, transportation and professional attire to prevent young families from entering the homeless system. Since the launch in Nov. 2020, eight parenting youth have successfully secured permanent housing and another four young families are currently being linked to permanent housing.

8-Evaluation and Quality Improvement through Youth: At the system-level, YAB is an active member of the NV-500 Board, which is ultimately responsible

for the oversight of a high-functioning, effective CoC. Youth are involved in the development of priorities, coordinated entry recommendations and tool improvements, including a monitoring tool that incorporates client voice in the formal monitoring process. Youth providers have formalized youth leadership bodies that are brought into the evaluation and quality improvement conversations at the project-level. In addition, locally funded youth housing programs have youth stipends built into the budget to ensure that agencies are regularly asking youth for feedback and making program changes as recommended by young people. **9-Definition of Success:** The YHDP goal is to prevent and end youth homelessness in Southern Nevada through a coordinated response that ensures that homelessness among unaccompanied youth is rare, brief, non-recurring and equitable. Youth with lived experience and stakeholders envision a future where strong youth outreach and the expansion of housing projects connect youth to healthy, low barrier living environments. Success would be measured by less youth experiencing unsheltered homelessness, zero shelter denials and a reduction in the inflow of youth from other systems. Through housing problem-solving conversations and YHDP resources, youth can be quickly diverted into safe and stable housing. Coordinated entry processes will effectively link all youth experiencing homelessness to housing and services that are tailored to their needs as measured by average stays in shelters (less than 30 days) and length of time from assessment to permanent housing (less than 90 days). Youth specifically call out the need for social, emotional and mental supports, including peer-to-peer and mentorship models to holistically support young people in their transition to adulthood. This robust continuum of care builds a foundation that ends homelessness by preventing entry into the system. NV-500's commitment to equity-driven goals ensures that all subpopulations of youth have equal access to these services. This blend of data and the human touch is the bedrock for a successful YHDP.