



Working Group Report to the Board

Working Group: Youth Working Group (YWG)

Champion: Arash Ghafoori & Melissa Jacobowitz (NPHY)

Meeting date, time, and location: (4th Tuesdays); July 25, 2023, from 9:00 am to 11:00 am via Google Hangouts

Attendees: NPHY: Melissa Jacobowitz, Allison Steinzor; Lived X Consultant: Davion Taylor, Martin Castro, Amy Jones; HELP: Sharon Romero, Miriam Garcia, Celeste Williams, Malcom Washington; CCSD: Meg Pike; StepUP: Joe Taylor; Just One Project: Kristen Carl; BitFocus: Nora Saldivar; Legal Aid: Jaymie Junsay; DFS: Isabella Ireheta; CCSS: Dr. Chaqula Kallo, Catherine Huang-Hara, Brenda Herbstman; Nevada Partners: Lizette Guillen; Youth Action Board: Victor Marcias Jr.

Accomplishments - Action Items Completed:

- Funding Opportunities
 - The local CoC competition NOFO was recently released. More information can be found at <https://helphopehome.org/funding-opportunities/>. For questions, please contact helphopehome@clarkcountynv.gov.
- YWG Coordinated Entry Recommendations

Melissa Jacobowitz presented an overview of the Youth Coordinated Entry System (YCES), highlighting the active participation of the Youth Working Group (YWG) in its creation. The YWG played a key role in designing the YCES by selecting the housing assessment and writing optional questions, establishing policies and procedures, and creating system maps. Community matching, facilitated by HELP through a CoC grant, is currently the primary entity responsible for the matching process and the Coordinated Entry System Working Group (CESWG) oversees the CES system. Recently, a HUD TA provider and the Lived X Consultants conducted a secret shopper experiment, which identified gaps in the CES. As a result of this discovery, the TA provider recommended implementing a lead CE agency, a model adopted by other communities, to address these issues. During the last meeting, YWG actively brainstormed ideas and discussed challenges and planned to propose suggestions for enhancing the CES during this meeting.

During the meeting, the YWG put forth several recommendations regarding the YCES and engaged in a thorough discussion. The recommendations encompassed various aspects, such as providing immediate needs resources and emergency shelter when available, conducting annual housing assessor training that includes modules on cultural competency, trauma-informed care, and strengths-based approaches. They also emphasized the importance of holding care coordination meetings for community matching and ensuring transparent access to the community queue. The YWG also suggested that representatives from youth access sites should attend Coordinated Entry Task Force meetings. Furthermore, the group proposed the establishment of a system to conduct annual quality assurance checks and ensure compliance at access sites. To streamline the process, the YWG recommended making training mandatory for all housing assessors during onboarding. The YWG also advocated for incorporating harm reduction principles into housing diversion and training practices. These coordinated entry recommendations were formalized into a recommendations document (attached) and approved by the YWG via consensus: the YWG Co-Champions will share this recommendation document with CoC and CES leadership.

Additionally, members of the YWG suggested exploring policy recommendations at the state level for mental health services. They also suggested that outreach workers receive training to conduct housing assessments effectively. As part of an expanded intervention approach, members asked about expanding mobile crisis services to transition-aged youth. Moreover, they brainstormed about providing free cellphones to individuals undergoing housing assessments, whenever possible, to facilitate communication and access to resources.
- Youth Action Board Update
 - Nevada Partners is the agency responsible for the facilitation of the youth action board and recruitment of youth members via their NV 95 grant. Since the last YWG meeting, Nevada Partners has recruited three youth to the youth action board and is currently working on finalizing their scheduling and meeting agendas. The next Youth Action Board meeting will occur on Friday, July 28th, and monthly meetings will commence on Friday, August 25th. An incentive structure for youth action board participation is currently in development.
- Training Opportunities
 - [Nevada Homeless Alliance Statewide Conference](#), August 15th – 16th, at UNR
 - [2023 Nevada Youth Homelessness Summit](#), registration opens August 24th, November 8th at The Smith Center for the Performing Arts
- Open Discussion
 - The next meeting is on Tuesday, August 22nd, from 9:00 am – 11:00 am



Youth Working Group Recommendations for Coordinated Entry

In accordance with the Guiding Principles created by the Youth Coordinated Entry Subcommittee, the Youth Working Group recommends that the following practices be taken to strengthen the Southern Nevada Homelessness Continuum of Care (CoC)'s Coordinated Entry System:

1. All coordinated entry sites shall work to meet the basic needs of the individuals and families they serve by offering immediate needs resources, if available, and connections to emergency shelters.
 - a. Housing problem-solving, harm reduction, and diversion techniques should also be implemented when possible and appropriate.
2. All coordinated entry housing assessors shall be trained annually; in addition to training on administering housing assessments, best practice training shall be offered on topics including but not limited to cultural competency, trauma-informed care, harm reduction, and strengths-based approaches.
 - a. All coordinated entry sites shall be trained to meet the specific needs of young people experiencing homelessness, along with the specific needs of additional subpopulations.
3. Upon being administered a housing assessment, matching, especially for youth experiencing homelessness, shall be conducted through care coordination meetings amongst youth homelessness service providers offering housing and community matchers.
 - a. All housing providers and access sites shall have transparent access to the community queue in order to effectively case manage individuals and households waiting to be referred to housing.
4. Youth access sites should invite representatives to participate in the Coordinated Entry Task Force to assist with efforts to identify and contact hard-to-reach youth on the community queue using the Homeless Management Information System and other appropriate means necessary.
5. A system must be developed to conduct quality assurance checks and compliance of assessment sites at least annually.