# YOUTH ACTION, A WAY HOME

ALAMEDA COUNTY'S 2022 COORDINATED COMMUNITY PLAN TO PREVENT AND END HOMELESSNESS FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS WHILE SUPPORTING THOSE CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS



### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

First and foremost we want to give it up for ourselves! Our CCP (Coordinated Community Plan) writing team; Sahra Nawabi (YAB peer mentor), Antonio Pizano (YAB peer mentor), Hannah Moore (Youth Services Coordinator, ALL IN Alameda County) and Jen Lucky (Office of Homeless Care and Coordination). We have been meeting weekly and writing diligently to ensure that all of the wisdom we heard in our community conversations and systems modeling sessions have come through in a clear and organized way in this plan. We also want to acknowledge and thank our data consultant Margaret Woley who supported us in gathering data for each special population of youth experiencing homelessness.

We would like to thank our funder, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development which gave multiple communities and including Alameda County an opportunity for youth (young people ages 18 and under) and young adults (young people ages 18 to 24) and adult allies in Alameda County the opportunity to come together to create a comprehensive plan to prevent and end youth and young adult homelessness while supporting those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This Coordinated Community Plan represents community efforts in Alameda County to recognize and learn from the experience, expertise, passion, and wisdom of youth and young adults with lived experience of homelessness. Through this planning process, youth and young adults were supported to investigate the root barriers and solutions to ending youth and young adult homelessness.

We would like to thank our service providers, stakeholders, community members, and most importantly our youth and young adults with lived experience of homelessness who helped lay the foundation of this plan.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This partnership was led by the youth and young adults on the Youth Action Board and the youth and young adults on the Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) Core team, which included:

- Alameda County Youth Advisory Board: Youth About Action
- Abt Associates
- Community Development Agency/Collaborative Applicant
- ALL IN Alameda County
- EveryOne Home (Continuum of Care)
- Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, Office of Homeless Care and Coordination
- Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, Center for Healthy Schools and Communities
- University of California, Berkeley, School of Public Health; i4Y (Innovations for Youth)
- Alameda County Social Services Agency, Family and Children's Services
- Alameda County Social Services Agency, Child Welfare

We would like to thank the following stakeholders who have supported this process:

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Alameda County Supervisor Dave Brown
- Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley
- Alameda County Public Defender
- Alameda County Probation Department
- Alameda County Office of Education
- ALL IN Alameda County
- Bay Area Community Resources
- Bay Area Legal Aid
- Beyond Emancipation
- Caminos (Center for Healthy Schools and Communities)
- City of Oakland Human Services Department
- Covenant House California
- East Bay Children's Law Offices
- East Oakland Community Project
- First Place for Youth
- Fred Finch Youth & Family Services
- Lifelong Learning Academy
- REACH Ashland Youth Center
- TAY Career Technical Education HUB at 1025 2nd Street Oakland
- Ruby's Place
- Child & Young Adult System of Care, Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services
- Oakland Youth Advisory Commission

# **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHHP)

Unaccompanied Immigrant Youth and Young Adults (UIY): Unaccompanied immigrant youth (UIY) are minor children and youth who make dangerous journeys across borders to flee extreme violence, traumatic experiences, and economic deprivation in their home countries who are not accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Transition-Age Youth (TAY): Young people between the ages of 18 and 24

Young Adults: Individuals 18 to 24

Youth: Individuals under 18

Youth and Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness (YEH)

Youth and Young Adults: YYA

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### **OUR VOICES**

My name is Sahra Nawabi, a Youth Advocate with lived experience of homelessness and extensive experience serving unhoused communities. First, I would like to begin thanking the department of the U.S Housing and Urban Development for giving our community, especially our youth, an opportunity to be at the table and one hundred percent involved throughout the entire process. Being a part of Alameda County's Youth Advisory Board (YAB) as a Peer Mentor has been life changing so far by allowing me to construct the idea of transforming trauma in my advocacy work to end youth experiencing homelessness in my community.

The Alameda County's Youth Advisory Board has been struggling these past few years to find a home and sustainability. This YHDP program not only provided the technical assistance we needed to be strong but provided guidance as to how we play high importance in this program . Since the U.S department of Housing and Urban Development requires a YAB to carry out this work and be 100% involved, I believe there should be a planning grant designated to employ these youth with fair compensation. These young leaders are not here to be just heard but to be the lending hand of designing and creating innovative projects to match the needs of the unmet. We are program designers, project coordinators, we are people who have the expertise from being rejected, disconnected or connected with the system itself. This was a lot of work to do and some YAB's don't have the support of funding to stay in this work for two years and beyond. I say that because as a youth and a YAB member who was in this process before and during, we have bills to pay from car insurance to paying our phone bill and our 3x rent. We can not be working two jobs and especially being a part of this time consuming work if we are not being paid to take care of our needs. We are just like you but stronger and compassionate about this work. And if passion beats a degree, then I wouldn't be here today.

Two important lessons I have learned in this process is one, never be afraid to stick up for what's best for you especially if it's supposed to be made for you. I believe that as a young person we get a lot of doubts and negative stimanas but I can tell you that anything you put your mind to you can accomplish, especially if it is close to home. And I am a walking model for that. Furthermore, we need to approach things through an racial equity centered lens and it needs to be considered and applied to all decisions, policies, laws that affect individuals and families. As easier said than done and cannot happen overnight this can come together if we start educating, examining, effort and transformation. If we don't stick together and become a community, change cannot happen without unity.

The amount of money we have received is a call to action to design and improve programs that meet the needs of our youth. To reflect our diligence as a community effort to prevent and end youth homelessness, we all have manifested as a result of this project to encourage young advocates and adult allies to take a stand to reform our youth response system. You were heard and you will lead the way home.

I want to give a shoutout to Hannah Moore, who is holding the Youth Advisory Board for such a strong adult ally in this process and encouraging the YAB to apply for this YHDP grant. Most importantly, I would like to thank all the YHDP core team members and community partners for carrying out our values and principles.

"We need love, unconditional love that doesn't have a price tag because it was never given to us." #CommunityLove —Sahra Nawabi



# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This document comprises Alameda County's 2022 Youth Action, A Way Home Coordinated Community Plan (CCP) to prevent and end homelessness for youth and young adults while supporting those experiencing homelessness. It is the product of six months of collaborative work by the Youth Advisory Board (YAB), the YHDP core team (Healthcare Services Agency, Social Services Agency, Community Development Agency, ALL IN Alameda County and staff of the EveryOne Home (Continuum of Care (CoC). The team engaged stakeholders across the county. The plan is focused on improving the access to and delivery of services to youth and young adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The plan is also focused on developing innovative solutions to address the extremely high cost of rent in Alameda County.

Youth and young adults were seen, heard, and supported to investigate the root barriers to ending youth and young adult homelessness and to develop solutions for overcoming those barriers. Members of the YAB both co-led the planning committee and authored sections of this report.

The document describes the mission and vision of the Youth Action, A Way Home Coordinated Community Plan Committee; illustrates the needs of youth and young adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness; describes the planning, governance, and implementation of the CCP; places the plan in the broader context of ending homelessness in Alameda County; and lays out the goals, objectives, and action steps (and entities responsible for these action steps) developed by the YAB and YHDP Core Team to meet the needs identified through the community planning process. Appendices contain supporting information, including additional data of the impact of COVID-19, special activities and YAB's letter of support.

Alameda County has identified objectives and action steps necessary to reach the following 5 goals to work towards ending and preventing youth homelessness proposes a total of \$6.7 million dollars to fund 5 projects drivin by the following five goals:

1.Systems Enhancements: Cross-Systems Partnerships/Collaboration
2.Youth and Young Adult Collaboration
3.Economic Stability
4.Legal Advocacy
5.Increasing Transportation (Mobility) for YYA Experiencing Homelessness

We the representatives of Alameda County greatly appreciate the opportunity to participate in the YHDP and look forward to continuing to partner with HUD to end homelessness among youth and young adults in Alameda County.

**INTRODUCTION** 

### YOUTH ACTION, A WAY HOME

In August 2021, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) selected Alameda County, California, to participate in the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP). This prestigious opportunity, which will provide \$6.7 million in project funding and significant technical assistance, required us, the Alameda County YHDP Core team, to complete a Coordinated Community Plan (CCP) describing the actions the community wants to take to end youth and young adult homelessness, including detailing the broad community partnership, shared ownership, youth and young adult leadership, and addressing stable housing, health, education, employment, and permanent connections.

As a result, this Coordinated Community Plan, *Youth and Young Adult Action, A Way Home*, was developed to prevent and end youth and young adult (YYA) homelessness in Alameda County while supporting youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. The plan represents a broad range of stakeholders from the worlds of homelessness, government, child welfare, education, workforce development, business, justice, affordable housing, advocacy, and out-of-school activities. Our partners' and stakeholders' commitment will determine the plan's successes and failures. Our planning team—made up of core partners including members of the Alameda County Youth and Young Adult Action Board (YAB) with lived experience of homelessness and their adult allies—led the development of the CCP. A subset of stakeholders met weekly and participated in short and day-long convenings to clarify our needs and prioritize the actions that we believe will ensure that experiences of homelessness among YYA in Alameda County are rare, brief, and non-recurring.



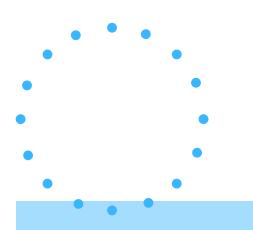
# **MISSION & VISION**

#### Mission:

The mission of the Youth Action, A Way Home Committee is to build a responsive, collaborative, and ethical homeless services system that empowers youth to make their own decisions and provides relevant and impactful resources. We envision a community where homelessness is rare for youth and young adults in Alameda County. When it does happen, we envision a responsive, collaborative, and ethical homelessness services system that empowers youth and young adults to make their own decisions, provides relevant and impactful resources, and ensures that it is brief and only one-time. We will achieve this by strengthening our cross-sector collaboration, improving system navigations, and supporting flexible and responsive housing and income opportunities.

#### Vision:

Our mission and vision play key roles through this communityinformed process, such as guidance towards practices of social innovation through an equity-centered lens. Our mission and vision allow the Youth Action, A Way Home (YAWH) committee to provide our community with a clear, effective process to ensure our values are carried throughout the work.





### **Putting Our Plan Into Action:**

Governance, and Implementation of Youth Action, A Way Home Coordinated Community Plan

ALL IN-Alameda County (Since 2014, ALL IN Alameda County (ALL IN) has been a strong and innovative force addressing issues of poverty through collaboration across sectors and with community. ALL IN's three areas of focus are Basic needs, economic development and quality education) has convened and facilitated the Ending Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Collaborative since 2018. The objective of this collaborative—service providers, government agencies, and university professors—is to create a space for all Alameda County entities working in the area of ending youth and young adult homelessness to share current strengths, challenges, and learnings, and to build and strengthen relationships. It was in this space that the need for a county-wide Youth Advisory Board was recognized and the collective decision to apply for YHDP funding was made. In 2020, Blue Shield of California provided funding to ALL IN to build out our Youth and Young Adult Advisory Board (YAB). In June 2021, ALL IN, the YAB, Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, and the Community Development Agency began to meet regularly to collaboratively write the grant proposal for YHDP.

Upon the award announcement this group identified and engaged the additional partners that would be necessary for a core planning team, including Alameda County Social Services Agency and EveryOne Home, which operates our Continuum of Care. It was important for these stakeholders to be included to receive feedback from those who serve our community regarding the child welfare and youth and young adult homelessness system and persons who allocate and make decisions on funding from high levels.

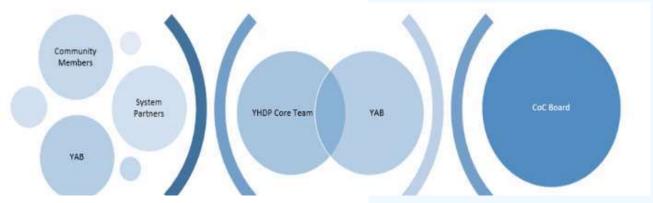
The existing YHDP core team, convened in June 2021, will transition in the fall of 2022 to the Youth Action, A Way Home Executive Committee, and will be responsible for implementing the plan, supporting the Office of Homeless Care and Coordination's Youth Development Program Manager, and updating the plan as needed. The core team has provided ideas and discussion in the YHDP decision-making processes. The YAB and the core team held an open dialogue weekly beginning in October 2021 and presented final plans to the Continuum of Care for final approval in April 2022. From December 2021 to February 2022 the core team, with ALL IN and the YAB, engaged the community through six community conversations and two Systems Modeling Sessions. Many of the community members/participants were from the original Ending Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Collaborative engaged in our Community Conversations.

### **Putting Our Plan Into Action:**

Governance, and Implementation of Youth Action, A Way Home Coordinated Community Plan

The Executive Committee members will include representatives from the Youth Advisory Board, Alameda County's Office of Homeless Care and Coordination in the Health Care Services Agency, the CoC, Alameda County's Child Welfare Office in the Social Services Agency, Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS), the County's Community Development Agency, and ALL IN-Alameda County. The Ending Youth Homelessness Collaborative will act as a YHDP oversight committee, a space for TAY supportive housing providers, youth and young adult serving organizations, YAB members, and county agency staff to provide continued support, reflections and critique of YHDP projects for continuous quality improvement.

The Office of Homeless Care and Coordination in the County's Health Care Services Agency is going to hire a Youth Development Program Manager to lead the effort. They will coordinate among the YHDP Executive Committee, partners, youth, and young adults to facilitate regular meetings, manage contracts, build and maintain community relationships, and track the progress of implementation.



The chart above illustrates how decisions were made and who played key roles within the *Youth Action, Way Home* plan. The YAB and the YHDP Core team are in the middle to represent the true essence of this work: authentic youth engagement. The roles of the YAB members included but were not limited to providing suggestions, edits, context, and comments towards a designated task such as writing and reviewing the *Youth Action Way Home* Plan.

The YHDP core team was given a technical assistance team ABT Associates, in which HUD grants each community to have guidance for requirements and guidelines for the YHDP grant, providing efficient and effective feedback through those ideas. The HUD's technical assistance provided key guidance in answering any questions or concerns about HUD's requirements and expectations. Weekly internal meetings were held with open dialog on actionable items designated to the Youth and Young Adult Action, A Way Home Committee. To the left, Community members/system partners participated in community conversations, the CoC reviewed the planning budget, and the CoC Board provided input and final approval.





Alameda County has a rich and complex history that includes vibrant arts and culture as well as racist and discriminatory housing policies and practices such as redlining. Racial inequity in housing and homelessness is highlighted by the fact that 63% of unhoused transition-age youth and young adults are Black/African American, according to our 2019 Point in Time Count. Despite this complex history and the fact that the Bay Area is one of the most expensive housing markets with one of the highest costs of living in the country, we in Alameda County understand that preventing and ending youth and young adult homelessness is possible. We understand this as a collaborative process that must be youth-led alongside a racially and ethnically diverse set of stakeholders.

While Alameda County has programs that support youth and young adults experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, there is still a great need for more programs, beds, services, and education about what is available and how to access resources and coordination. Alameda County CoC includes 13 cities and six unincorporated areas. There are 374 units dedicated to youth and young adults in the CoC, including 66 emergency shelter beds, 22 FUP vouchers, 25 host home spaces, 103 transitional housing units, 78 rapid rehousing spaces, and 80 permanent supportive housing units. Services available to youth and young adults in the county include connection to mainstream benefits, disability-related services, drop-in centers, community-based outreach, education and job training programs, financial and transportation assistance, legal help, medical and mental health services, substance use services, support for LGBTQ+ youth, and support for pregnant and parenting youth.

Services need to be expanded in the unincorporated areas and throughout the county, and coordination between service providers needs to be strengthened. Additionally, there is a critical need to create flexible housing options for youth and young adults, who report a need for greater access to all resources, increased support to maneuver through and transition from program to program within the homelessness response system, and increased youth and young adult development training for service providers. Youth and young adults and providers have indicated that the homelessness system should be improved to be more welcoming to youth, and stronger housing and employment connections for youth and young adults are needed so they can find and sustain housing. Youth and young adults and providers also noted that increased access to youth-dedicated permanent housing and long-term subsidies would significantly build capacity to serve youth.

According to the 2019 PIT Count, 731 youth and young adults were experiencing homelessness at the time of the count. This is likely an undercount of the true number of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. On the other side, there are only 374 housing resources at any given time for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. This is clearly not nearly enough housing to meet the needs of every person who is in need of support.





The following needs rose to the surface during our six community conversations to best understand the needs of special populations: minors, juvenile justice involved youth, foster/child welfare system involved youth, sexually and labor exploited youth, undocumented immigrant youth and young adults, and pregnant and parenting youth and young adults.

In our first community conversation around "minors/youth under 18" experiencing homelessness specific service needs that showed up were the need for school-integrated housing services, case management, and family assistance; residential services in scattered sites, hosted, but not foster care (i.e. host family volunteers, not parental rights signed away, temporary shallow subsidy supporting host household); community-based peer and clinical navigation services; and legal support as "minors" do not have the same legal rights as adults.

In our community conversation to best understand the needs of juvenile justice involved youth and young adults experiencing homelessness specific service needs that showed up were the need for full service, one-stop-shop hubs for youth and young adults transitioning out of the juvenile justice system that include housing, paid career technical education specifically designed for juvenile justice/criminal legal system impacted transition aged youth and young adults and that lead to certifications and livable wages; case management for each youth and young adult in the system to fulfill/address their needs regarding reaching

self-sufficiency (for those who are leaving the juvenile justice system). Further the need to have TAY resources in our county correctional facility came up as they do not exist. Youth and young adults 18-24 who are detained in this facility do not have access to TAY-specific resources upon discharge unless they are already connected.

In our community conversation to best understand the needs of **foster and child welfare systems** impacted youth and young adults the specific services needs that showed up were community-integrated support and guaranteed extended assistance for youth and young adults aging out of foster care; parenting support; and a guaranteed income program modeled on existing programs.

In our community conversation to best understand the needs of **labor and sexually exploited youth and young adults** the specific service needs that showed up were legal documents recovery services and housing services for victims of mass displacement; immigration, legal, and social services advocacy; hygiene resources; employment services and protection for undocumented workers; health and saftey needs; and parenting resources including diapers, formula, and childcare.



# NEEDS, GOALS, & ACTION STEPS

In our community conversation to best understand the needs of undocumented immigrant youth and young adults the following came to the surface about what homelessness looks like in this population: living with strangers; sponsors they don't know; feeling lost, isolated, disconnected from family back home; losing sponsor's placement; living with sponsors who are day laborers and don't have a stable income leading to unstable housing; teen parenting; having a new baby; kinship support. Needs included case management for all; access to psychoeducation regarding attachment, trauma, and adolescent brain development.

In our community conversation to best understand the needs of LGBTQ+ youth and young adults the following came to the surface about what homelessness looks like in this population: discrimination and isolation; rejection from families and the community; depression and mental health needs; healthcare services for trans youth and young adults that positively support them; understanding root causes of homelessness, such as family rejection.

In our community conversation to best understand the needs of pregnant and parenting youth and young adults the following service needs came up: prenatal support/classes; legal aid services; funding for childcare; antepartum and postpartum care; pregnant and parenting classes regardless of housing; life coaching; substance abuse education; immediate housing regardless of pregnancy status (the Homeless Reform Act recognizes unhoused expecting mothers only after they reach the third trimester); food and basics. Housing alone isn't enough.

While each of these special populations have specific needs and the experience of homelessness is diverse, a clear thread throughout all of our conversations is the need for holistic care and support—from having caring adult allies to legal support, to financial and educational training and support to inclusive safe spaces where youth and young adults experiencing homelessness can feel safe, seen and heard.



### The Broader Context of Ending Homelessness in Alameda County

Youth and Young Adult Action, A Way Home was developed at the same time as Alameda County's Office of Homeless Care and Coordination (OHCC) and CoC partners were generating the Home Together 2026 Community Plan, a five-year strategic framework to dramatically reduce homelessness in the county as well as racial disparities in the county's efforts to end homelessness. The Plan recommends action steps in four categories:

- 1.Prevent Homelessness for Our Residents
- 2.Connect People to Shelter and Needed Resources
- 3.Increase Housing Solutions
- 4. Strengthen Coordination, Communication and Capacity

The Home Together 2026 Community Plan identifies the housing programs and shelter inventory needed to fill existing gaps and meet the needs of all of Alameda County's homeless populations. Homeless Response System Modeling conducted to inform the Home Together 2026 Community Plan focused on households with only adults (including TAY) and families with minor children in the county's homeless response system. Home Together identifies housing needs for TAY but does not specifically address the variety of pathways and resources that would be most beneficial and responsive to youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. YHDP CCP process will inform the implementation of the Home Together 2026 strategies, and YHDP-funded programs will align with and help the community meet the Home Together 2026 Community Plan's goals.

Youth survey results from the 2019 Point in Time Count identified the following issues as contributing to youth and young adult homelessness in Alameda County:

- Lack of affordable housing
- Lack of supports and resources to successfully transition out of institutional systems such as foster care and the juvenile justice system into permanent housing

### WE CAN END HOMELESSNESS





The following goals were identified by the Youth Action Board and YHDP Core team in response to the needs identified through our community process in writing this plan (*Youth and Young Adult Action, a Way Home*). Each goal comes from a specific need(s) and has identifiable objectives and action steps.

#### **GOAL 1: SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT: CROSS-SYSTEMS PARTNERSHIPS/COLLABORATION**

#### <u>Needs:</u>

Currently Alameda County does not have a youth and young adult (YYA) specific system to address and work towards ending youth and young adult homelessness. Throughout the planning process YYA as well as youth and young adult service providers made clear that greater efforts are needed in different systems and sectors working together and being in alignment. There are disjointed and parallel systems, projects, and programming. The County needs to collaborate with homelessness and non-homelessness partners including criminal justice, education, workforce development, child welfare, undocumented immigrant youth and young adult services, commercial sexual exploitation, and pregnant and parenting youth and young adult services to reduce barriers, increase data sharing, and coordinate responses.

According to the 2019 PIT Count, 59% of youth and young adults staying in shelters and housing programs in Alameda County had experience in the foster care system. According to the Voices of Youth Count study, 46 percent of youth experiencing homelessness have been in juvenile detention, prison or jail. These significant overlaps indicate a critical need for collaboration between the systems already connecting with young people who are experiencing homelessness.

YHDP has provided the opportunity for county agencies to work with youth, our CoC, and youth and young adult serving organizations to design and build out what this system can and should look like.

#### <u>Objectives:</u>

Currently, the youth and young adult homeless response system in Alameda County is inadequate. Youth and young adults may not be aware of available programming, and providers find the coordinated entry system inefficient. Some youth-serving projects are underfunded, making it difficult for them to provide comprehensive services to youth. Additionally, most staff are not trained to work effectively with all youth. There is a need to increase staff cultural competency so they can better serve youth and young adults of color, LGBTQ+ youth, unaccompanied immigrant youth, and youth and young adults who have experienced violence. Staff also need more information on the different resources available to youth, especially on the resources available to minors.

- Create a homeless response system that is specific to the needs of YYA.
- Increase cross-system partnerships to support YYA to gain self-sufficiency, attain education and employment goals, and obtain and maintain stable housing.
- Monitor and maintain effectiveness of YHDP-funded projects.





GOAL 1: SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT: CROSS-SYSTEMS PARTNERSHIPS/COLLABORATION
<u>Action Steps:</u>

- Facilitate quarterly convenings of the *Ending Youth and Young Adult Homelessness Collaborative* bringing together runaway and homeless youth and young adult service providers, housing programs' staff, county agency staff, and the Youth and Young Adult Action Board
- Provide trainings to enhance staff knowledge about working with YYA such as:
- trauma-informed care
- youth and young adult development
- self-care for services providers
- collective impact
- coaching skills for leaders
- LGBTQ+ inclusivity
- racial equity
- Engage YYA to evaluate and improve coordinated access to resources
- Continue to participate in the CoC Systems Coordination Committee (YAB members)
- Engage YYA to evaluate and improve the referral and exit plan process
- Map the current committees/collaborations in Alameda County supporting TAY and identify a YHDP Executive Team member to attend each one
- Create and implement a continuous quality improvement plan to ensure YHDPfunded projects are effective and efficient.
- Identify regularity of QI (Quality Improvement) meetings, partners/tables/committees that make up the QI work
- in order to assess and monitor projects

#### <u>Special Populations:</u>

This goal will work to address the needs of all special populations. This goal will specifically focus on the needs of young people who are cross-system involved.

#### Responsible Entity(ies):

- Youth and Young Adult Advisory Board (Youth and Young Adult About Action)
- YHDP Core Executive Team
- OHCC Youth and Young Adult Development Program Manager
- OHCC Coordinated Entry staff
- Homeless and non-homeless youth and young adult serving organizations





#### **GOAL 2: YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT COLLABORATION**

#### <u>Needs:</u>

Prior to and throughout the planning process YYA made clear that they do not feel seen or heard in leadership decision-making processes. For our community to end youth and young adult homelessness we must have true YYA and adult ally collaboration in decision-making authority. Youth and young adults with lived experience need to be supported in advisory roles as thought partners and decision-makers.

The Alameda County CoC is working to increase representation of people with lived experience on the board: their goal is to reach ½ of board members with lived experience of homelessness. At this time there is one dedicated "youth seat" on the CoC board that is filled by a current YAB peer mentor.

Peer Navigation is an evidence based approach in fields related to homelessness, such as mental health, for getting people connected to the resources they need. There is currently no peer navigation resource available for young people in Alameda County. Creating such a program will allow young people to connect with others who have shared similar challenges, such as past involvement with other systems (child welfare, criminal legal). Given evidence from other fields, it is expected that such an approach would improve outcomes for young people experiencing homelessness.

The Peer Navigation program will have a lower active client to case manager ratio. This will help our youth be able to build stronger relationships and achieve better outcomes.

#### <u>Objectives:</u>

The voices of youth and young adults are often missing in existing programs. Input from youth and young adults is needed to determine how the system can best serve youth and young adults across Alameda County.

- Embed youth and young adult collaboration into the youth and young adult homeless response system.
- Having youth take on mentorship roles to support their peers in navigating the system.





#### **GOAL 2: YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT COLLABORATION**

#### Action Steps:

- Create sustainability for the Youth Action Board by:
- Placing the YAB in a youth and young adult serving organization that can fully support the YAB peer mentors and members
- Identifying ongoing sustainable funding for the YAB
- Advocate for the CoC to guarantee half of the ½ of seats for people with lived experience be youth seats
- Create a peer navigation project as the front door to the homeless response system and integrate peer navigation supports throughout all front door system access points.
- Create a process that supports matching youth and young adults with navigators whose expertise and experience fits their needs.
- Increase the number of people with lived experience working across the system in both YYA-supporting and system-level roles
- Identify a strategy to bring in/engage "disconnected youth"

#### Responsible Entity(ies):

- Youth and Young Adult Development Program Manager
- ALL IN Alameda County
- True Colors United
- Youth and Young Adult Action Board
- Health Care Services Agency,
- Office of Homeless Care and Coordination
- The Center for Healthy Schools and Communities
- YHDP Core Team
- CoC /EveryOne Home (identifying funding for YAB sustainability)
- Homeless and non-homeless youth and young adult serving organizations





#### **GOAL 3: ECONOMIC STABILITY**

#### Needs:

Alameda County is one of the most expensive communities in the United States. Youth and young adults need flexible options to increase their income and access housing.

In Alameda County, Fair Market Rent for just a studio apartment was almost \$1600 a month; a one-bedroom was over \$1900 per month.

According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, a person would need to earn over \$30 per hour to afford a studio or over \$37 per hour for a one-bedroom. Minimum wage in California is only \$14 per hour.

Young people experiencing homelessness often do not yet have the education, work experience or necessary stability to be making enough income to pay rent in our community, let alone have the resources to pay first and last month's rent and a deposit up front.

Covid has also had a profound impact on the education and employment opportunities for young people, especially those experiencing homelessness. As of August 2021, according to a research study conducted by the Youth and Allies Against Homelessness (YAAH) research team in the i4Y (Innovations for Youth)Center of the UC Berkeley School of Public Health, 66% of young people surveyed in Alameda and San Francisco Counties had lost or lower income because of covid. 19% of students had stopped their education for reasons other than graduation. These interruptions to education and employment may have long-term impacts on the ability of young people to afford housing.

#### <u>Objectives:</u>

- Provide space for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness to support the design with flexible and rapidly deployable resources that they can quickly direct to their unique needs.
- Connect youth and young adults experiencing homelessness to education and career pathways to support long-term economic stability.





#### **GOAL 3: ECONOMIC STABILITY**

#### Action Steps:

- Continue to partner with the City of Oakland's Direct Cash Transferfor Homeless Youth and Young Adult Pilot Program through the City's Health and Human Resources Department.
- Provide the expertise of youth and young adults to community-based direct cash transfer programs to enhance the efficacy and efficiency of these programs.
- Partner with an organization providing direct cash transfers for homeless youth and young adults to ensure youth and young adults are provided the supportive services necessary to obtain and maintain stable housing and achieve selfsufficiency.
- Work with our local workforce development agencies to lower barriers to YYA experiencing homelessness accessing workforce development programs.
- Work with our local community college system's (Peralta/Chabot/Alameda County Office of Education) career technical education pathways to lower barriers and strengthen access for YYA experiencing homelessness to enter pathway programs.
- Connect youth and young adults to scholarship programs and opportunities.
- Ensure that the Joint Component Housing project allows for up to 36 months of rental assistance (HUD special activity).
- Ensure that youth and young adults in supportive services projects can continue to receive services up to 24 months after exiting the program (HUD special activity).
- Use administrative funds to pay stipends to youth and young adults.
- Use administrative funds for youth and young adults to attend conferences and trainings (HUD special activity).

#### Responsible Entity(ies):

- Youth Action Board
- Youth Development Program Manager
- YHDP Core Team
- Alameda County Workforce Development Board
- CTE Representative from Peralta Community College
- CTE Representative from Chabot Community College





#### **GOAL 4: LEGAL ADVOCACY**

#### <u>Needs:</u>

There is limited availability of housing resources for unaccompanied minors. The community identified the need for long-term shelter and community-based housing for this population. However, providing housing to minors is complicated due to their legal status.

Additionally, there are insufficient low-cost or free resources for legal representation for unaccompanied immigrant youth and young adults (UIY), who must navigate challenges related to housing, immigration status, employment, and education. Homelessness projects need to have resources and partnerships in place to support the needs of UIY.

The need for low-cost/no cost legal representation also came up in community conversations around labor and sexually exploited youth and young adults navigating homelessness.

While social service providers bring a breadth of expertise and resources to their work with young people, they do not have the necessary background and training to help young people deal with the many legal issues they may be facing. Based on the nature of their situation, any youth under the age of 18 experiencing homelessness has a legal issue.

According to a 2018 evaluation of Seattle-based Legal Counsel for Youth and Children, attorneys providing free legal services worked with clients on an average of 2.4 legal issues, including education, family law, housing, emancipation and accessing public benefits.

#### **Objectives**:

During the Coordinated Community Plan planning process, the YHDP planning team held community brainstorming sessions to help identify the needs of youth and young adults across the county. During these sessions, the community members identified a need to provide better legal support for minors and unaccompanied immigrant youth and young adults.

- Support for youth and young adults navigating legal systems as it relates to most areas of law including the immigration process and other legal needs.
- Provide legal service support to help minors gain independence/ navigate housing insecurity.
- Engage landlords to support Transitional Housing.





#### **GOAL 4: LEGAL ADVOCACY**

#### Action Steps:

- YHDP-funded projects will partner with legal advocates with the expertise to support unaccompanied minors and/or unaccompanied immigrant youth.
- All YHDP-funded projects will include a line item to support paying attorneys for legal services for youth.
- The YHDP Executive Team will create a TAY legal advocate committee for local youth and young adult legal services, programs, and advocates to come together

#### Responsible Entity(ies):

- Youth Development Program Manager
- Youth Action, A Way Home Executive Team
- Bay Area Legal Aid
- East Bay Children's Law Offices
- Alameda County Public Defender's Office



#### GOAL 5: INCREASING TRANSPORTATION (MOBILITY) FOR YYA EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

#### <u>Needs:</u>

YYA do not have the transportation that they need to consistently access the community and system resources that will help them escape homelessness and thrive. You could also add data that helps us understand the need that warrants the two specific action steps below

#### <u>Objectives:</u>

During the CCP planning process, youth and young adults identified the need to provide access to transportation to support accessing homeless services, employment, and other community-based resources that support housing stability and overall well-being.

- Increase transportation access for and connect youth and young adults experiencing homelessness with free transportation services.
- Partner with travel agencies such AC Transit & BART to identify easier access to transportation in Alameda County

#### Action Steps:

- Build a transportation network that helps YYA access shelter and other services.
- ALL YHDP-funded projects will have a line item to build transportation options into programming.
- Identify policy changes for transportation for YYA experiencing homelessness.

#### Responsible Entity(ies):

- Youth and Young Adult Action, A Way Home Executive Committee
- YHDP-funded project vendors
- Local transportation entities



### YHDP PROJECTS



Project	HUD CoC Project Type	Project Components	Amount
Navigation	SSO	<ul><li>Housing navigation</li><li>Peer navigation</li></ul>	\$ 1,935287.59
Joint Component	TH-RRH	Crisis model TH	\$ 3,225,479.32
Coordinated Entry System (CES)	SSO-CE	<ul> <li>Developing youth and young adult specific CE processes.</li> <li>Expanding youth and young adult specific CE access points</li> <li>Management of navigators</li> <li>Implementation and managment of CE matching and referral process for youth</li> <li>Facilitating youth and young adult specific case conferencing</li> <li>Evaluation and monitoring of youth and young adult CES</li> <li>Project technical assistance (staff training)</li> <li>Outreach to market youth and young adult CES</li> </ul>	\$ 1,096,662.97
HMIS	HMIS	<ul> <li>Supporting inclusion of YHDP programs into current HMIS system</li> </ul>	\$ 193,528.76
Planning	Planning	<ul> <li>Supporting project management</li> <li>Supporting authentic youth and young adult collaboration in the planning process</li> </ul>	\$295,000.00

# APPENDIX A: HOMELESS YOUTH DATA

Multiple sources of data exist to help us understand youth and young adult homelessness in Alameda County. The main sources of data used for this report are as follows:

- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
- Point-in-Time (PIT) Count
- Community Brainstorming Sessions
- Community Stakeholder Survey
- California Coalition for Youth 2021 Homeless Youth Survey

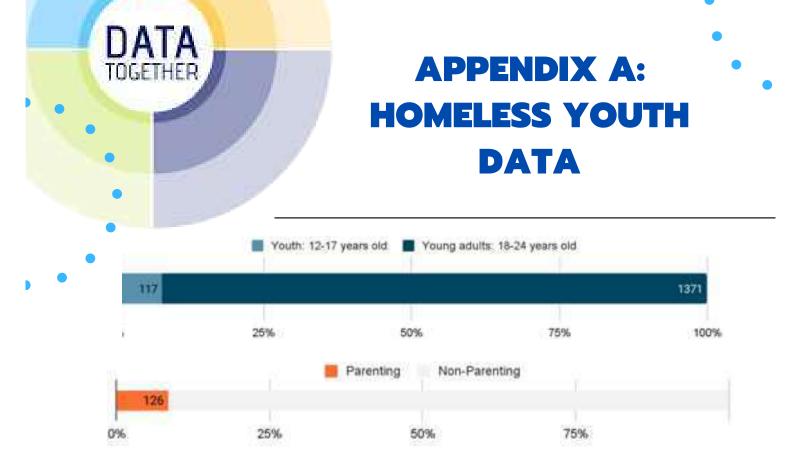
The most recent data available was used for this analysis, and most data is specific to Alameda County. The data sources are used to better understand the needs of and resources available to youth and young adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Alameda County. Findings were presented to the YHDP Core Planning Team and the Youth and Young Adult Action Board for review and discussion. The roles of the Core Planning Team and the YAB are explained in the Governance section.

Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)

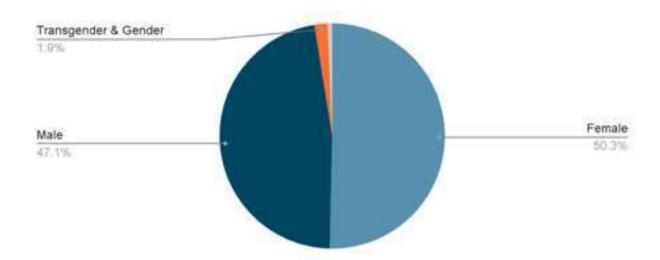
Alameda County CoC providers enter data into a shared HMIS system: Clarity, by Bitfocus. The CoC actively engages homeless youth and young adult providers to participate in HMIS, regardless of their funding source. Support is provided to HMIS users to increase participation and maintain data quality.

Snapshot of the HMIS: Annual Performance Report (2020)

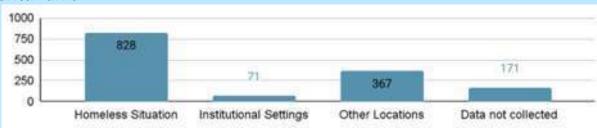
HMIS records for 2020 show that 1,488 young people accessed homeless services in Alameda County. The majority were between 18 and 24 years old, and 126 of the 1,488 young people were parents.



Less than 2% of young people identified as Transgender and/or Gender Nonconforming. This is likely an undercount.



At the time of their HMIS intake, the majority of young people were in "homeless situations," meaning they were staying in places not meant for human habitation (tents, parks, sheds, etc.) or in shelters or transitional housing. "Other Locations" included staying with family or friends, in a hotel or motel, or in a rental unit.





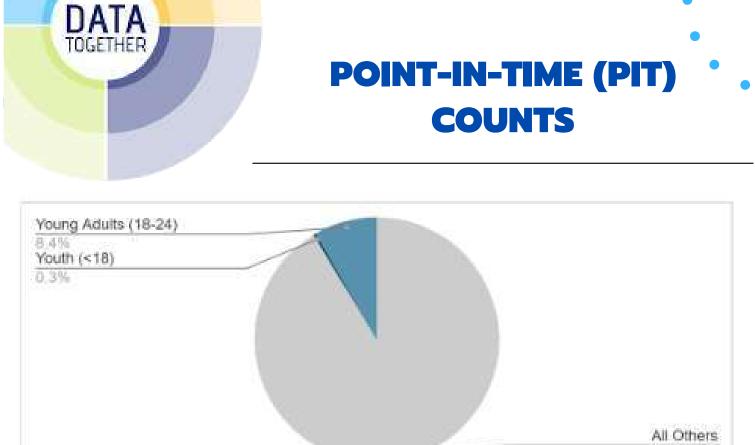
The most recent PIT count in Alameda County was conducted in 2019. The full report, prepared by Applied Survey Research, can be found here: <u>https://everyonehome.org/main/continuum-of-care/everyone-counts/</u>. As compared to the annual HMIS data, the PIT count is a snapshot in time. However, because Alameda County conducted a survey with the 2019 PIT count, there is a depth of information that is not available with HMIS data. From the Alameda County PIT Count report:

On January 30, 2019, every census tract in Alameda County was covered with the support of 164 individuals with lived experience of homelessness and 489 community volunteers, staff from various city and county departments, and law enforcement. This effort resulted in a peer-informed visual count of individuals and families residing on the streets and in vehicles, makeshift shelters, encampments, and other places not meant for human habitation. Emergency shelters, safe havens, and transitional housing facilities also reported the number of individuals and families who occupied their facilities on the night prior to the morning of the count.

A specialized count of unaccompanied children and transition-age youth and young adults under the age of 25 was conducted on the same day. This dedicated count was designed to improve the understanding of the scope of youth and young adult homelessness. Trained youth and young adult enumerators who currently or recently experienced homelessness conducted the count in areas where young people experiencing homelessness were known to congregate. The dedicated youth and young adult count methodology was improved in 2019 to screen for age and to better ensure unaccompanied children and transition-age youth and young adults were not included in both the general street count and youth and young adults count.

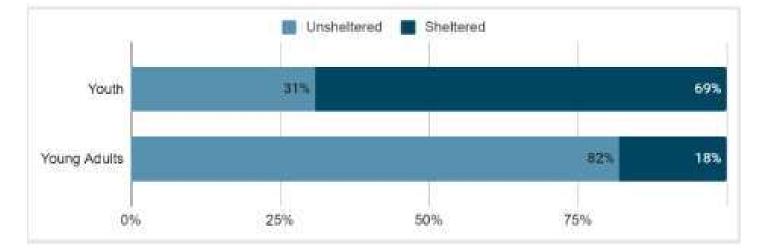
In the weeks following the street count, an in-depth survey was administered to a sample of 1,681 unsheltered and sheltered individuals and families experiencing homelessness. The survey gathered basic demographic details as well as information on residency, housing history, personal characteristics, and intersections with the service system.

Summary of PIT Count Data and Analysis for TAY and Youth and Young Adults (2019) In the 2019 PIT Count, 702 young adults between the ages of 18-24 were identified as experiencing homelessness; 29 youth under the age of 18 were identified.

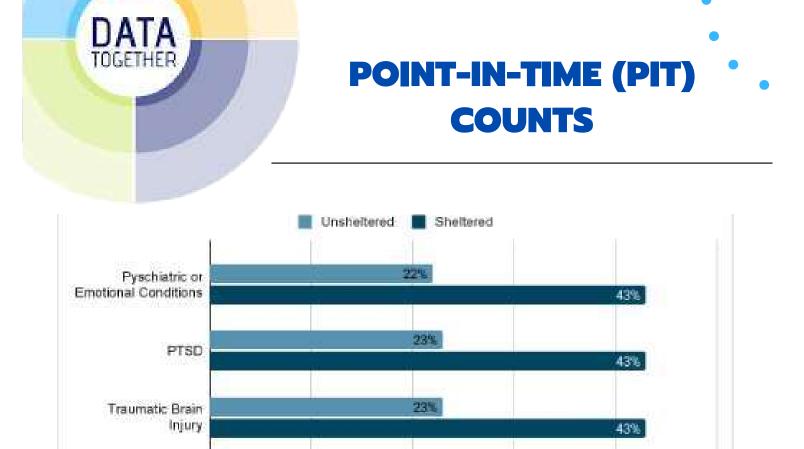


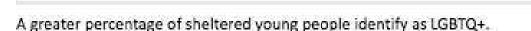
91.3%

The majority of young adults experiencing homelessness were unsheltered, while the majority of youth were sheltered.



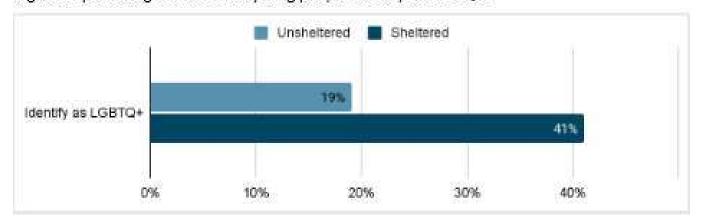
Though young people experiencing homelessness are generally healthier than the adult homeless population, mental health is an issue for them. Sheltered TAY report mental health concerns at a higher rate than their unsheltered peers.





10%

0%



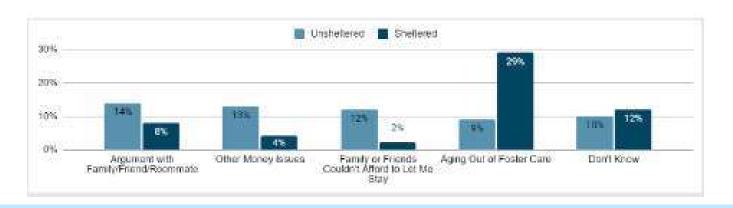
20%

30%

40%

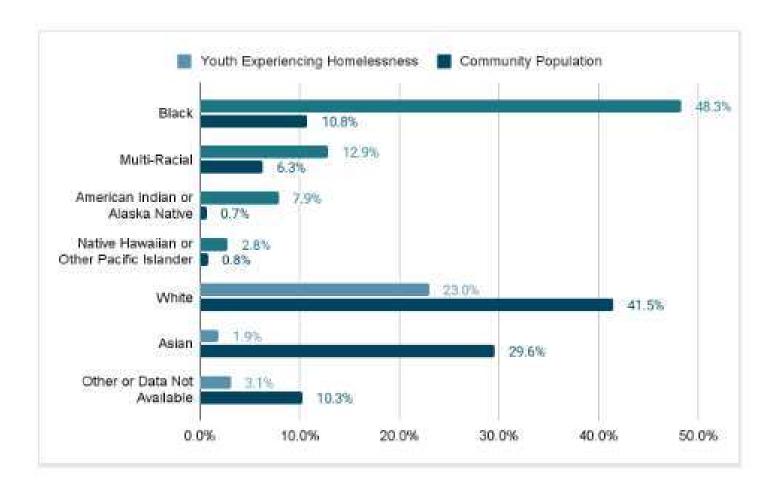
50%

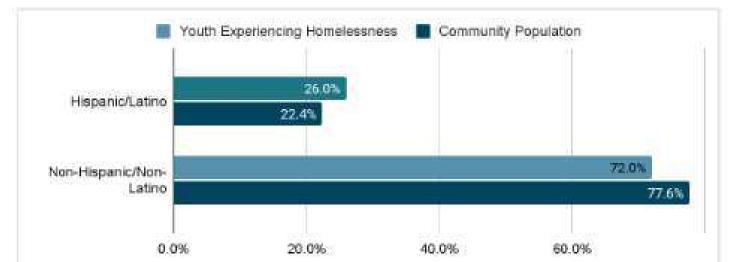
#### There is no one clear reason that young people are experiencing homelessness.





In 2019, 14% of PIT survey respondents of all ages self-reported a history of foster care. Eighteen percent (18%) of youth and young adults under age 25 reported that aging out of the foster care system was the primary cause of their current homelessness.







# POINT-IN-TIME (PIT) . COUNTS

Young people who responded to the survey shared the following experiences:

- Stigma, trauma, and marginalization that creates barriers to accessing resources and maintaining housing
- Risk of return to homelessness from time-limited programs, especially for African-American and parenting youth and young adults
- Symptoms related to PTSD or other mental health issues that make it difficult to navigate the homeless system and maintain stable housing
- Lack of safety at home or in home communities due to gender identity or sexual orientation
- High risk for commercial sexual exploitation
- Unique challenges affecting the ability of unaccompanied immigrant youth and young adults to maintain safe and stable housing
- The impacts of racism, including institutional racism, and discrimination for youth and young adults of color, and Black and Native American youth and young adults in particular.

The interventions outlined in this plan aim to address these challenges to ensure that youth homelessness in Alameda County becomes rare, brief, and one-time.

Resources for Youth and Young Adults

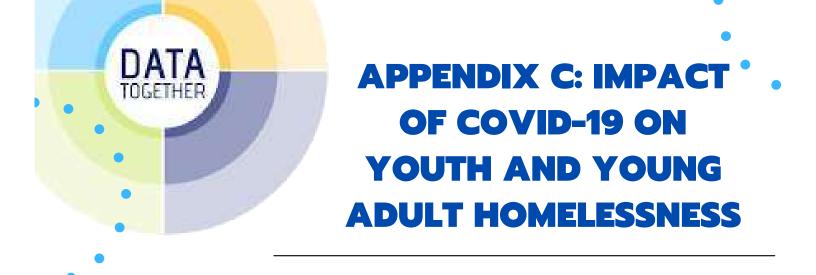
Resources currently available for TAY in Alameda County include the THP plus, Foster Youth Initiative and Family Unification Program vouchers (for former foster youth only) and dedicated HUD Continuum of Care grants.28 The State of California has required that communities set aside at least 8-10% (in different funding rounds) of their Homeless, Housing Assistance Program (HHAP) funds for the needs of Transition Age Youth. Alameda County and the CoC have used initial HHAP funding on increasing system access, additional interim housing, and services paired with housing subsidies dedicated to TAY.



### APPENDIX B: USICH CORE OUTCOMES

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has identified core outcomes that a community must achieve to end youth and young adult homelessness. With this community plan, we aim to achieve these outcomes with our work across Alameda County to end youth and young adult homelessness.

Stable Housing	Includes a safe and reliable place to call home.	
Permanent Connections	Includes ongoing attachments to families, communities, schools, and other positive social networks.	
Education/Employment	Includes high performance in and completion of educational and training activities, especially for younger youth, and starting and maintaining adequate and stable employment, particularly for older youth.	
Social-Emotional Well-Being	Includes the development of key competencies, attitudes, and behaviors that equip a young person to succeed across multiple domains of daily life, including school, work, relationships, and community.	



Since March 2020, when jurisdictions across the country, including California, began issuing shelter-in-place orders to slow the spread of the Covid-19 virus, unaccompanied youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in Alameda County have faced increased hardships. The California Coalition for youth and young adults surveyed 312 young people ages 15-25 across the state and released a report in 2020 detailing the needs of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness during the pandemic.

Key findings of the report include:

- BIPOC and LGBTQ youth and young adults are overrepresented and most significantly impacted by housing instability, homelessness, and COVID-19.
- 32% of youth and young adults had three or more different sleeping locations in the last week because they could not stay in their home or did not have a home. The top three locations youth and young adults slept in during the last week are: car (58%), tent (41%), outdoors (40%).
- COVID-19 has exacerbated the fight young people must make to access even their most basic needs.
  - 66% of youth and young adults indicated they were in need of more than five resources during the pandemic.
  - Employment was the number one resource young people indicated they were in need of (81% listed Employment). Other high ranking needs included Physical Health (61%), Housing (58%), Distance Learning Support (42%), and Mental Health (38%).

Isolation, increased vulnerability, and loss of connections have negatively impacted the mental health of young people experiencing homelessness during the pandemic.



General Overview: Appendix A - Special Activities HUD's Project Proposal

Youth Action Board approval is a requirement that HUD requires. Youth, including homeless and formerly homeless youth, are involved in every step of the implementation of the YHDP at the local level, and it is for this reason that HUD is requiring selected communities to have a Youth Action Board.

For purposes of the project applications, HUD requires that the Youth Action Board have an opportunity to review all project applications thoroughly and that any input will be implemented to the extent that it is feasible within statutory and regulatory guidelines.

Additionally, HUD requires that the Youth Action Board submit a letter of support for all projects submitted to HUD for review and consideration.

The Alameda County's Youth Advisory Board (YAB), also known as Youth About Action, is excited to express our support for the special activities for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP).

The Youth About Action, a committee makes up a group of youth leaders, advocates, and adult allies that represent the following:

- Pregnant/Parenting
- LGBTQ+
- Former Foster Care
- Juvenile justice System Involved
- 100% BIPOC

- Disconnected Youth: Youth who are homeless but get rejected/not involved from the care of the system

Collectively and with open dialog through a community facilitated conversation we went through each proposed special activity and identified the following that will be beneficial to youth between 18-24 experiencing homelessness in Alameda County.

Both list A & B is what we believe is a blindspot within the programs/services that currently exist. Paragraph A does not need approval but a notice to our Deputy Assistant Secretary for special needs. (please see list below)



A: The following YHDP activities may be exercised by YHDP recipients with notice to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Needs, subject to requirements governing grant agreement amendments at 24 CFR 578.105:

- Leasing, sponsor-based rental assistance, and project-based rental assistance in Rapid-Re Housing
- Use of administrative funds to support youth and young adult stipends
- Use of administrative funds to attend conferences and trainings that are not HUD-sponsored or approved (subject matter must be relevant to youth and young adult homelessness)
- YHDP recipients may employ youth and young adults who are receiving services
- Moving assistance (more than one-time)
- Gas and mileage costs for a program participant's personal vehicle for trips to and from medical care, employment, childcare, or other services eligible under the transportation section
- Legal fees, including court fees, bail bonds, and required courses and equipment

B.) Under the conditions specified below, YHDP recipients may make use of the following built-in exceptions to NOFO's requirements, subject to approval by the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Special Needs and requirements governing grant agreement amendments at 24 CFR 578.105:

- A recipient may provide up to 36 months of Rapid Rehousing rental assistance to a program participant
- 24 months aftercare Services and resources that will be offered to ensure youth are able to sustain their housing at the end of the 36 months of assistance.

With the notification sent to our YHDP core team for review of these identified activities and the guidance of HUD's technical assistance team, ABT Associates, we've decided to fulfill this request.

The scream of urgency and need is due to Alameda County being one of the most expensive communities to live, breathe, and survive in. With that being said to match the needs of youth experiencing homelessness and the economic factor varies from person to person. Every situation, background, and experience is different, but one thing that is common is not having a safe place and the time needed to do so. By allowing this extension of time of 36 months of housing assistance and 24 months of accessing supportive services after exiting the care of the system both underline the same justification and goal by decreasing the chances of youth reentering back into homelessness.

### APPENDIX D: YOUTH DGETHER APPENDIX D: YOUTH ACTION BOARD, SPECIAL ACTIVITIES NOTIFY HUD & REQUESTING APPROVAL

According to Alameda County's 2019 Point-in-Time Count and accompanying survey, onethird of surveyed individuals experiencing homelessness stated that receiving rental assistance would have prevented their current homelessness. And if this proves that folks needed rental assistance, time is also an important factor and this missing?

With that said, racial disparities among housing and employment exist within this county and the world itself. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness analysis of 2020 national data, Black people represent only 13% of the US population, but account for 39% of people experiencing homelessness. We need to approach this matter with an equity centered lens and those who struggle with driscimination, mental illness or the trauma that is endorsed in homelessness.

Another huge factor is demolishing negative stigmas that landlords tend to have with individuals, families and friends with subsidies. Without landlord engagement, which is an ongoing political issue, youth wont be able to be given a chance of being in control of their own life.

Time is the essence and key in everything and anything that we do, but to experience homelessness and the rejection by those neglected is something we can't ask back for. But what we can do is ask for this preventive method before it's too late.

### HUD REQUIRED SIGNATURES

Appendix B Section C of the FY 2019/20 YHDP NOFO requires representatives of:

- Continuum of Care,
- Public Child Welfare Agency,
- Local Government Agency, and
- Youth Action Board

In the planning process, approve the coordinated community plan, and provide a signature verifying their approval. As representatives of these entities, we verify that our agencies have participated in the planning process, reviewed this document, and approve of Youth Action, A Way Home, Alameda County Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness for Youth and Young Adults While Supporting Those Experiencing Homelessness.

We the undersigned stand united in realizing the vision of a County where all people are safely and securely housed. We are affixing our signatures to this plan with a firm and full commitment and that of our respective organizations to achieve this plan to end youth homelessness in Alameda County.

### **SIGNATURES:**

SIGN

- Continuum of Care: C'Mone Falls; CoC Committee: Moe Wright, Leadership Board
- Public Child Welfare Agency: Michelle Love or Andrea Ford
- Local Government Agency: Health Care Services Agency: Colleen Chawla
- Youth Advisory Board Members/Peer Mentors
- Runaway and Homeless Youth Providers: Covenant House: Ami Rowland



Covenant House

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# THANK YOU