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COLORADO HOMELESS YOUTH ACTION PLAN

January 2007-December 2011



Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

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History of the Office of Homeless Youth Services (OHYS)

The Legislature passed the Homeless Youth Services Act (House Bill 02-1159) in 2002 in response to the overwhelming and diverse needs of homeless youth in Colorado. The intent of this legislation was to create a vehicle, through which, services to homeless youth statewide could be improved by coordinating current services and facilitating interagency collaboration to identify gaps, removing barriers, improving access and sharing information.

Initially, the OHYS was housed under the Colorado Department Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) with proposed funding from the U.S. Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools to support a full time staff position. However, the anticipated funding did not become available and the OHYS was in operation for just one year (July 2002 through June 2003) with a half-time staff position.

On May 21, 2004 the Governor signed House Bill 1107, authorizing the transfer of the Office of Homeless Youth Services from the Department of Public Health and Environment to the Department of Human Services, Supportive Housing and Homeless Programs (SHHP). A full time position was created, supported with federal funding administered by SHHP. This Homeless Youth Coordinator position was filled and the OHYS became fully operational in December 2004. The Homeless Youth Coordinator position was vacant for much of 2006 due to staff turnover, but has been consistently staffed since fall 2006.

Objectives of the Office of Homeless Youth Services

The Homeless Youth Services Act, which created the OHYS, outlines the key activities and expectations that are to be accomplished. As stated in the legislation, the OHYS is strongly encouraged to work with the Executive Directors, or their designees, of the Departments of Corrections, Education, Health Care Policy and Financing, Human Services, Public Safety, Public Health and Environment, the Judicial Department, as well as, private nonprofit and not-for-profit organizations, appropriate federal departments and other key stakeholders in the community. The Office of Homeless Youth Services seeks to:

- Identify and remove obstacles to the provision of services to homeless youth;
- Improve the quality of services provided to homeless youth;
- Reduce needless expenditures caused by the provision of overlapping services; and
- Identify funding resources available to entities serving homeless youth.

The Homeless Youth Services Act designates the Colorado Department of Human Services, through the 1.0 FTE OHYS to be responsible for coordinating the private non-profit and public entities serving homeless youth in Colorado. This includes fostering cooperation among the non-profit and public entities that serve homeless youth as well as breaking down barriers in order to provide seamless, collaborative, and effective services to homeless youth. The OHYS is to be a resource for and a coordinator of the efforts of public and private non-profit entities serving

homeless youth in Colorado. In addition, the OHYS is to work towards a greater level of inter-governmental cooperation, which is necessary to more fully serve homeless youth.

Some of the specific duties for the OHYS outlined in the legislation include:

- Provide information, coordination, and technical assistance as may be necessary to reduce needless expenditures associated with the provision of overlapping services and to improve the quality of services provided to homeless youth;
- Identify procedural and substantive obstacles to the provision of services and to make recommendations to the private non-profit and public entities concerning procedural, regulatory, or statutory changes necessary to remove such obstacles;
- Post know services for homeless youth in Colorado on a website;
- Develop, maintain, and make available a listing of all rights and organizations that may be relevant to the homeless youth population in Colorado, including legal, educational, victims' rights, etc.;
- Obtain information concerning known funding sources available for the homeless youth population in Colorado;
- Work with entities to identify issues concerning sharing of information in providing services to homeless youth and to facilitate resolution of such information sharing issues; and
- Prepare a written annual report concerning the performance of the OHYS and progress in effectively meeting the goals. At a minimum, the report is to be made available electronically to the Governor and the legislature by January 15, 2005 and January 15, 2006.

The Creation of the Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth

Clearly, the Homeless Youth Coordinator alone cannot accomplish these objectives. Therefore, the OHYS created the statewide Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth as a vehicle to assist with implementation of the Homeless Youth Services Act. The ACHY is made up of key stakeholder organizations and individuals representing federal, state, and local governments, non-profit service agencies, faith based agencies, funders, and homeless or formerly homeless youth. (See Appendix 3 for a full committee roster.)

The Problem: Who are Homeless Youth in Colorado?

The term 'homeless youth' refers to young people who are on their own and not under the care and supervision of a parent or guardian. The Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth recommended that this plan focus on youth living on their own between the ages of 12 and 24 years old, however young people have been identified as living on the streets that are under the age of 10. The primary reason for looking at this particular age group is that young people age 12 through 24 are typically in the developmental process known as adolescence. During this age range, many of the service needs are relatively similar compared with younger children or older adults. Therefore, services can be designed in a manner that is appropriate to the needs of this age group.

Youth Homelessness is a problem in urban, suburban, and rural areas of Colorado. While the largest numbers of youth have been identified in urban areas of the state, concerned agencies and citizens in the rural and suburban areas of the state have identified an increasing number of youth experiencing homelessness as well.

Youth become homeless for a wide variety of reasons. Although many stereotypes may exist in the minds of the general public, each young person has been on a unique journey that led to their state of homelessness. Homeless and runaway youth face unbelievable circumstances and obstacles in their lives. Youth homelessness is largely a reflection of family breakdown. Homeless youth often flee homes where they experience physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. Other key factors include parental substance abuse or mental health issues. Family conflict surrounding the sexual orientation, parenting status, or disability status of the young person is also common. That being said, there are a few primary categories that many of these youth fall into.

Some youth fall into the category of runaway. These youth typically flee their home situation for a variety of reasons. Regardless of the situation, these youth see a life on the streets with nowhere to live as being superior to the reality of their home life. Some common reasons that youth cite for running away include physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect by their parent or guardian, substance abuse in the home, and the affects of untreated mental illness. Of particular significance is that runaway youth experience major depression, conduct disorder, and post-traumatic stress syndrome at rates 3 times as high as among the general adolescent population.ⁱ

Another category is that of throwaway or expelled youth. These youth have typically been forced to leave their home or the parents are complacent as to whether the youth stays or goes. Youth who are abandoned by their families also fall into this category. Some reasons why these youth might be kicked out include conflict over the sexual orientation of the youth, substance abuse either by the parents or the youth, family poverty or homelessness, and behaviors stemming from untreated mental illness.

Former systems youth make up a large number of the homeless and runaway youth population. National figures estimate that around 21-53% of youth who become homeless were formerly a part of the child welfare system.ⁱⁱ According to the Colorado Division of Child Welfare, Colorado emancipates between 300-400 foster youth per year. This indicates that approximately 75-100 youth emancipating from the child welfare system in Colorado will experience homelessness each year. This figure does not include youth who returned home, were adopted, were runaways, or entered the juvenile justice system prior to the age of emancipation. In fiscal year 06-07, Colorado exited over 2600 of the almost 5000 youth ages 14+ in the child welfare system.ⁱⁱⁱ Some of these youth returned home, were adopted, were runaways, or entered the juvenile justice system. Approximately 10-18% of youth exiting youth corrections in Colorado are discharged to a situation of homelessness due to a lack of housing options. The majority of these youth are former foster youth or have sexual offenses on their records.^{iv} These youth were many times raised within the 'system' and may not be adequately prepared or have the resources to transition from the system to some form of stable housing.

Another category is youth who are parenting. These youth may also fall into one of the previously mentioned categories, but have the added challenge of a young child of their own to care for. Although some of these youth are asked to leave home due to their pregnancy or parent status, many do not become pregnant until after seeking survival on the streets.^v

The State of Youth Homelessness in Colorado

Too many Colorado youth have been left to fend for themselves, without a safe and stable place to stay.

While gathering data on this population is challenging, efforts by communities and service providers estimate that between 1200 and 1500 youth and young adults ages 12 to 24 are homeless in Colorado at any given time.^{vi} Many providers and youth believe that this is actually a significant undercount, due to the number of youth who remain “under the radar” in local communities.^{vii} Researchers also estimate that between 5 to 7.7 percent of all adolescents in the United States experience homelessness each year.^{viii} There has been a significant increase in the number of younger youth experiencing homelessness in recent years. The National Runaway Switchboard, a federally designated communication and support center for homeless and runaway youth, operates a 24-hour crisis hotline. Callers to this hotline who are under the age of 12 have increased by 172 percent since 2000 and callers between the ages of 12 and 13 have increased substantially as well.^{ix}

Safe shelter programs for homeless and runaway youth are concentrated primarily in the Denver Metro area with a few beds existing in locations such as Colorado Springs as well as in Taowac on the Ute Mountain Ute reservation. Limited transitional housing programs exist, however these services are primarily limited to the Denver area. Despite the significant obstacles faced by these young people, a large majority continues to attend school.^x Other entities are working hard with limited resources to meet the complex needs of the homeless and runaway youth population. However it is not enough.

The issue of funding has become much more significant as the entire nation feels the strain of these uncertain economic times. Recently, Colorado was notified that the two agencies operating the Transitional Living Program for homeless youth ages 16-21 were not going to be refunded starting in 2009. Unfortunately, these two programs served 41 youth per year in the Denver metropolitan area. One of the agencies had been operating the program for 17 years. Homeless youth service agencies also report other significant losses of funding in recent months for case management and other support services. Youth continue to report being turned away from shelter and housing due to a lack of space. Supportive services providers also report experiencing capacity issues to service this population. Lack of funding and coordination appear to be high on the list of issues facing the existing service delivery system.

History of Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

In 2005, the National Partnership to End Youth Homelessness developed a checklist to help communities identify the essential components for an effective strategy to address youth homelessness. The OHYS and the ACHY worked through these ten essential components and analyzed the extent to which Colorado had these elements in place. This process served to

identify gaps in service delivery, barriers to accessing what is in place, and was an initial step of the strategic planning process. A retreat was then held with the ACHY on October 11, 2006 and committee members participated in a facilitated process that resulted in the following activities being accomplished:

- Finalization of Vision and Mission Statements for the Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth:
 - **Vision Statement:** Public, Private, and Faith-Based Agencies working together to end youth homelessness in Colorado.
 - **Mission Statement:** The mission of the Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth is to end youth homelessness by improving the quality, availability, and accessibility of services provided to homeless youth and those at risk of homelessness.
- Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis completed

This retreat served as a platform to begin the development of this five-year strategic plan called the Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan. The purpose of the plan is to:

- Ensure that the primary objectives outlined in the legislation that created the OHYS are accomplished;
- Capture the vision and develop a roadmap showing how to accomplish these objectives;
- Ensure accountability;
- Drive funding decisions;
- Provide consistency and collaboration;
- Move promising approaches forward statewide; and
- Allow for broad communication and increased awareness.

Information from the various planning activities conducted by the ACHY in prior years was compiled in order to create draft strategies and action steps. Workgroups representing each one of the five priority areas were formed and met to finish developing each section of the action plan. Each workgroup worked to ensure that the primary objectives laid out in the legislation, which created the OHYS, are being accomplished through this plan. The ACHY recognized that this five-year plan could not touch on every issue relevant to this population and therefore worked to include the most pressing issues.

The plan was presented to multiple stakeholder groups through a series of workshops. The draft plan was posted on the OHYS website for comment as well. Feedback received through ACHY review and from community groups was used to edit the draft plan. The management of the Colorado Department of Human Services reviewed and approved the draft plan. In January 2007, the ACHY voted to adopt and begin implementation of the plan.

Rationale

This plan seeks to address the key systemic issues and barriers as well as gaps in services and resource coordination issues. Addressing these issues makes good sense from several perspectives. For example, the cost to house a youth in the child welfare or juvenile justice

systems range between \$25,000 and \$55,000 per year, while housing a homeless youth in transitional housing costs under \$12,000 per year.^{xi} In fact, one Colorado specific study showed that it costs \$53,665 to maintain a youth in the juvenile justice system for one year, but only \$5,887 to permanently move a homeless youth off the streets.^{xii}

Youth on their own operate in survival mode and experience negative outcomes in the areas of health, education, and employment. Without prevention and early intervention, these youth are not likely to transition successfully to adulthood. Instead these youth are at high risk for HIV and STI infection,^{xiii} suicide, incarceration, dropping out of school, teen parenting, and system dependence. Without the appropriate opportunities and supports, homeless youth are likely to become a part of the adult chronically homeless population.^{xiv}

Youth on their own are at great risk for further victimization and exploitation. Thirty percent of homeless youth will be actively recruited for the purposes of sexual exploitation and other forms of human trafficking within 48 hours of leaving home. Researchers estimate that at least 162,000 homeless youth are victims of commercial sexual exploitation in the United States.^{xv} Unfortunately, Colorado is situated along a key domestic sex trafficking route.^{xvi}

Through the Colorado Homeless Youth Services Act, the legislature has mandated a coordinated response to this important issue as well. By working towards innovative solutions in these areas, less youth will become homeless and those experiencing homelessness will have the opportunity to efficiently enter a collaborative service delivery system designed to address the root causes of their homeless situation and offer a positive path forward.

Strategies and Accomplishments

The Colorado Homeless Youth Action plan is divided into five priority areas. These priorities were developed and ranked by the ACHY. Under each priority are a number of strategies designed to successfully address the priority area.

Priority Area One – Prevention: To prevent youth homelessness by promoting a culture of individual, familial, community, and government responsibility.

The number one priority of this plan to achieve is to ensure that the number of Colorado youth becoming homeless in the future is greatly reduced. By reducing the influx of newly homeless, a significant dent can be made in the problem. This priority area calls for an investment on the front end of the problem to treat the cause, which should reduce the investment needed to address the effect.

Strategy 1.1. To enhance transferable life skills and other supportive services provided to youth in systems of care and to other at-risk youth. This will assist these youth in gaining the developmental assets necessary for a successful transition to adulthood. In order to carry out this strategy, the ACHY will identify the current practices of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems in Colorado. Once identified, the existing gaps will be analyzed and a best practice guide will be compiled that can be replicated in local communities statewide. The OHYS and ACHY will provide technical assistance to existing providers of transition services in order to promote positive outcomes for the youth that they are serving. In addition, the OHYS

will work to facilitate collaborative partnerships in underserved regions of the state in order to provide youth in these areas with effective transition and life skills services as well as other necessary support services.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- Conducted a statewide survey on current life skills practices and resources. (January 2008) ACHY members are in the process of using the survey data and other information to compile a list of current practices and available resources in the areas of life skill for youth exiting systems of care as well as other at-risk youth.

Strategy 1.2. To ensure that youth have access to their state issued photo identification, Social Security Card, and birth certificate upon exit from the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Many youth exit these systems of care without access to these important life documents, making it nearly impossible to acquire housing, education, employment, supportive services and other necessary supports. Many of these youth end up at homeless service providers, in part due to a lack of access to their vital documents. In order to tackle this issue, the ACHY will form a joint workgroup with Bridging the Gap at Mile High United Way. This workgroup will develop a project plan that will focus on the acquisition of these documents before the youth leave care, safe storage options for these documents during the transition process, and creating a life skills curriculum so that youth exiting care are better educated on how to access and secure these important documents.

The workgroup will begin by gathering current local and national policies and practices regarding the acquisition and retention of vital documents. Once barriers and opportunities have been identified, a plan to reduce the barriers in Colorado will be developed and implemented. At the point that the barriers to acquisition of these documents have been minimized as practical, a public policy recommendation will be crafted to require all youth to have access to their vital documents upon exit from systems of care in Colorado. In addition, training on the streamlined acquisition process will be developed for systems of care caseworkers.

The workgroup will investigate physical and electronic storage options for these documents and will formulate recommendations for the appropriate agencies.

A vital documents life skills model curriculum will be developed to ensure that youth are better equipped for acquiring, using, and safely storing these documents. This model curriculum will be made available to systems of care and local communities across the state.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- ACHY and Bridging the Gap at Mile High United Way formed a joint workgroup to address this issue. Formulated a project plan to address the areas of education, acquisition, and retention of vital documents for youth exiting systems of care. Began the process of removing the barriers that caseworkers experience when attempting to obtain vital records for youth prior to exiting care.

- Identified current policies and processes as well as barriers faced by caseworkers when attempting to acquire vital documents for youth in systems of care. (June 2007)
- Researched national models for vital documents acquisition and retention. (April 2007)
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Vital Records Registrar assisted in removal of barriers to obtain birth certificates. (January 2008)
- Created birth certificate acquisition and resource training CD-ROM and webpage on the e-Colorado site for caseworkers and guardian's ad litem. The Office of the Child's Representative provided the filming for the training and secured Continuing Legal Education credit for those that complete the training (February 2008)
- Homeless Youth Coordinator and Bridging the Gap at Mile High United Way Project Director trained county vital records registrars on the streamlined process at the 2008 Vital Records Conference. (April 2008)
- Workgroup members presented a summary of the overall group goals and current progress to the SB 64 Task Force on Foster Care and Permanency in early 2008.
- Action steps to remove barriers to the acquisition of Social Security cards and state issued photo identification are in process.
- The Colorado Division of Child Welfare drafted a proposed rule, which would require all youth in the child welfare system to be provided with their photo identification, Social Security Card, and birth certificate. Rule making hearings are scheduled for early 2009. (December 2008)
- Options to store vital documents for youth in transition are currently being explored.
- Vital documents related life skills training for youth is currently under development.

Strategy 1.3. To improve the availability, accessibility, and effectiveness of programs providing lifelong connections, support systems, mentoring, and life coaching to youth at-risk of homelessness in Colorado. To accomplish this, the ACHY will first identify current programs offering this supports to youth and will analyze gaps that exist. Next, a best practice model will be developed for replication locally statewide. In addition a statewide training protocol for youth mentors will be developed to ensure that youth mentors are trained consistently and to reduce individual agency overhead in administering such programs.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- The Youth Mentoring Collaborative, which is spearheaded by Mile High United Way, has been included in the work of the ACHY around this strategy.
 - A list of agencies currently offering support and connections for youth at risk of homelessness is under development. Once complete, the gaps will be analyzed.
 - A meeting was held with one Goodwill Industries, one of the collaborative partners, to learn from their experiences and challenges to date in mentoring homeless youth. (April 2008)

- The Homeless Youth Coordinator participated in a national roundtable discussion to begin developing a mentoring and life coaching framework for homeless youth and youth at risk of homelessness. (February 2007)

Strategy 1.4. To strengthen families and provide community based support and early intervention. In order to accomplish this, the plan calls for several actions. First, the plan calls for the expansion of the family assistance center model, which includes elements to reduce risk factors for youth and to stabilize and support families. The ACHY will work with local communities to implement this model.

Another action is to expand the respite program model for parents and youth who are in crisis and need a ‘time-out’ or break while counseling is offered. This model reduces incidents of child abuse and of throwaway and runaway youth. ACHY and local communities must identify potential partners and funding sources.

For youth exiting respite or shelter programs and returning home, the plan calls for an expansion of available after care and follow up services to these youth and families. In addition, the plan calls for an extension of time that these services are offered thereby increasing the number of successful transitions of youth back into their homes.

A final action for this strategy includes conducting a marketing and outreach campaign to raise awareness of prevention and family intervention resources across the state. This includes the development of public services announcements to be aired across the state as well as partnership agreements with 211 information and referral call centers and other information outlets.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- This strategy is to be explored further by ACHY in late 2009.

Strategy 1.5. To ensure that appropriate discharge/exit planning is completed for youth exiting systems of care in Colorado. The ACHY will first identify models that support a successful transition from system of care to stable housing. Sample best practice exit plans will be developed and training will be made available to systems of care caseworkers. A public policy recommendation will be developed in order to improve discharge policy and practice within the systems of care.

In rare cases, youth under the age of 18 who are unable to return home are ready for a transition to independence. Unfortunately, these youth are currently unable to sign leases, contracts, permission slips, etc. A model emancipation public policy recommendation will be developed that will propose allowing youth to legally emancipate when certain conditions are present.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- ACHY members have identified successful discharge planning strategies for youth exiting systems of care. ACHY members are now in the process of developing a

discharge planning recommendations that call for an improvement of policies and practices in systems of care.

- OHYS presentations on youth homeless prevention/discharge planning at Office of the Child Representative (OCR) training on transitioning youth for judges and guardians ad litem. Presentations were provided in Jefferson, Boulder, Arapahoe, Adams, El Paso, and Denver Counties as well as during the OCR Statewide Conference. (November 2007 - May 2008)
- Joined NYC transitions and resource group for quarterly meetings (June 2007)
- Represented youth homelessness at SB 02 Medicaid extension for 18-21yo former foster youth summit. Resulted in the sponsoring legislators committing to clean up the language in the next legislative session to ensure that the most vulnerable youth are eligible for Medicaid as intended. (September 2007)
- Several ACHY members attended the 2008 Homeless Youth and the Law Conference hosted by the American Bar Association and the National Network for Youth. (June 2008) Model state laws were drafted and state specific modifications are currently in process.

Priority Area Two - Housing: To have safe, decent, easily accessible, and developmentally appropriate homes for every youth.

The number two priority to be accomplished by this plan is to ensure that there is an appropriate continuum of safe housing and shelter options for homeless and runaway youth across the state. The plan calls for sustaining current programs that are effective and for the creation of additional housing opportunities for youth.

Strategy 2.1. The ACHY will work with Bridging the Gap at Mile High United Way to identify the necessary continuum of housing options for youth and will conduct an environmental scan of existing housing opportunities. This will include identifying the known funding sources to support the various housing strategies, as well as challenges, gaps and opportunities within the current housing system.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- Partnered with Bridging the Gap at Mile High United Way to complete an environmental scan/gap analysis of housing for homeless youth across Colorado. (September 2007)
- Created document showing continuum of youth housing categories needed in Colorado (September 2007)

Strategy 2.2. A plan to fill the gaps and sustain the existing housing will be developed based on best practice models and the ACHY will facilitate the implementation by local communities and agencies across the state.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- A literature and research review of local and national best practice models for housing homeless and formerly homeless youth is in process.
- Homeless Youth Coordinator presented an overview of OHYS and steps to strategically address youth homelessness statewide at the 2007 and 2008 Ohio Homeless Youth

Summit. Gained an overview of the youth housing system strategies being employed in Ohio. Ohio and Colorado share several attributes and challenges. Therefore, the states have formed a relationship that continues to allow for best practice and innovation sharing. (December 2007 and 2008)

Strategy 2.3. Resources to support existing and new housing options need to be identified and increased. This may include funding recommendations where funding gaps exist. The plan calls for the identification of potential partners to support and to carry out the development of new housing resources. These potential partners may include non-profit organizations, faith based organizations, community or neighborhood associations, as well as property management and business partners. By using a collaborative partnership model, many existing resources will be leveraged in order to acquire new and enhance existing housing services.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- Presented a workshop on developing youth housing at the Housing Colorado Now conference (October 2007)
- MHUW began leading a collaborative process of initial planning and fundraising for transformational (5 year) housing projects in Metro Denver serving transitioning foster youth and homeless youth. This is being coordinated with the ACHY Housing workgroup. (November 2007 to the present)
- Urban Peak began leading a collaborative process of initial planning and research for a congregate care housing model to serve homeless youth with co-occurring disorders. Funding for this model will be a significant challenge. (June 2008)
 - The Homeless Youth Coordinator toured the only current example of this model in California. (August 2008)
- SHHP created a permanent supportive housing project serving 10 homeless youth who exited the juvenile justice and/or child welfare systems. This project utilizes Project Based Vouchers through the Housing Choice Voucher program is being run in partnership with the City of Denver and Urban Peak. (May 2008)
- Forward Steps Foundation, a new transitional housing program for former foster youth and homeless youth, began housing youth in the Denver Metro Area. (2008)

Strategy 2.4. As most areas of Colorado are lacking any homeless youth shelter beds, the ACHY will facilitate the identification or development of best practice models for sheltering homeless youth in underserved areas of the state. Models to be explored include the rural host home model of shelter homeless and runaway youth. Once a best practice based shelter plan is developed, the ACHY will work to identify and support appropriate communities and entities in implementing the plan to create additional safe shelter opportunities for youth across the state.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- ACHY members researched local and national best practice models to shelter homeless youth in both rural and urban areas. (September 2007)

- Hosted a statewide Summit to begin planning and visioning for rural host homes to shelter homeless and runaway youth in underserved parts of the state. (April 2008)
- Identified federal demonstration grant that could support rural host home model and provided technical assistance to agencies interested in applying for the funding. This resulted in a rural host home model being designed to serve the San Luis Valley area of Colorado. Funding has not yet been secured in order to implement the model. (July 2008)

Priority Area Three - Supportive Services: To provide comprehensive, wrap-around services to achieve maximum self-sufficiency or family reunification.

The number three priority for this plan is to ensure that homeless youth have access to the necessary and appropriate supportive services in order to assist them in breaking free of cycle of homelessness. This includes ensuring that services are accessible to homeless youth in the areas of employment, education, training, life skills, mentoring/coaching, mental health, substance abuse, and physical health.

Strategy 3.1. To improve the information and referral process for homeless youth and for service agencies. This includes ensuring that resources specifically designed to service homeless and at-risk youth are easily identified and accessed. The ACHY will identify current information and referral resources. Next, in partnership with Bridging the Gap at Mile High United Way, focus groups will be held with youth in order to assess these resources and determine the information and referral needs of homeless youth. The results of this analysis process will be compiled into a summary report, which will be used to work with information and referral providers to amend their processes and tools to specifically meet the needs of homeless and at-risk youth. The ACHY members will assist with marketing and training providers on the improved information and referral resources and will work to ensure that accurate and up to date information is contained within these resources.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- Conducted survey of ACHY members to determine key information and referral guides and websites for youth currently available. (April 2007)
- Conducted five focus groups with homeless and formerly homeless youth across the Denver metro area to discuss information and referral needs and ideas and to review and gain feedback on the key resources. (December 2007)
- Produced a report summarizing the results of the information and referral survey and focus groups. (January 2008)
 - Report results delivered to the National Runaway Switchboard and YouthNet. (April 2008)
 - OHYS hosted a statewide training conducted by the National Runaway Switchboard for service providers. The training covered the information and referral system, the message relay and conference calling system, the free bus ticket program for youth who have runaway, and other outreach and prevention tools. (April 2008)

- Youth Net assigned the task of implementing appropriate suggestions to the State Youth Council of the Colorado Workforce Development Council. (December 2008)
- ACHY members are planning to meet with the Colorado 211 Collaborative in early 2009 to discuss the report findings and feedback.
- Links to the key information and referral resources were added to the OHYS website. (February 2008)

Strategy 3.2. To ensure that there is a means for homeless and runaway youth to communicate with family and friends, such as a kin message center. The ACHY will research if any current resources exist to meet this need. Any current resources will be identified and evaluated for possible partnership and to avoid duplication of efforts. If none such resources exist, the ACHY will create a plan and recommendation for the creation of a kin message center.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- Conducted a survey and research. (July 2007)
- Findings indicated that the National Runaway Switchboard already offers message relay and conference calling services nationally. Details can be found at: http://www.1800runaway.org/youth_teens/get_in_touch.html. Therefore, ACHY determined that current resources are adequate to meet the demand.

Strategy 3.3. To ensure that the physical health, mental health, and substance abuse treatment needs and gaps are being addressed in a collaborative manner. The ACHY will work with the Colorado LINKS initiative to ensure that the appropriate entities and networks are connected to jointly tackle these needs and gaps. This includes having ACHY members act as liaisons with these other entities and engaging active participation from providers of these services in the ACHY work. A key outcome is the development of a plan for homeless youth to gain access to developmentally appropriate and affordable health, mental health, and substance abuse services across Colorado.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- Presented information on the youth homelessness to the Mental Health Planning and Advisory Committee's Youth and Young Adult Transition Committee to assist in the development of key recommendations regarding the need for increased access to developmentally appropriate services across Colorado. (September 2007)
- Participated in Colorado LINKS for Mental Health activities in order to identify other groups working on similar activities. Began to work on partnership development with appropriate groups. (March 2007 to the present)
 - Identified current efforts to meet the health, mental health and substance abuse needs of youth in Colorado using the guidebook published by Colorado LINKS. (May 2007)
 - Participated in the new 'CO LINKS Joint Meeting of Chairs' group to ensure coordination of activities between all state level groups addressing children and youth mental health in their planning efforts. (June 2007)

- A proposed memorandum of agreement between Colorado LINKS and ACHY is currently under review by CDHS and ACHY.
- Assisted Urban Peak in presenting a symposium on the gaps in developmentally appropriate mental health and substance abuse services for youth in transition. (November 2007)
- Conducted outreach to community health and behavioral health organizations to join ACHY efforts. Active membership from four organizations secured. (July 2008)
- The Colorado Office of the Governor and the Department of Human Services, Division of Behavioral Health secured a three year federal Access to Recovery grant which funds substance abuse treatment and recovery services for youth and young adults in Colorado. Homeless youth services agencies have been able to utilize this funding to offer recovery support services to youth and have been able to engage youth in substance abuse treatment. (October 2007)
- The Mile High Council on Substance Abuse and Mental Health and Urban Peak Denver received funding for 'Beat the Street', which will target homeless and at-risk young adults in the Denver metro area with substance abuse, mental illness or co-occurring disorders. Its purpose is to improve youth's residential stability and self-sufficiency by integrating age-appropriate housing and support services with individualized substance abuse and mental health treatment. (2008)
- The Mental Health Center of Denver, in partnership with Urban Peak Denver and the Mile High Council on Substance Abuse and Mental Health, received a federal grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, SAMHSA. This grant targets young people of color who have HIV or are at risk of contracting HIV. Urban Peak and The Council will conduct outreach, facilitate Street Smart groups, provide rapid HIV testing and service planning. MHCD and The Mile High Council will provide therapy and psychiatric services to the youth referred through the outreach efforts. (October 2008)

Strategy 3.4. To research and implement best practice models with Colorado public school districts along with public and non-profit entities in order to address the educational needs of homeless youth, with a particular emphasis on unaccompanied homeless youth. This includes several steps that will allow for this part of the plan to be completed successfully

First, homeless education liaisons from Colorado public school districts will be better connected with area homeless youth service providers. The plan calls for the direct input and membership of homeless education liaisons in homeless youth meetings throughout Colorado, such as the ACHY, CONET, etc.

Second, this plan calls for the implementation and replication of successful collaborative partnerships between local school districts and nonprofit direct service organizations. Initial pilot partnerships will be evaluation and replicated where appropriate.

This strategy also calls for increased collaboration between agencies collecting data on homeless youth in order to identify effective ways of measuring educational success. School districts and other agencies are to collaborate with the Colorado Department of Education's data collection unit in order to gain a better understanding of the data available and effective identifiers in order to measure and track educational success for homeless youth. As a result of this collaboration,

systems will be put into place that track data on homeless youth in terms of retention and dropout rates, expulsion and suspension rates, and proficiency on assessment testing. Other indicators will be discussed and researched. This includes a focus area on addressing credit accrual issues for homeless youth who enroll mid-semester.

Another education related strategy is to research and implement best practice strategies for identifying and serving homeless unaccompanied youth in Colorado public school districts. As of the start of this plan, only 15 of the 178 Colorado school districts were collecting data each year on unaccompanied homeless youth. This strategy calls for this data to be collected in all 178 school districts. Enrollment forms will be updated to include identifiers for unaccompanied homeless youth. Local and national best practice models will be made available to local school districts and communities as well.

In order to increase the educational success of unaccompanied homeless youth, this population will be a primary topic at the federally funded school district meetings and in regional trainings. In addition, the plan calls for the Colorado Department of Education to include homeless unaccompanied youth as a priority area in all requests for proposals issued to distribute federal McKinney-Vento funds to local school districts.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- CDE and OHYS created a partnership to better connect public school districts with homeless youth service providers through the participation of CDE and homeless liaisons in CONET and ACHY.
 - OHYS presents updates and offers technical assistance at the CDE statewide trainings of school homeless liaisons. (January 2007)
 - 1-2 Liaisons and the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth attending CONET and ACHY. (January 2008)
- Collaborated with CDE to increase data elements being collected on homeless youth in public schools to allow for better analysis of key areas of need. (June 2007)
- CDE and CDHS hosted joint training with homeless education liaisons and direct service providers. (November 2007 and 2008)
- Pilot project to create a partnership between school districts and non-profit organizations was developed with DPS and CO Youth for a Change and expanding to Aurora Public Schools in the 2008-2009 school year. This program includes a liaison position to reengage homeless youth dropouts with educational services. Other formal collaborative partnerships started in Adams 12 Schools with Goals, Inc., in Greeley Schools with the Greeley Dream Team, and in Aurora Schools with the Colfax Community Network. (2008)
- Systems in place to measure and track educational success of homeless youth in Colorado School Districts. Staff training on reporting at the local school district level is in process. Data collection results to be available in June 2009. (June 2008)
- As of the 2008-2009 school year, CDE is leading the nation by collecting specific unaccompanied youth data from all Colorado school districts. Enrollment forms were updated to include unaccompanied youth identifiers and have been provided to local school districts. (2008)

- Unaccompanied youth is a priority in CDE requests for proposals to distribute federal homeless funds to local school districts (March 2007)

Strategy 3.5. To develop a continuum of supportive services for homeless youth within local communities across Colorado. The ACHY will conduct an environmental scan of current supportive services accessible by homeless youth across Colorado. Using this information, the ACHY will identify gaps and needs by creating a chart outlining the ideal continuum of supportive services for homeless youth statewide. Local community partnership models will be developed, including investigating nontraditional resources such as the business community, nursing/assisted living facilities, senior citizen organizations, colleges, etc. The plan calls for an increase in asset specific training to assist youth in maintaining housing and moving through the housing continuum towards self-sufficiency. A plan will be drafted to ensure the delivery of comprehensive supportive services to youth in each region of Colorado. This will ensure that homeless youth have greater access to the supports necessary for a successful transition to adulthood.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- Presented a workshop on the work of OHYS at the State Youth Council's Think Big Conference. (April 2007)
 - This presentation resulted in a key local champion to help carry out the Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan in Moffat County. This individual has created a local planning group and has requested that the OHYS present at and help facilitate a community meeting in early 2008. (April 2007)
 - This presentation resulted in the appointment of Andy to the State Youth Council to represent youth homelessness. (July 2007)
 - CDHS involvement in the State Youth Council has resulted in a council plan for 2008 that includes steps to increase workforce and educational opportunities for homeless and foster youth. (October 2007)
- Presented a workshop on strategies to engage homeless youth in workforce services at the Rocky Mountain Workforce Development Conference. (May 2008)
- Promoted homeless youth as a priority area during planning with the State Youth Council. (February 2008)
 - Presented on the work of the OHYS to the Jefferson County Youth Council. (March 2008)
- A document outlining the ideal continuum of supportive services needed in Colorado to assist homeless youth is currently in process.
- Urban Peak completed an expansion of their shelter building in Denver, thereby allowing for additional space to provide supportive services to shelter youth and drop –in youth. (October 2008)

Priority Area Four - Planning and Awareness: To create awareness and establish best practices and policies based upon accurate research and data, youth engagement, and strategic planning. The fourth priority area calls for increased public and political will through coordinated public awareness activities. In addition, data and research are to be compiled collaboratively to ensure that local and statewide planning is based on the best evidence available. Youth must be actively

engaged in this process using the positive youth development framework in order to achieve maximum levels of success.

Strategy 4.1. To create a report showing the number and characteristics of homeless youth in Colorado. This strategy calls for comprehensive participation from all youth serving agencies in local and regional homeless counts and in the Homeless Management Information System. In addition, the plan calls for the entities collecting homeless youth data to meet together to coordinate efforts and share information. This will result in more accurate and comprehensive data on homeless youth in Colorado. In addition, the ACHY will craft recommendations that would facilitate the cooperation of important sources of systemic empirical data relevant to youth homelessness. This should result in key indicators and questions being added to statewide data collection systems operated by such organizations as Child Welfare, Youth Corrections, Labor and Employment, Public Health and Environment as well as other relevant systems. All of this will allow for data to be compiled and analyzed to support statewide, community, and agency planning and will increase public awareness of the issue.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- Worked with CDPHE, Prevention Leadership Council, and Omni Institute to begin planning for a toolkit for youth homelessness in the Aspire data warehouse and mapping tool. This will allow for easier gaps analysis and the ability to visually overlay various data. (December 2007 and January 2008)
- A homeless point in time count was conducted by SHHP for Denver's Road Home. The survey showed that over 400 youth between the ages of 13 and 24 are on their own in the City and County of Denver on any given night. (March 2008)
- A statewide homeless count is scheduled for January 27, 2009. ACHY is currently working to increase homeless and runaway youth data captured in this count and in the Homeless Management Information System that is generating the report.

Strategy 4.2. To ensure that homeless youth service agencies have opportunities to network and coordinate service delivery. The plan calls for the Colorado Network of Homeless and Runaway Youth Services (CONET) to be reinstated for the purposes of networking, coordinating service delivery, and coordinating with regional and national efforts. CONET meetings are to be held on the same day as the quarterly ACHY meetings in order to allow for broad statewide participation in both meetings. The plan calls for CONET to elect a representative to serve with the Youth Policy Council of the National Network for Youth and to secure funding to cover the costs associated with this position. CONET is to create a speaker's bureau and support statewide training and technical assistance efforts.

In addition, ACHY will work with local homeless planning bodies to ensure greater inclusion of homeless youth serving organizations, which will increase the visibility of the issue as planning occurs.

Finally, coordination between existing systems and grassroots strategy efforts will be increased. This should lead to planning and policy recommendations being conducted in a coordinated manner across Colorado. This should include joint strategies between ACHY and other

homeless or youth strategy efforts as well as recommendations being proposed jointly between ACHY and other groups.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- CONET (Colorado Network of Homeless Youth Services) dissolved several years ago. The OHYS facilitated the reorganization of this group, assumed the temporary chairperson role, and assisted in securing funding for meeting lunches and ensured attendance from key runaway and homeless youth providers, HHS, and CDE. In addition, OHYS facilitated the elections for a chair and other key officers. (January 2007)
 - Funding was secured and allocated to support travel expenses for an elected CONET member to actively represent Colorado and federal region 8 on the National Network for Youth Policy Council. (April 2007)
 - Several youth were identified and trained by Mile High United Way for a youth speakers' bureau. (November 2008)
 - Provider speakers' bureau in process.
- Co-hosted Colorado Adolescent Champions quarterly luncheon (along with CDPHE Adolescent Health Director) for all program coordinators/managers from across all state government departments who run programs addressing the needs of youth/adolescents. OHYS will continue to work with CDPHE to ensure that this networking group will continue to meet quarterly for the purpose of better coordinating our state's adolescent services across departments and divisions. (Quarterly beginning November 2007)
 - This group created a chart showing all functional program areas in state government working on adolescent/youth issues. (March 2008)
 - A subset of this group began meeting to explore state technology strategies to engage youth and rural providers. (June 2008)
 - The group has begun to develop a document that maps the connections and opportunities for partnership between the various functional program areas serving adolescents/youth in state government.

Strategy 4.3. To increase awareness and education regarding homeless and runaway youth issues and solutions. This strategy calls for a public awareness campaign to be held each November in conjunction with National Runaway Prevention Month with the goal of raising public and policymaker awareness of the issues and barriers faced by this population. In order to successfully raise awareness, a proclamation will be requested from the Governor declaring the month as Homeless and Runaway Youth Awareness Month in Colorado. In addition, public service announcements are to be developed and aired and print materials are to be developed. This strategy also calls for the creation of a mechanism for homeless youth to have an active voice to inform policy initiatives. Options for youth voice to explore include focus groups and a youth advisory board.

This plan and related communication will be monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that both rural and urban homeless youth needs are being addressed statewide. The ACHY is to facilitate the development of local homeless youth action plans in rural, suburban, and urban communities across the state. These plans should result in statewide improvement of homeless youth services as well as an overall reduction in the number of youth experiencing homelessness in Colorado.

Each year this plan is to be reviewed and revised as necessary to take into account emerging needs and opportunities. A report outlining the progress made and plans for the coming year, as well as any recommendations, will be completed annually in order to increase public and policymaker awareness of the issues as well as the results to date. A press release with key findings, accomplishments and recommendations will be developed and distributed annually as well.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- Worked with CDE, MHUW, and CONET to distribute a Call to Action and press release in conjunction with National Homeless Youth Awareness Month, which resulted in press coverage, community actions, and activities for homeless youth and service providers. (November 2007)
- OHYS worked with CDE, Family Tree, Inc., Mile High United Way, Stand Up for Kids, The GLBT Community Center of Colorado, Urban Peak and Volunteers of America to conduct a public awareness campaign promoting November 2008 as Colorado Homeless and Runaway Youth Awareness Month. (November 2008)
 - A kickoff event was held with approximately 250 attendees. The event featured a youth resource fair with approximately 100 youth homeless youth receiving information about accessing education, employment, housing, shelter, and emergency services. Basic medical care, food and other necessities were distributed to the homeless youth in attendance. A proclamation ceremony was held in conjunction with the event. Proclamations declaring November 2008 as Homeless and Runaway Youth Awareness Month were issued during the ceremony by Governor Bill Ritter, Jr. and Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper. A proclamation issued by Colorado Springs Mayor Lionel Rivera was also announced at the event. Green light bulbs were distributed to community members to help them show their support and raise awareness of the issues facing homeless youth in Colorado.
 - Numerous community events were held during the awareness month including fundraisers, a provider training conference sponsored by CDE and CDHS, a film screening and discussion panel, service learning programs with local schools and youth boards, and booth space at local events.
 - A CDE public service announcement on the educational rights of homeless youth was aired on Colorado television stations.
 - A fact sheet on youth homelessness in Colorado was created and distributed.
 - The Homeless Youth Coordinator participated on the National Runaway Runaway Prevention Month Task Force, and was able to align the national awareness campaign with Colorado's planning process.
- Presented a workshop, along with 2 formerly homeless youth, on youth homelessness and the work of OHYS at the Colorado Coalition for the Homeless Conference. (May 2007)
 - This presentation resulted in a key local champion to help carry out the Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan in Weld County. This individual has facilitated the development of a local draft homeless youth action plan and has requested that

the OHYS help facilitate a community meeting in early 2008 to present both the state and local plans. (May 2007)

- Presented on the work of the OHYS at the annual Colorado Springs Homeless Conference and facilitated a community needs and opportunities conversation with community providers. (September 2008)
- OHYS is in the process of working with the Prevention Leadership Council and the Colorado Division of Behavioral Health to coordinate youth engagement/youth voice opportunities for youth to inform policy initiatives.
- The Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan was revised to take into account emerging needs, barriers, and opportunities. (May 2007 and January 2009)
- OHYS Annual Report completed and submitted to Governor and state legislature. Made available to the public on the OHYS website. (January 2007, February 2008, January 2009)
- Developed an electronic newsletter that is distributed approximately every two months to ACHY members and other interested parties statewide. The newsletter provides information on upcoming events, available funding resources, recent research findings and other information related to homeless youth issues. (July 2008)
- Local homeless planning is in process. Moffat County developed an initial plan during 2007. OHYS provided technical assistance to an initiative in Weld County during their planning process in early 2008.
- The Colorado Division of Child Welfare received a federal demonstration grant to facilitate collaborative planning for support systems for rural homeless youth. The ACHY is acting as the steering committee for this grant, which will assist rural communities in creating local community plans to better service homeless and runaway youth. (October 2008)

Priority Area Five – Outreach: To identify and link vulnerable youth to appropriate housing and services.

The fifth priority of this plan is to ensure that homeless and runaway youth can be identified and engaged in services as quickly as possible in order to prevent additional risks and vulnerabilities associated with prolonged street engagement.

Strategy 5.1. To educate providers and communities statewide regarding the risk posed to homeless youth of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. To begin with, the ACHY will link with the Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking in order to coordinate efforts most effectively. The plan calls for homeless youth outreach organizations to begin using information from anti-trafficking organizations in outreach presentations such as with local schools. In addition, local homeless education liaisons are to be trained to identify trafficking victims and create awareness in local schools. The direct service staff members from homeless youth service agencies are to be trained in basic human trafficking knowledge. This will allow the staff to identify current and potential victims of human trafficking/exploitation and to offer appropriate assistance and referrals as the staff develops relationships with the youth. The OHYS website will contain a resource page with links to human trafficking materials, hotlines, and key resource information.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- Hosted multiple human trafficking trainings for homeless youth service providers and school district homeless liaisons. Over 40 individuals have been trained. Additional training will be hosted in subsequent years. (August and November 2007, May 2008)
- ACHY approved a recommendation that all direct service staff from runaway and homeless youth agencies attend training on human trafficking. ACHY will ensure that the trainings are set up at least quarterly to allow for new staff to be trained. (October 2008)
- Worked with the Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking to create a plan to reduce victimization of homeless and runaway youth in commercial sexual exploitation. (December 2007 through April 2008)
- Elected a liaison to connect the Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking with the Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth (June 2007)
- Co-hosted a forum on Human Trafficking with CDE for school district homeless liaisons from across Colorado. (November 2007)

Strategy 5.2. To create a statewide webpage on the OHYS website that includes links to statewide and national resource directories as well as key crisis and outreach hotlines and information. This will give the public a portal to the primary resources and hotlines for homeless and runaway youth concerns. In addition, this website will include a list of questions frequently asked by homeless or at-risk youth and will offer general answers and referral information.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- Created a page for the OHYS portion of the SHHP website that includes all of the key 24 hour local and national crisis lines for homeless youth, key information and referral websites, and links to Colorado runaway and homeless youth shelter providers. The page was updated during 2008. (December 2007)
- Created a page for the OHYS portion of the SHHP website that includes Frequently Asked Questions that are common from homeless and at-risk youth. The list of FAQ's was updated with additional information during 2008. (December 2007)

Strategy 5.3. To develop and compile best practice models for coordinated and collaborative outreach to homeless and at-risk youth that can be replicated in rural, suburban, and urban areas of Colorado. To accomplish this, the ACHY will complete an environmental scan of existing outreach programs and efforts both locally and nationally. Best practice models will then be developed and recommended for replication in underserved regions of Colorado.

Progress to date for this strategy:

- ACHY members have begun conducting research on existing national best practice models as well as current practices of providing outreach to homeless and runaway youth in Colorado.

Funding

Funding for the Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan strategies is anticipated to come from a variety of sources. As this plan is a call to local communities and agencies to work together and to develop local plans, these local community and agency plans will bring many of the resources necessary for successful plan implementation. In addition, the plan will seek to maximize the use of all appropriate federal, state and local funds through both government and private sources in order to ensure this plans success. For areas of the plan where appropriate funding cannot be identified, funding recommendations will be created and delivered to potential funders.

Evaluation

The Colorado Homeless Youth Action plan will be evaluated on a continual basis. The OHYS will monitor each of the five priority areas to ensure that the deliverables are being completed on time and within the scope outlined in this plan. In addition, the ACHY will evaluate the plan progress and impact on a quarterly basis. Each plan priority area will be reviewed at the quarterly ACHY meetings. Finally, an annual report to the Governor and legislature will be completed each year indicating the effectiveness at meeting the goals and objectives outlined in this plan.

Glossary of Terms

1. ACHY-Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth. Advises the Office of Homeless Youth Services and assists with implementation of the Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan.
2. OHYS-Office of Homeless Youth Services, which is a function of the Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Supportive Housing and Homeless Programs.
3. CDHS-Colorado Department of Human Services.
4. CDE-Colorado Department of Education.
5. DYC-A division within the Colorado Department of Human Services responsible for management and oversight of State-operated and privately contracted residential facilities, and for community alternative programs that serve and treat youth aged 10-21 years who have demonstrated delinquent behavior.
6. OCR-Colorado Office of the Child's Representative. The state entity responsible for improving best interest representation for Colorado's children. The office contracts with over 250 attorneys who represent youth in dependency and neglect (child abuse), delinquency, domestic relations, paternity, truancy and probate cases.

7. Unaccompanied Homeless Youth-A young person ages 12 to 24 on their own without a safe living arrangement.
8. Runaway Youth-A young person under age 18 who is away from home without parent or guardian consent.
9. Systems Youth-A young person leaving and/or aging out of the foster care/child welfare or juvenile justice system.
10. Throwaway/Expelled Youth-A young person ages 12 to 24 told to leave their household by their parent/guardian or a young person abandoned by their family.
11. HIV-Human Immunodeficiency Virus.
12. STI-Sexually transmitted infection (also known as STD).
13. SAMSHA-The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
14. McKinney-Vento Act-The major federal legislative response to homelessness. Funds a range of services for homeless persons including health care, shelter, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, job training, educational assistance, outreach, as well as other key services.

Appendices

1. Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan Summary
2. Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan Matrix
3. ACHY Membership Roster
4. 2005 OHYS Statewide Gaps Analysis

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STATE OF COLORADO



Colorado Department of Human Services

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Joscelyn L. Gay, Deputy Executive Director

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Director



Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor

Karen L. Beye
Executive Director

Homeless Youth Services Office

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan Summary

1. **PREVENTION:** *To prevent youth homelessness by promoting a culture of individual, familial, community, and government responsibility.*

Key Strategies:

- Ensure comprehensive and consistent delivery of life skills and other support services for youth emancipating from systems of care and other at-risk youth in local communities;
- Ensure that youth have access to ID and other vital documents upon exit from systems of care;
- Improve the availability, accessibility and effectiveness of programs providing permanent connections, mentoring, and life coaching to youth at-risk of homelessness;
- Promote strengthening of high-risk families by increasing access to community based support and intervention services; and
- Ensure successful discharge planning for youth exiting systems of care.

2. **HOUSING:** *To have safe, decent, easily accessible, and developmentally appropriate homes for every youth.*

Key Strategies:

- Identify the housing needs and gaps for homeless and at-risk youth in Colorado; and
- Facilitate appropriate housing and shelter development to meet the local needs for homeless and at-risk youth.

3. **SUPPORTIVE SERVICES:** *To provide comprehensive, wrap-around services to achieve maximum self-sufficiency or reunification.*

Key Strategies:

- Improve youth information and referral process;
- Ensure homeless youth have comprehensive access to developmentally appropriate health, mental health and substance abuse services;
- Increase effectiveness of school homeless liaison services to homeless youth; and
- Develop an array of supportive services to address education, employment, permanent connections, assets, guidance and other needs to ensure homeless youth have the necessary supports for successful transition to adulthood.

4. **PLANNING AND AWARENESS:** *To create awareness and establish best practices and policies based upon accurate data and strategic planning.*

Key Strategies:

- Recreate Colorado Network of Homeless Youth Providers (CONET) to ensure interagency collaboration and coordination of services, resources and to connect with regional and national efforts to address the issue of youth homelessness;
 - Create a public awareness campaign for National Homeless Youth Awareness/Runaway Prevention Month each November;
 - Increase awareness and education of Homeless Youth Issues
 - Coordinate research and data activities related to homeless youth;
 - Ensure homeless youth voice to inform policy initiatives; and
 - Create and distribute Office of Homeless Youth Services annual report.
5. **OUTREACH:** *To identify and link vulnerable youth to appropriate housing and services.*

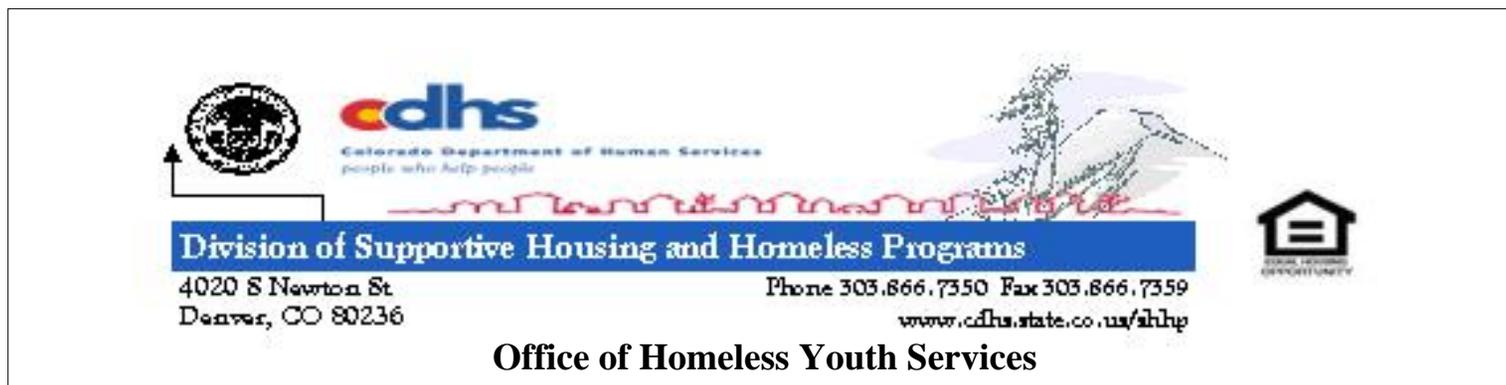
Key Strategies:

- Train providers on human trafficking issue and victim identification;
- Create homeless youth outreach web pages that include: 24-hour runaway and homeless youth crisis lines, human trafficking and suicide hotlines, and frequently asked questions; and
- Increase collaborative outreach statewide to link homeless and at-risk youth with resources and support.

To view the entire action plan or for more information, please contact:

Andy Johnson, Homeless Youth Coordinator at andrew.johnson3@state.co.us or 303-866-7366

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan



COLORADO HOMELESS YOUTH ACTION PLAN MATRIX

January 2007-December 2011

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA ONE - PREVENTION: To prevent youth homelessness by promoting a culture of individual, familial, community, and government responsibility.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Completion Date (Estimated)	Progress to Date
Strategy 1.1 Enhance transferable life skills and other supportive services provided to youth in systems of care and other at-risk youth to assist them in gaining the developmental assets needed for transition to adulthood	Action 1.1.1 Identify current practices in systems of care in areas such as life skills/developmental assets, as well as financial/asset management	Prevention Workgroup	Greater awareness of current services available and populations served allowing for better program planning	List completed, reviewed by Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth (ACHY) List placed on the Homeless Youth website	October 2008 November 2008	In process
	Action 1.1.2 Conduct a gaps analysis of life skills available across the state	Prevention Workgroup, Planning Workgroup	Life skill categories needing increased availability are identified Locations across the state needing additional life skills identified	Conduct a review of current life skill practices across the state	January 2008	Statewide review conducted 1/08
				Conduct analysis of life skill gaps	January 2009	In process
Action 1.1.3 Develop best practice guide containing developmental and financial asset building models that can be replicated at local agencies or in local communities statewide	Prevention Workgroup	Model is replicated statewide and youth have access to asset building activities	Guide complete and posted on Homeless Youth website	May 2009		

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA ONE - PREVENTION: To prevent youth homelessness by promoting a culture of individual, familial, community, and government responsibility.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Completion Date (Estimated)	Progress to Date
	Action 1.1.4 Expand the availability of youth transition related programs statewide to reach all key regions of the state and to include a broad range of services and life skill development activities	Prevention Workgroup	At risk youth have access to necessary life skills and transition services Identified gaps in services are addressed with new or expanded life skills and transition services	Assist current programs providing transition services in utilizing best practice models to address needs Facilitate building collaborative partnerships to provide youth with transition and life skills in underserved regions of the state	June 2009 February 2010	CDHS- Division of Child Welfare secured Support Systems for Rural Homeless Youth grant to create local homeless youth plans for rural regions
	Action 1.1.5 Improve accessibility of developmentally appropriate mental health and substance abuse services to youth at risk of homelessness	Prevention Workgroup, Supportive Services Workgroup	Reduction of youth homelessness as youth have access to necessary supportive services	(see strategy 3.3)	(see strategy 3.3)	In process

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA ONE - PREVENTION: To prevent youth homelessness by promoting a culture of individual, familial, community, and government responsibility.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Completion Date (Estimated)	Progress to Date
Strategy 1.2 Ensure that youth have access to ID and Vital Documents upon exit from systems of care	Action 1.2.1 Develop a workgroup to discuss the easier acquisition of ID and vital documents for youth who are homeless (cosponsored by ACHY and Bridging the Gap)	ACHY Documents Workgroup and Bridging the Gap at Mile High United Way (BTG) Partnership Forum	Current policies and practices for all systems for acquisition and retention of IDs and vital documents are identified Barriers and opportunities identified	Initial list reviewed by the Prevention workgroup	January 2007	Completed
	Action 1.2.2 Research national ID and vital document acquisition and retention models as well as current state processes and practices	ACHY Documents Workgroup and BTG Partnership Forum	National models identified Colorado policies and processes identified	Initial list reviewed by the Prevention workgroup	April 2007	Completed
	Action 1.2.3 Develop a coordinated plan to ensure youth have access to IDs and vital documents upon exit from systems of care	ACHY Documents Workgroup and BTG Partnership Forum, CDHS-Division of Child Welfare (DCW) & Division of Youth Corrections (DYC)	All youth will exit systems of care in Colorado with access to IDs and vital documents	Plan developed and agreed to by the Prevention Workgroup Draft policy recommendations to be adopted by systems of care	August 2008 August 2009	In process. Birth Certificate process streamlined and training CD/website created Social Security Card and Photo ID tasks in process In process

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA ONE - PREVENTION: To prevent youth homelessness by promoting a culture of individual, familial, community, and government responsibility.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Completion Date (Estimated)	Progress to Date
	<p>Action 1.2.4 Develop a coordinated plan to ensure that youth who exited systems of care have a means to store their vital documents and records during transition to adulthood</p>	ACHY Documents Workgroup and BTG Partnership Forum	All youth who exit systems of care in Colorado will have access to a means of vital documents storage/retention	<p>Agreement from stakeholders to move forward.</p> <p>Plan developed and agreed to by the Prevention Workgroup</p> <p>Plan elements begin to be implemented.</p>	<p>October 2007</p> <p>January 2009</p> <p>January 2010</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>In process. Storage options and barriers being explored</p>
	<p>Action 1.2.5 Develop a curriculum model to ensure that youth in systems of care develop life skills in the area of ID and vital document acquisition process, uses, retention, and care</p>	ACHY Documents Workgroup and BTG Partnership Forum	All youth in systems of care in Colorado will receive life skill training regarding ID and vital document acquisition, retention, uses, and care before exit	A replicable curriculum model regarding ID and vital documents is developed and available to local communities	April 2009	In process
<p>Strategy 1.3 Improve the availability, accessibility and effectiveness of programs providing life long connections, support systems, mentoring, life coaching to youth at-risk of homelessness.</p>	<p>Action 1.3.1 Identify current programs offering these activities to youth and areas needing these services statewide</p>	Prevention Workgroup	A list of age appropriate recommendations for improving access to these services for youth at risk of homelessness statewide	<p>A comprehensive list of current programs offering these services is developed</p> <p>A gap analysis is conducted statewide</p>	<p>September 2009</p> <p>October 2009</p>	In process

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA ONE - PREVENTION: To prevent youth homelessness by promoting a culture of individual, familial, community, and government responsibility.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Completion Date (Estimated)	Progress to Date
	Action 1.3.2 Develop best practice model that can be replicated at local agencies or in local communities statewide.	Prevention Workgroup	Model is replicated statewide and youth have access to supportive individuals	A comprehensive list of best practices that can be used by service organizations across the state for program planning	September 2009	
	Action 1.3.3 Develop shared system of training volunteer mentors for youth	Prevention Workgroup	Mentors are trained in a consistent manner statewide and agency overhead to run mentor programs is reduced	Statewide training protocol developed and agency agreements in place	December 2010	
Strategy 1.4 Strengthen Families and provide community based support and intervention	Action 1.4.1 Expansion of the Family Assistance Center Model	Prevention Workgroup	Family Assistance model which includes elements to reduce risk factors for youth and helps to stabilize and support families	Model is developed and includes specified elements Communities to implement model are identified	January 2010 April 2010	
	Action 1.4.2 Expand Respite program model for parents and youth who need a time out/break	Prevention Workgroup	Reduced incidents of child abuse as well as throwaway/runaway youth	Model is expanded Potential Partners and funding are identified	December 2009 March 2010	
	Action 1.4.3 Expand and extend aftercare and follow up services for youth returning home from respite and sheltering programs	Prevention Workgroup	Reduced incidents of repeat respite service needs Successful transitions back into home	Aftercare service funding identified Agencies providing extended aftercare services in key regions across the state	December 2010 September 2011	

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA ONE - PREVENTION: To prevent youth homelessness by promoting a culture of individual, familial, community, and government responsibility.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Completion Date (Estimated)	Progress to Date
	Action 1.4.4 Conduct a marketing and outreach campaign to raise awareness of prevention and family intervention resources across the state	Prevention Workgroup	Reduced incidents of child abuse as well as throwaway/runaway youth	PSAs developed and aired Partnership agreements with 211 call centers and other information outlets	October 2010 August 2010	
Strategy 1.5 Ensure appropriate discharge planning for youth exiting systems of care	Action 1.5.1 Identify models to support successful transition from systems of care to stable housing	Prevention Workgroup, Housing Workgroup	Successful models are identified that would best serve the youth of Colorado	Draft sample housing exit plans Identify best practice strategies and policies for housing exit planning	October 2009 December 2009	In process In process
	Action 1.5.2 Improve discharge policy and practice in systems of care	Prevention Workgroup, Colorado Community and Interagency Council on Homelessness (CCICH)	Public Policy supports youth transitioning successfully from systems of care to stability	Public policy recommendation	February 2010	
	Action 1.5.2 Conduct training for caseworkers in systems of care on housing exit planning strategies	Prevention Workgroup, Housing Workgroup	Youth successfully transition from systems of care to stable housing	Coordinate with systems of care to create training for caseworkers	December 2010	

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA ONE - PREVENTION: To prevent youth homelessness by promoting a culture of individual, familial, community, and government responsibility.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Completion Date (Estimated)	Progress to Date
	Action 1.5.3 Create recommended model emancipation law for Colorado	Prevention Workgroup	In rare cases, youth who are unable to return home and are ready for transition to independence are able to legally emancipate from parents/system and are able to sign contracts, leases, and permission slips	Model emancipation public policy recommendation created	December 2009	Workgroup members attended a national conference in 6/08 to craft draft model laws. State specific modifications in process.

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA TWO - HOUSING: To have safe, decent, easily accessible, and developmentally appropriate homes for every youth.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
Strategy 2.1 Identify necessary continuum of housing options for youth and Conduct Environmental Scan of existing housing opportunities for youth	Action 2.1.1 Review and update current BTG Housing Environmental Scan and include statewide information to increase understanding of current housing resources and needs	BTG Self Evaluation Team, Housing Workgroup	Identification of gaps in housing continuum Identification of gaps in resources for specialized populations	Housing Environmental Scan updated	June 2007 Annually	Completed In process
	Action 2.1.2 Create environmental scan of existing funding streams, statute and code as it relates to youth ages 16 – 23 and housing	BTG Self Evaluation Team	Identification of challenges and opportunities with in current system	Environmental Scan of funding, statute and codes complete	June 2007	Completed
	Action 2.1.3 Create a chart outlining the ideal continuum of housing for homeless youth ages 15-24 statewide	Housing Workgroup	Identification of all existing and needed housing resources to assist in identifying gaps	Continuum of housing chart complete	May 2009	In process
	Action 2.1.4 Prioritize housing list from 10/06 list based on needs and gaps to guide Strategy 2	BTG Self Evaluation Team, Housing Workgroup	A housing needs list that will be based on the gaps analysis done by the ACHY	Housing list prioritized and reviewed by ACHY	July 2009	

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA TWO - HOUSING: To have safe, decent, easily accessible, and developmentally appropriate homes for every youth.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
Strategy 2.2 Establish data driven best practice youth housing plan	Action 2.2.1 Conduct literature and research review of local and national best practice models for housing homeless and formerly homeless youth	Housing Workgroup	Youth Housing Models will be identified that could be replicated to fill identified gaps Underserved and special populations such as behavioral health, physical, and developmental disabilities, GLBT, juvenile sexual offenders and other offenders and foster youth, will be specifically targeted with appropriate housing options	Research and Literature review complete	July 2009	In process
	Action 2.2.2 Develop housing plan and strategic financing plan for ACHY endorsement and recommendation	Housing Workgroup	Youth housing best practice models will be incorporated into a plan which addresses identified gaps and outlines resources necessary to implement	Housing and financing plan complete Housing plan delivered to CDHS management Approved plan incorporated into Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan	October 2009 October 2009 January 2010	

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA TWO - HOUSING: To have safe, decent, easily accessible, and developmentally appropriate homes for every youth.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
Strategy 2.3 Increase/develop statewide resources and implement plan to manage new and existing resources to support approved housing plan recommendation	Action 2.3.1 Identify barriers and challenges for housing partners and develop strategies to address	Housing Workgroup	New partnerships for the development of housing for youth who are homeless Action oriented strategy to address existing challenges/barriers (note 2.1.2)	A coordinated plan will be implemented to increase housing opportunities for youth who are homeless	February 2009	In process
	Action 2.3.2 Identify existing partners and their capacity to increase support for recommended housing plan	Housing Workgroup	Increase assets and resources within the community for youth and partners	Housing partners will be identified that can provide increased support in order to allow plan implementation	April 2009	In process
	Action 2.3.3 Identify new partners in faith based, community/neighborhood associations, and property management, and business partners	Housing Workgroup	New partners will participate in the development of housing for youth who are homeless	Housing partners will be identified that can provide new support in order to allow plan implementation	August 2009	
	Action 2.3.4 Implement Plan	Housing Workgroup	Housing plan is implemented creating additional housing opportunities for youth and filling the identified gaps	Implement action of the housing plan	December 2009	

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA TWO - HOUSING: To have safe, decent, easily accessible, and developmentally appropriate homes for every youth.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
Strategy 2.4 Establish a best practice model for sheltering homeless youth in parts of Colorado without youth shelter beds available	Action 2.4.1 Conduct literature and research review of local and national host home programs and other best practice models	Housing Workgroup	Youth Host Home and other Sheltering Models will be identified that could be replicated to fill identified gaps	Research and Literature review complete	September 2007	Completed. 9/07
	Action 2.4.2 Develop an alternative shelter plan for underserved portions of Colorado utilizing best practice models for ACHY endorsement and recommendation	Housing Workgroup	Youth Sheltering best practice models will be incorporated into a plan which addresses identified gaps and outlines resources necessary to implement	Shelter plan complete Shelter plan delivered to CDHS management Approved plan incorporated into Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan	March 2009 April 2009 May 2009	In process
	Action 2.4.3 Identify current interested parties as well as new partners in faith based, community/neighborhood associations, education, and business arenas	Housing Workgroup	Organizations will be identified that can provide increased support in order to allow plan implementation	Interested parties across the state identified	June 2009	
	Action 2.4.5 Plan Implementation	Housing Workgroup	Create additional shelter opportunities for youth and filling the identified gaps by implementing the shelter plan	Shelter plan is implemented	August 2009	

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA THREE – SUPPORTIVE SERVICES: To provide comprehensive, wrap-around services to achieve maximum self-sufficiency or reunification.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/ Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
Strategy 3.1 Improve information and referral process for consumers and providers which specifically identifies resources designed to serve homeless and at-risk youth	Action 3.1.1 Identify resource guides and websites currently in existence providing resource information appropriate for homeless youth	Supportive Services Workgroup	Any similar projects will be identified and evaluated for possible partnership and to avoid duplication of efforts	A list of other information and referral websites and resources guides that include homeless and at risk youth information is developed	June 2007	Completed 7/07. 211, YouthNet and the National Runaway Switchboard (NRS) identified as primary guides
	Action 3.1.2 Identify and assess information and referral needs of homeless youth	Supportive Services Workgroup, BTG	Information and Referral needs of homeless youth clearly identified	Gather information from ACHY and hold focus groups with youth on existing guides	January 2008	ACHY survey and youth focus groups completed. 12/07 Report completed 1/08.
	Action 3.1.3 Work with information and referral providers to design or amend processes and/or tools to specifically meet the needs of the homeless and at-risk youth population	Supportive Services Workgroup	Information is easily accessed by youth and referral sources	Present findings report to information and referral providers and present recommendations to improve information and referral tools	August 2008	Report delivered to NRS and YouthNet. State youth Council tasked with helping to update YouthNet 12/08

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA THREE – SUPPORTIVE SERVICES: To provide comprehensive, wrap-around services to achieve maximum self-sufficiency or reunification.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
	Action 3.1.4 Invite youth serving agencies to participate and collect the data	Supportive Services Workgroup	Information is accurate, comprehensive and current. Homeless Youth have access to necessary services statewide	Marketing and training is provided to providers. Data is entered and current Youth are able to begin using tool/accessing information	April 2009 April 2009	In process. OHYS hosted a training by the NRS on their resources. 4/08
Strategy 3.2 Create a kin message center to allow safe communication between homeless youth and family members and friends	Action 3.2.1 Conduct research to identify what currently exists in Colorado and seek out national best practice models	Supportive Services Workgroup	Any similar projects will be identified and evaluated for possible partnership and to avoid duplication of efforts	Survey ACHY on existing message center resources Research complete	April 2007 June 2007	Completed 7/07. Findings indicate that the National Runaway Switchboard offers this service nationally. Current resources are adequate.
Strategy 3.3 Ensure that homeless youth health, substance abuse and mental health issues and service gaps are being addressed through a communication network/working group	Action 3.3.1 Identify key players and current efforts. Contact key health care stakeholders such as CDPHE to identify current efforts in this subject area	Supportive Services Workgroup, Colorado LINKS for Mental Health	Communication between youth efforts begins	Relevant key players and efforts identified	May 2007	Completed
	Action 3.3.2 Connect ACHY with Health and Mental Health Care provider networks	Supportive Services Workgroup, Colorado LINKS for Mental Health	Homeless youth issues are represented in health/mental health networks	ACHY has representation on key health and mental health initiatives	June 2009	In process

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA THREE – SUPPORTIVE SERVICES: To provide comprehensive, wrap-around services to achieve maximum self-sufficiency or reunification.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
	Action 3.3.3 Engage and include Health Care/Mental Health providers in ACHY	Supportive Services Workgroup	Health and Mental Health providers are actively involved in ACHY	At least three health/mental health providers are active members or ACHY	July 2008	Completed. Ongoing outreach to mental health providers continues.
	Action 3.3.4 Create a plan to ensure homeless youth have access to developmentally appropriate and affordable health, substance abuse and mental health services across Colorado	Supportive Services Workgroup	Youth are able to access developmentally appropriate and affordable health, substance abuse and mental health services	A plan is developed (or co-strategies are created with other groups)	February 2009	In process. ACHY and CDHS are reviewing a proposed Memorandum of Agreement with Colorado LINKS

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA THREE – SUPPORTIVE SERVICES: To provide comprehensive, wrap-around services to achieve maximum self-sufficiency or reunification.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/ Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
Strategy 3.4 Research and implement best practice models with CO School Districts and public/nonprofit agencies to address educational needs of homeless youth, with a particular emphasis on unaccompanied youth who are homeless	Action 3.4.1 Connect homeless education liaisons in CO public school districts with area homeless youth service providers	CDE and CO School Districts	Direct input and membership of liaisons in homeless youth meetings throughout CO Implement and replicate successful school district and non-profit collaborations	Participation of CDE and liaisons in CONET, ACHY, ACHY workgroups, etc. Programs created, evaluated and, where appropriate, replicated	January 2007 –Ongoing January 2009	In process. CDE and CDHS hosted a joint training with homeless education liaisons and direct service providers 11/07 and 11/08 1-2 Liaisons and the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth attending CONET and ACHY In process. Pilot project developed with DPS and CO Youth for a Change and expanding to Aurora Public Schools in 08-09 school year. Partnerships in Adams 12 and Greeley Schools.

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA THREE – SUPPORTIVE SERVICES: To provide comprehensive, wrap-around services to achieve maximum self-sufficiency or reunification.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
	Action 3.4.2 Increase collaboration with agencies collecting data on homeless youth to identify effective ways of measuring educational success.	CDE, CO School Districts, Planning Workgroup	Collaborate with CDE's data collection unit, school districts and other agencies to gain a greater understanding of data available and effective identifiers to measure and track educational success for homeless youth	Systems in place to track data on homeless youth in terms of retention vs. drop out rates, expulsion/suspension rates, and proficiency on assessment testing. Other indicators will be discussed and researched Emphasis on addressing credit accrual issues for homeless youth who enroll mid-semester	June 2009 September 2009	Systems in place. Staff training on reporting at the district level is in process. Data collection results to be available in 6/09. In process

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA THREE – SUPPORTIVE SERVICES: To provide comprehensive, wrap-around services to achieve maximum self-sufficiency or reunification.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
	Action 3.4.3 Research and implement best practice models for identifying and serving homeless unaccompanied youth (HUY) in Colorado school districts	CDE and CO School Districts, Supportive Services Workgroup	Currently data is collected only on 15 subgrantee districts on the number and primary nighttime residence of HUY. New outcome is to gain data from all 178 districts and strengthen current efforts for identifying HUY in funded districts	October count and year end data collection on HUY added for all districts. Annual comparative analysis conducted to track trends, identify success, and/or challenge areas Enrollment forms to include identifiers for HUY Local and national “Best practice” models posted on CDE Homeless Educ website and CDPHE Best Practice webpage	October 15, 2007- first collection date with on-going collections each October and year end Ongoing May 2009	As of 08-09 school year, CDE will be collecting unaccompanied youth data from all Colorado school districts. Completed. Sample forms disseminated to school districts – ongoing
	Action 3.4.4 Increase focus on addressing barriers and increasing the educational success of HUY	CDE and CO School Districts	HUY a priority in service provision by districts	HUY a primary topic at funded district meetings and in regional trainings HUY as a priority area for service provision in CDE’s RFP for McKinney-Vento sub-grantee districts	November 2006 and ongoing July 2006 and ongoing	Completed. 11/06 Ongoing Completed. 3/07 -ongoing

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA THREE – SUPPORTIVE SERVICES: To provide comprehensive, wrap-around services to achieve maximum self-sufficiency or reunification.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
Strategy 3.5 Develop a continuum of supportive services for homeless youth within local communities across Colorado	Action 3.5.1 Conduct an environmental scan of current supportive services accessible by homeless youth across Colorado	Supportive Services Workgroup, Planning Workgroup	Current extent of statewide supportive services for homeless youth is known	Environmental scan complete	December 2008	In process
	Action 3.5.2 Identify types of supportive services and areas of Colorado needing to be enhanced or added	Supportive Services Workgroup	Create a chart outlining the ideal continuum of supportive services for homeless youth ages 15-24 statewide. Identify gaps across Colorado	Continuum chart complete Gaps and enhancements needed are identified	March 2009 April 2009	In process In process
	Action 3.5.3 Identify non-traditional opportunities to provide services and support	Supportive Services Workgroup	Increase resources to serve the array of needs for homeless youth	Local Community partnership models will be developed (i.e. business community, nursing/assisted living, senior organizations, colleges, etc.)	August 2009	
	Action 3.5.4 Increase available asset specific training to help youth successfully maintain housing and movement through housing continuum	Supportive Services Workgroup, BTG	Youth are able to maintain housing and transition successfully to adulthood	Training materials are available on Webpage Agencies have been identified to deliver the training to youth	January 2010 January 2010	

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA THREE – SUPPORTIVE SERVICES: To provide comprehensive, wrap-around services to achieve maximum self-sufficiency or reunification.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/ Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
	Action 3.5.5 Create a plan to ensure the delivery of comprehensive supportive services and other supports to youth in each region of Colorado	Supportive Services Workgroup	Homeless Youth will have access to the supports necessary for them to transition successfully to adulthood	Plan complete and submitted to CDHS for approval Implementation begins	April 2010 May 2010	

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FOUR – PLANNING/AWARENESS: To create awareness and establish best practices and policies based upon accurate research and data, youth engagement, and strategic planning.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
Strategy 4.1 Create a report that shows the number and characteristics of homeless youth in Colorado	Action 4.1.1 Ensure participation from youth serving agencies in homeless counts conducted by ICH, continua of care, CDE, etc.	Planning Workgroup, CCICH	More comprehensive and accurate data is available for Colorado	All homeless youth serving entities statewide participate in annual homeless survey	January 2009 (and ongoing)	In process. Data gathered from previous homeless surveys
	Action 4.1.2 Increase HMIS participation by homeless youth serving agencies statewide	Local continua of care HMIS implementers (CDHS-SHHP, Pikes Peak United Way, and Colorado Coalition for the Homeless)	Better program data is available on program and individual youth outcomes	75% of homeless youth serving entities are collecting HMIS data	June 2009	In process
	Action 4.1.3 Meet with entities gathering key data on this population in Colorado	Planning Workgroup, Prevention Leadership Council, Continua of Care, Denver's Road Home, Urban Peak	Coordination of data collection and analysis efforts for homeless/at-risk youth	Meet with key individuals	May 2009	In process

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FOUR – PLANNING/AWARENESS: To create awareness and establish best practices and policies based upon accurate research and data, youth engagement, and strategic planning.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
	Action 4.1.4 Facilitate the cooperation of important systemic empirical data sources to collect data relevant to youth homelessness	Planning Workgroup	Key questions added to Child Welfare, DYC, Workforce, GLBT, Public Health and other statewide systems	Recommendations crafted for data providers Questions identified/added	March 2011 December 2011	
	Action 4.1.5 Analyze data and compile reports to support statewide, community, and agency planning and increase public awareness	Planning Workgroup, BTG	Strategic planning includes data driven decision making Public Policy is informed on the state of youth homelessness in Colorado	Initial Analysis complete Annual update/analysis of data complete	June 2009 Annually (ongoing)	In process

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FOUR – PLANNING/AWARENESS: To create awareness and establish best practices and policies based upon accurate research and data, youth engagement, and strategic planning.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
Strategy 4.2 Ensure that agencies have opportunities to network and coordinate service delivery to homeless youth	Action 4.2.1 Hold CONET meetings quarterly on the same day as each ACHY meeting and market to all homeless youth serving agencies in Colorado and tie into regional and national efforts	Homeless Youth Coordinator, CONET members	Interested parties may participate in one or both meetings	Meetings Scheduled and held at least quarterly	January 2007 – ongoing	Completed. Ongoing meetings held quarterly beginning 1/07
			Homeless youth serving agencies in Colorado will participate and have increased opportunities for networking and collaboration	Funding allocated for CONET/Region 8 participation on National Network for Youth Policy Council	April 2007	Completed. Funding secured
				Representative elected and actively serving on Youth Policy Council	February 2007	Completed. Representative elected and actively participating
				Mountain Plains Network for Youth participating in CONET meetings	July 2007	Mountain Plains Network for Youth no longer has funding to provide technical assistance on RHY

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FOUR – PLANNING/AWARENESS: To create awareness and establish best practices and policies based upon accurate research and data, youth engagement, and strategic planning.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
	Action 4.2.2 Increase youth serving agency opportunities for participation in local homeless continuums of care and other local homeless planning bodies	Planning Workgroup	Homeless youth serving agencies and related issues will be more visible in local communities across Colorado	Youth serving agencies added to distribution lists for local homeless planning groups	March 2009	In process
	Action 4.2.3 Increase coordination between existing system and grassroots homeless strategy efforts	Planning Workgroup	Planning and recommendations related to homeless youth are conducted in a coordinated manner across Colorado	Joint strategies are created with other homeless strategy efforts Recommendations are proposed jointly by ACHY and other homeless strategy efforts	August 2009 January 2010	In process. OHYS and CDPHE co-host quarterly luncheons with state agency adolescent program coordinators. 11/07 - ongoing

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FOUR – PLANNING/AWARENESS: To create awareness and establish best practices and policies based upon accurate research and data, youth engagement, and strategic planning.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
	Action 4.2.4 Utilize CONET to create a speakers bureau and training/TA partnership to support statewide needs/actions	Planning Workgroup, CONET	(supports 4.2.2) Agencies receive training and TA needed to best serve homeless youth Increased public and policymaker awareness about the issues and barriers faced by youth who are homeless	Speakers bureau created and utilized for training and public awareness opportunities Training/TA partnership formed and mechanism to meet training needs statewide developed	January 2009 April 2009	Several youth identified and trained for youth speakers bureau 11/08. Provider speakers bureau in process.

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FOUR – PLANNING/AWARENESS: To create awareness and establish best practices and policies based upon accurate research and data, youth engagement, and strategic planning.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
	Action 4.3.2 Create and conduct public will, awareness, and involvement campaign	Planning Workgroup	Increased public awareness about the issues and barriers faced by youth who are homeless	Awareness Campaign Implemented Public Service Announcements (PSA) developed and aired Print Materials Developed	November 2008 (ongoing each November) October 2009 February 2010	Awareness Campaign implemented with 250 attendees at kickoff event including youth, providers, public policy makers 11/08 CDE Homeless Education PSA developed and aired 11/08 Initial Fact Sheet developed and distributed 11/08
	Action 4.3.3 Create a mechanism for the homeless youth voice to inform policy initiatives	Planning Workgroup, CDHS management, Prevention Leadership Council	Policy implications for homeless youth will be communicated to appropriate parties	Mechanism developed and approved	January 2010	In process. CDHS and Prevention Leadership Council discussing plan to coordinate this action

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FOUR – PLANNING/AWARENESS: To create awareness and establish best practices and policies based upon accurate research and data, youth engagement, and strategic planning.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
	Action 4.3.4 Develop and Monitor action plan and communication to ensure both rural and urban homeless youth needs are met statewide	Planning Workgroup	Action plan results in statewide improvement of youth services and a reduction in homelessness. Local plans developed that incorporate statewide strategies, as appropriate	Standing agenda item added to Planning Workgroup meetings Evaluate progress/outcomes of Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan Local community Homeless Youth Action Plans developed	Ongoing Annually Ongoing	Ongoing Completed 2/08 Completed 1/09 In process. Moffat County developed initial plan. New grant supporting additional local planning in rural CO
	Action 4.3.5 Review and revise Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan	Planning Workgroup	Plan is current and takes into account emerging needs and opportunities	Plan revisions complete and endorsed by ACHY and approved by CDHS management	Annually (beginning January 2008)	Plan updated and approved by CDHS 5/07 Plan updated and approved by CDHS 12/08

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FOUR – PLANNING/AWARENESS: To create awareness and establish best practices and policies based upon accurate research and data, youth engagement, and strategic planning.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
	Action 4.3.6 Create report outlining progress made and plans for the coming year as well as any public policy recommendations	Planning Workgroup	Increased public awareness about the issues and barriers faced by youth who are homeless Policy implications for homeless youth will be communicated to appropriate parties	Annual report complete and submitted to the Governor and state Legislature	Annually (beginning January 2008)	Report published and submitted 2/08 Report published and submitted 1/09
	Action 4.3.7 Create an annual press release with key findings, accomplishments and recommendations	Planning Workgroup, CDHS communications officer	Increased public awareness about the issues and barriers faced by youth who are homeless	Press release complete and distributed to key media outlets	Annually (beginning February 2009)	

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FIVE - OUTREACH: To identify and link vulnerable youth to appropriate housing and services.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
Strategy 5.1 Educate providers and communities statewide regarding Human Trafficking problem/issues and assistance options	Action 5.1.1 Partner with the Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking	Outreach Workgroup	Increased partnerships to address human trafficking issues/serve victims/prevent trafficking situations	ACHY has key point person linked to the Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking.	June 2007	Complete. Point person identified 6/07
				Individual agencies have active membership established with Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking	Ongoing	In process

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FIVE - OUTREACH: To identify and link vulnerable youth to appropriate housing and services.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
	Action 5.1.2 Connect Homeless Youth serving organizations to training and anti-trafficking materials/information through the Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking	Outreach Workgroup, CDE and Colorado School Districts, CONET, Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking	Staff at homeless youth serving entities and school homeless liaisons create awareness and better identify potential human trafficking victims	Staff at homeless youth serving agencies include trafficking information in school and other outreach presentations Homeless Liaisons are trained regionally to identify trafficking victims and create awareness in local schools	January 2009 January 2009	In process CDHS and CDE jointly hosted a statewide Human Trafficking training for homeless education liaisons 11/07

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FIVE - OUTREACH: To identify and link vulnerable youth to appropriate housing and services.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
	Action 5.1.3 Ensure that all homeless youth direct service providers are trained in basic human trafficking knowledge	Outreach Workgroup, ACHY members, Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking	Current and potential victims of human trafficking/exploitation are identified and offered appropriate assistance as providers develop relationships with the youth	Develop recommendation that RHY agencies ensure that all direct service staff attend training Ensure that RHY agency directors agree to implement recommendation Create curriculum Create training schedule and post to website Coordinate a pool of trainers Track trained direct service staff	October 2008 February 2009 January 2009 January 2009 April 2009 Ongoing	Complete Approved by CDHS and ACHY 10/08 In process In process In process In process. OJJDP Train the Trainer attendees identified 12/07 and 1/08 Outreach Workgroup Chair maintaining a spreadsheet of those trained

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FIVE - OUTREACH: To identify and link vulnerable youth to appropriate housing and services.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
	Action 5.1.4 OHYS Resource Webpage has links to key human trafficking materials, hotlines and key resource information.	Outreach Workgroup, Prax(us)	The public, service agencies, and potential victims have access to key resource information on trafficking	Materials gathered for webpage Webpage approved and updated	September 2007 October 2007	Completed 9/07 Completed 10/07
Strategy 5.2 Create statewide webpage within the OHYS website which includes links to statewide and national resource directories as well as key crisis and outreach hotlines and information.	Action 5.2.1 Identify key resource directories, crisis hotlines, frequently asked questions, and other information to be included in webpage content	Outreach Workgroup, Supportive Services Workgroup	Comprehensive information on resources and hotlines is compiled	Materials and information gathered	October 2007	Completed
	Action 5.2.2 Draft format and design of webpage	Outreach Workgroup	Relevant content is included in the webpage design	Webpage designed	November 2007	Completed
	Action 5.2.3 Submit webpage for approval and launch	Outreach Workgroup, CDHS Webmasters	Information is available to the public, service agencies, and youth	CDHS approves page and website launched Website content reviewed and amended as necessary	December 2007 Ongoing – bi-annual	Completed In process - ongoing
Strategy 5.3 Develop and compile best practice models for coordinated/collaborative outreach to homeless and at risk youth that could be replicated in rural,	Action 5.3.1 Complete an environmental scan of current homeless youth outreach programs and current efforts to design/improve outreach services statewide.	Outreach Workgroup, Planning Workgroup	Current services are mapped and relevant outreach gaps identified	Environmental scan complete	April 2009	In process

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FIVE - OUTREACH: To identify and link vulnerable youth to appropriate housing and services.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
suburban, and urban areas.	Action 5.3.2 Conduct literature and research review of local and national collaborative youth outreach and other best practice models which could be replicated statewide	Outreach Workgroup	Outreach models identified to meet statewide needs	Review complete Models identified for replication	June 2009 August 2009	In process
	Action 5.3.3 Develop an outreach model and plan for replication in underserved portions of Colorado utilizing best practice models for ACHY endorsement and recommendation	Outreach Workgroup	Outreach best practice models for rural and urban settings that address the identified gaps and outlines resources necessary to implement will be incorporated in to the plan	Model and plan complete Implementation begins	October 2009 February 2010	

**Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Supportive Housing &
Homeless Programs, Office of Homeless Youth Services**

**Colorado Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth
Members and Interested Persons**

State and Federal Government Officials	
<p>Colorado Department of Human Services Andy Johnson, Chair Homeless Youth Coordinator CDHS-Supportive Housing and Homeless Programs, Office of Homeless Youth Services</p>	<p>Colorado Department of Human Services Jim Gault, Central Region Director CDHS-Division of Youth Corrections</p>
<p>Christopher Roe Resource Development Team Leader CDHS-Supportive Housing and Homeless Programs</p>	<p>Julia Koc, Client Manager CDHS-Division of Youth Corrections</p>
<p>Bob Coulson, Adolescent Services Administrator CDHS-Division of Child Welfare</p>	<p>James Meadows, Client Manager CDHS-Division of Youth Corrections</p>
<p>Ricardo Matthias, Adolescent Program Specialist CDHS-Division of Child Welfare</p>	<p>Lucia Waterman, Field Manager Prevention Services CDHS-Division of Behavioral Health</p>
<p>Sue Schierkolk, Youth and Business Outreach Programs Manager CDHS-Division of Vocational Rehabilitation</p>	<p>Katie Wells, Coordinator of Adolescent Services CDHS-Division of Behavioral Health</p>
<p>Colorado Department of Labor and Employment <i>Vacant</i> <i>Colorado Department of Labor & Employment</i></p>	<p>Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing Nora Brahe, Continuum Coordinator Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing</p>
<p>Colorado Department of Education Dana Scott Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Colorado Department of Education</p>	<p>Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Jose Esquibel Director, Interagency Prevention Systems Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment</p>
<p>Colorado Department of Public Safety Meg Williams, Manager Office of Adult and Juvenile Justice Services Colorado Department of Public Safety</p>	<p>Colorado Judicial Department Susan Colling, Juvenile Programs Coordinator Division of Probation Services Colorado Judicial Department</p>
<p>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Sam R. Martinez, Child and Family Program Specialist U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families</p>	<p>Colorado House of Representatives <i>Vacant</i></p>

City and County Officials	
City and County of Denver Allen Pollak, Director, Children and Families Denver Department of Human Services	Jefferson County Roxanne Sabin, Child & Youth Services Supervisor Jefferson County Human Services
Renae Walker, Youth Administrator Denver Department of Human Services	Anne Powley Chafee Independent Living Program Jefferson County Human Services
Leigh Hinze, Chafee and Independent Living Unit Supervisor Denver Department of Human Services	Kristen Waites Chafee Independent Living Program Jefferson County Human Services
Edwin Chambers, Social Caseworker Denver Department of Human Services	El Paso County Maija Schiedel, Manager, Permanency Division, Children and Family Services El Paso County Department of Human Services
Jerene Petersen Denver's Road Home Denver Department of Human Services	Ann Carlisle, Supervisor, Residential Placement El Paso County Department of Human Services
Commander Deborah Dilley Denver Police Department, District 6	Larimer County <i>Vacant</i> <i>Larimer County Department of Human Services</i>
Ginger Hecht, Business Development Assoc. Denver Office of Economic Development	Boulder County Frank Alexander, Director Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Services
Adams County <i>Vacant</i> <i>Adams County Social Services</i>	Wade Branstetter, Social Caseworker Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Services
Arapahoe County Michael Degretto, Adolescent Supervisor Arapahoe County Department of Human Services	Andrea Righi, Chafee Program Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Services
Carly Daelli, Youth Workforce Specialist Arapahoe/Douglas Works	Nicole White, Chafee Program Coordinator Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Services
Mesa County Mark Neujahr Mesa County Department of Human Services	Christina L. Pacheco, Children and Youth Resources Manager City of Longmont
Elbert County Debbie Bowers Elbert County Department of Social Services	Pueblo County <i>Vacant</i> <i>Pueblo County Department of Human Services</i>
Schools	
Heather Powers Colorado's Finest Alternative High School Englewood Public School District	Anna Stout, Homeless Liaison-South Quadrant Denver Public Schools Educational Outreach

Cathy Haller, Prevention Services Coordinator Mesa County Valley School District 51	Jackie Ulmer, Homeless Liaison-North Quadrant Denver Public Schools Educational Outreach
Sheree Conyers, District Homeless Coordinator Jeffco Public Schools	

Community Partners	
Candice DiManna, Interim Executive Director Comitis Crisis Center	Scott Shields, President and CEO Family Tree, Inc.
Kathleen O'Boyle, Director of Youth Services The GLBT Community Center of Colorado/Rainbow Alley	Nicole Sherwood, Outreach Supervisor Family Tree – Gemini
Ginger Guiette, Community Worksite Coordinator SHALOM – Denver	Tami Lack, Director of Development & Administration Third Way Center
Kay Ramachandran, CEO Urban Peak	Lindi Sinton, Division Director Volunteers of America
Kendall Rames, Deputy Director and Director of Programs Urban Peak Denver	Dorothy Bryan, Project Manager Transitional Services for Youth and Families Volunteers of America
Kippi Clausen, Project Director Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative – Bridging the Gap at Mile High United Way	Susan Zimmerhackel, Resource Coordinator Dry Bones Denver
Monica Haskell, Program Director Denver Area Youth Services	Terri Klements, Founder and Development Director The Tree House – Grand Junction
Debra McSweeney, Program Director Comitis Crisis Center	Randle Loeb, Vice President Metro Denver Homeless Initiative
Mandy Shotts, Outreach Organizer Prax(us)	Christina Morgan, Co-Executive Director StandUp for Kids – Denver
Doyle Robinson, Executive Director Sox Place	Anne Ayers, Homeless Services Program Manager MCPN Community Services and Clinics
Robert Dorsheimer, Executive Director The Council on Substance Abuse and Mental Health	Shawn Young, Executive Director Advocates for Young Adults
Aaron Cordova, Program Coordinator Jefferson Center for Mental Health, The Road	Audra Bishop, Co-Founder K.S.L.A. (The Keegan Scott Leadership Academy)
Nic Showalter, Consultant Bridging the Gap at Mile High United Way	Ilene Blum, Executive Director Stand Up For Kids – Boulder
Jennifer Pullen, Program Director The Matthews House	Melissa Parent, Staff Attorney/Volunteer Coordinator Rocky Mountain Children's Law Center
Elvis Nunez YES Academy at Eppworth	Sabrina Huffaker, Executive Director Forward Steps Foundation
Troy Spang Denver Indian Family Resource Center	Debbie Stafford, Faith-based Program Aurora Mental Health Center

Youth Representatives	
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Christina Leon	Richard Torres
Janay Eiland	Jerac Johnson

**2005 Statewide Gaps Analysis
Colorado Department of Human Services
Supportive Housing and Homeless Program
Office of Homeless Youth Services**

Moving Forward to Address Youth Homelessness: Identifying Gaps and Barriers

In 2005, the National Partnership to End Youth Homelessness developed a checklist to help communities identify the essential components—the minimum requirements—for an effective strategy to address youth homelessness. The OHYS, in partnership the Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth, worked through these ten essential components and analyzed the extent to which Colorado has these elements in place. This process served to identify gaps in service delivery, barriers to accessing what we do have in place, and was the beginning of our strategic planning process.

PLAN

While Colorado does not yet have a set of strategies to address youth homelessness, the OHYS is actively engaged in this process. What we *do* have is the interest and commitment from a wide range of players (state and county agencies, government programs, elected officials, community influentials, homeless providers etc.) to prioritize the implementation of these strategies when they are part of a comprehensive and coordinated plan. These entities are the most involved in current strategic planning:

Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth

Established by the OHYS, this body is comprised of representatives from state agencies, county agencies, youth-serving organizations, homeless service providers and the federal government. This body is the most intimately connected to the strategic planning and systems change issues regarding youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and will continue to inform and guide the work of the OHYS.

Interagency Council on Homelessness

The Colorado Interagency Council on Homelessness was created in 2003 by Governor Owens to serve as an advisory body to the Governor on housing needs and homeless issues. The council is co-chaired by Marva Livingston Hammons, Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Human Services, and Mike Beasley, Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Local Affairs. Members of the council include government and elected officials, foundations, non-profit housing and homeless providers, business representatives, and representatives from Colorado State Departments that serve homeless populations. The council has a sub-committee structure that corresponds to the strategic plan that has been developed to address homelessness. The Office of Homeless Youth Services is actively engaged in the council committee on Homeless Families and Youth and is responsible for implementing several strategies the Council has identified to address the homelessness of families with children and unaccompanied youth (see below).

Federal Policy Academy on Homeless Families and Unaccompanied Youth

Federal Policy Academies on Homelessness are sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Department of Education (DOE), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Department of Labor (DOL), Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH), and are planned in collaboration with other Federal partners including; the Food and Nutrition Service of the Department of Agriculture (FNS), and Department of Justice (DOJ).

In November 2005, a Colorado team of 13 individuals attended a policy academy to explore new approaches to responding to the housing, treatment, education, and service needs of families with children and unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness. The team spent two and half days drafting a four point strategic plan on improving access to mainstream services for homeless families with children and unaccompanied youth:

- Obtain baseline data to capture numbers and situations to better create and allocate resources to those specific situations.
- Target housing resources for homeless families To Get Them Into Appropriate Long Term Housing As Quickly As Possible.
- Develop a seamless, coordinated, interagency process that improves access to mainstream services for homeless families and unaccompanied youth.
- Recommend the development of a comprehensive statewide homeless plan that incorporates the family homeless plan.

Conclusion: There is a great deal of interest in strategic planning to address our most vulnerable youth and families in Colorado and this has begun to coalesce in the form of several important initiatives. All these efforts have reached out to the right players and have embraced the spirit of increased coordination and collaboration between agencies and organizations as well as policy change. They do so, however, with virtually no financial resources. In the absence of a single statutory body to coordinate youth policy and planning statewide, efforts to initiate systems change and increased collaboration will continue to be somewhat fractured and perhaps less effective than they could be.

DATA

Any strategic plan to address youth homelessness will depend on the quality of the data that drives planning decisions. Only with an information system in place can you assess how long youth are homeless, what their needs are, what the causes of homelessness are, how people interact with mainstream systems of care, the effectiveness of interventions and the number of homeless youth.

Fortunately, collecting data about this population of young people is getting better and more common. With the rollout of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) in January 2006, Colorado will be in a position to collect data on homeless individuals—both youth and adult—that is comprehensive, needs driven and uniform in its collection. In addition, HMIS will be implemented in all three Continuums of Care in Colorado and therefore has the statewide reach that has been missing before.

Also on the horizon is a statewide homeless count similar to the annual point-in-time count conducted in the Denver metro area each year. Because there hasn't been a statewide count since 1988, the Interagency Council identified the need for a source of data to reflect changes in the homeless population and to better capture the extent of homelessness in rural areas, often overlooked with the visible homeless presence in urban areas. The statewide homeless count is tentatively set for summer, 2006 and the OHYS will likely collaborate to increase the participation of youth providers across the state.

In the absence of HMIS and a statewide count, the OHYS has turned to other sources of data to paint a picture of youth homelessness in Colorado. Unfortunately, the data sources that have been available to date are difficult to compare against each other and, subsequently, the conclusions that can be drawn are limited. For example, if you wanted to find out how many youth are homeless in Colorado, you might turn to the Point in Time Study conducted by the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI), ask the Colorado Dept. of Education for their 2004-05 data on homeless students or contact Urban Peak for a copy of their eight-city study of homeless youth. None of these, however, will answer the question. The MDHI survey covers only the seven county metro area, the DOE data reflect only those homeless young people actually attending school and the Urban Peak study is not intended to be a count, but a deeper look at the risky behavior of this population. Here is what we know:

2005 MDHI, Point in Time Survey (annual/ongoing)

In 2002, MDHI estimated that there were approximately 400 young people between 15 and 21 sleeping on the streets in the metro area. In the most recent Point in Time Survey, January 2005, the count of this same population rose to 619, a percentage increase of 54%. If you expand the age range of "youth" up to 24, then over 1,000 young people were homeless on that particular day in January.

Colorado Department of Education, McKinney-Vento Reporting

As a part of federal reporting requirements, Colorado is able to track the number of homeless students in public schools statewide, a particularly valuable resource because of the statewide scope. Some of these students are part of homeless families; older high school students may be on their own (unaccompanied). Unlike other data that classify homeless youth by *age*, the school-based data classifies by *grade*. The closest we can get to the "youth" category, (often defined as age 15 – 21) is a count of homeless high school students, understanding that most students in high school are not going to be 21 or even twenty. Generally speaking, the school data refer to homeless youth, aged fifteen to nineteen. According to the October 2004 count, 1,130 Colorado high school students were homeless (October, 2005 data not yet available). Forty high schools reported ten or

more homeless students; of these, fourteen high schools reported twenty or more. An important thing to note is that the definition of homelessness used by the Department of Education differs from the more narrow definition used by Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Unlike the HUD criteria, the broader DOE definition allows students who are “doubled-up” with another family or living with friends—what is sometimes called “couch-surfing”—to be considered homeless. This lack of definitional uniformity contributes to the challenge of trying to make comparisons between different sources of data.

Urban Peak Public Health Survey Report 2004

In December 2004, Urban Peak coordinated a multi-state public health survey of 706 homeless youth in eight cities: Denver, Boulder, Colorado Springs, Austin, Chicago, Minneapolis, Salt Lake City and St. Louis. While there are some differences between the youth in Colorado and those in other states, the findings paint a picture—a snapshot—of youth who are markedly similar:

- Over one in five identify themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual
- Over 30% report having been in the custody of social services.
- At least one in three report having attempted suicide
- More than one-third report having been asked to trade sex for money, food, drugs, shelter or clothing; one in ten reported actually prostituting themselves.
- Less than one-third completed the 12th grade; only one in five report having a high school diploma and less than 20% have a GED.
- Almost one in five reported having attended more than 11 schools in their lifetime; 35 youth (6% of the sample) reported having attended 16-20 schools.
- 65% report having a family member with a substance abuse problem and almost half report having used with a family member.
- One in three report having had more than five drinks (in one sitting) in the two weeks prior to the survey; one in three report smoking at least one pack of cigarettes a day.
- Almost 50% report abusing substances before the age of 12; 14% reported first use before the age of ten.
- In the thirty days prior to the survey, youth reported using: marijuana (54%), cocaine (12%), mushrooms (10%), ecstasy (9%), crack (7%), meth (8%), morphine (5%), LSD (5%), heroin (4%) and valium (4%)

Conclusion: Considerable progress is being made in this area. HMIS will provide an excellent tool with which to guide the strategic planning process and give us the first real statewide picture of youth homelessness. Combined with the statewide homeless count (which involves outreach to individuals on the street, not in shelter care or receiving services), the data collected by schools under McKinney, and the expansion of Urban Peak’s behavioral research we will be able to assess the needs of this population in a way we have not before. Until we have a uniform definition of what it means to be “homeless” however, there will be confusion about a substantial population of young people (and homeless families with teens in school) who are spending each night of the

week on the floor, couch or basement of willing friends and relatives unable to support them financially and with no legal responsibility for their care and safety.

EMERGENCY PREVENTION

This component of a comprehensive plan to address youth homelessness refers primarily to teens that have run away from home or a foster placement (runaways) and teens that have been abandoned or kicked out of their homes (throwaways). An emergency homelessness prevention program would include crisis counseling, family reunification services, services after reunification (aftercare services) such as family therapy to address issues that might precipitate running away again and cross-system collaboration between shelter providers, schools, mental and physical health providers and social services. This component also applies to pro-active rental assistance to young adults, 18 – 24, who are about to lose housing due to inability to pay their rent.

Currently in Colorado, the primary point of contact is with young people after they've run away and have sought services or shelter. In this way, the system tends to be more reactive than proactive or, better said, focused on intervening when a young person has already run than on prevention of that act. In the metro Denver area there are shelter beds for minors and the organizations that provide these resources are diligent in their attempts to get that young person back home or into protective custody if returning home is unsafe. However, to have a system that is preventative in nature would require significant points of contact before a young person has decided to run away from home or before a parent or guardian throws a youth out on the street. This multi-systemic approach to crisis prevention and referral, including readily-accessible and affordable (or free) mental health care, physical health care, family therapy, crisis counseling, anger-management, parenting classes and substance abuse treatment for families and their children is not a reality statewide nor in the Denver metro area. In fact, often the single point of contact for a young person or family in crisis is a school counselor, an astute teacher or family friend and their ability to intervene is limited to a call to social services, an action many are loathe to take because the consequences can be substantial.

Conclusion: A statewide system of crisis intervention and affordable referral to multiple systems of care to prevent the escalation of crisis situations in families and youth is currently not available to any great degree. There is also no statewide system of rental assistance that specifically targets young adults, 18 – 24, to keep them in housing and prevent homelessness proactively.

SYSTEMS PREVENTION

Youth exiting state systems of care are often at risk of homelessness because of a number of factors, not the least of which is a lack of resources with which to provide housing an adequate length of time after discharge/emancipation. These young people do not have traditional family supports to fall back on; even when they return home the reunion can be a rocky one and they walk right back out the door to nowhere. State systems of care in Colorado are charged with the responsibility of developing a plan with young people so that they are not discharged to homelessness, but there are very limited resources to apply toward housing, and even so these funds can be used only for a very short amount of

time—six months for a youth on juvenile parole for example. By the end of that six-month period, it is unlikely that stabilization—including employment that can cover rent and bills—has been found. The scenario that has become all too common is not that a young person from corrections to parole didn't have a discharge plan. Instead, that young person simply doesn't have enough time in six months to get it together and at the end of that time loses his/her housing, drifts around for awhile, doesn't keep a job, hangs out on the street and, eventually, ends up seeking shelter care services or commits a crime of survival (i.e. stealing something) and ends up incarcerated again, this time as an adult.

Youth emancipating from foster care fall through the cracks too, although federal Chaffee dollars are available to aid that transition from care to independence and some of those funds can be used to secure housing. Unfortunately, Chaffee funds can only be used for housing for foster youth who never returned home and are termed “fully Chaffee eligible” because they became legal adults directly out of foster care. In other words a foster youth who is returned home at 17, even if mere months before the 18th birthday, will not be eligible for housing assistance through Chaffee.

Perhaps most compelling is simply to look at the numbers. Statistically speaking, we know that youth that have been in foster care, youth corrections or both have an increased risk of becoming homeless at some point in their future. This is especially true for young people who enter these systems as minors—and are still the legal responsibility of their parents if they return home as minors—but end up exiting the system as a legal adult (18). These young people are the most at risk of homelessness precisely because they have nowhere else to go and no one who is legally responsible for their care or safety.

Youth Corrections

In FY 2004 – 2005, over 900 youth ages 15 – 20 were discharged from youth corrections. Of those, 84 were fifteen or sixteen; 179 were seventeen (a difficult age for re-union with family to go smoothly) and 640 were 18 – 20 years old, the most vulnerable population for homelessness.

Child Welfare

In FY 2004 – 2005, over five thousand young people aged 14 – 21 were in out-of-home care in Colorado. Of these, nearly three thousand (2,836) were considered as likely candidates for Other Permanency Living Arrangements or OPLA. This determination was made because these young people have no permanent network of connections and are not likely to establish one; they are unsuitable for family foster placement due to the extent of trauma suffered and their level of emotional disturbance as a result, and for whom returning home will not be an option.

Taken together, these young people in two state systems of care comprise a tragic and compelling pool of youth for whom successful transition into adulthood will be particularly difficult and who will need substantial supports to do so.

Juvenile sex offenders

Juvenile sex offenders, or JSO's, are, by far, the most difficult youth population to house and to serve. Although there is a common misconception that JSO's do not respond to treatment and have a high rate of re-offense, neither of these is true. In fact, juvenile sex offenders respond well to treatment and have a very low rate of recidivism if they have completed treatment. The lack of public education around this issue and the fear that people feel have resulted in virtually no community based housing options for these young people. Shelter providers have liability issues in housing them with the larger youth population they serve and they cannot move them into transitional or permanent housing units because they have agreements with neighborhoods not to do so.

Another misconception is that this is a small percentage of the troubled youth population and is a small problem. This is also not the case. As of July 28, 2005 there are 549 juvenile sex offenders (adjudicated) being served by the Child Welfare system in Colorado and an additional 236 "sexual perpetrators" who have committed a minor sexual offense (non-adjudicated). The total, then, is 785 and that does not include the number of sex offenders in Corrections. It is estimated that the Child Welfare system alone will serve 186 new JSO's each year.

Conclusion: State systems of foster care and corrections understand their responsibility to provide stability after exit, but many factors contribute to the lack of success in this area. One such factor is inadequate resources to provide housing or to collaborate with others to provide housing for a much longer term after discharge. Other challenges that must be addressed is the growing pool of the very hardest to house—juvenile sex offenders—who are virtually impossible to house even while in, or having successfully completed, treatment. The reality is that more young people are entering systems of care and therefore will be exiting at some point in the future. A significant percentage of this at-risk pool of youth will, in fact, experience homelessness and may not recover. As a result, considerable effort must be made to think about systemic reform that will increase the odds of successful transition, particularly the provision of stable housing upon exit for a much longer period of time.

OUTREACH

If the goal is to link vulnerable young people to appropriate housing and supportive services to prevent them from becoming homeless or to intervene when they are already homeless, then a community-wide system of outreach is an important part of any success in this area. A number of organizations do this well, although they do not reach very far outside the Denver metro area:

- Urban Peak (through grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Denver Department of Human Services) conducts daily outreach in the places where homeless youth most frequently congregate. Outreach workers and volunteers, in collaboration with outreach workers from other agencies seek youth out and seek to develop trust in order to assist youth in accessing services.

- Gemini Shelter conducts outreach efforts directed towards youth and community agencies. Educational presentations on runaway and homeless youth to area middle schools and high schools are targeted to reach 1,200 youth per year. “Life Skills” groups at the shelter make 600 youth contacts per year. Street-based outreach conducted in areas where youth are present, such as teen centers, recreational centers, parks and community events make contact with another 600 youth a year. Community presentations are conducted to educate and inform community organizations on issues surrounding this population. The youth served at Gemini Shelter may be self-referred, referred by police or another community agency. Family Tree also conducts outreach to pregnant and parenting youth programs, substance abuse treatment centers, and collaborates with other youth shelters.
- Family Tree – Boulder: Gemini outreach staff are building new partnerships in Boulder to provide runaway and homeless youth with greater access to resources. Gemini Boulder Outreach staff has begun working with the Boulder Police Department to coordinate services and provide education and training to officers and other law enforcement staff referring youth to metro area shelters, including Gemini. In addition, the Boulder Outreach staff has been building partnerships with other human services agencies to provide enhanced services to this youth population.

Conclusion: While there is substantial outreach in the Denver metro area, including Boulder, these outreach efforts are located primarily in the metro area and do not reach statewide.

YOUTH HOUSING CONTINUUM

A housing “continuum” refers to a range of housing options that fit the needs of the individual and a person’s life circumstances that have resulted in homelessness. Available and affordable housing is the critical component to any strategic plan to end homelessness and it includes emergency shelter housing, transitional housing and permanent/stable housing. Because young people experiencing homelessness often have mental and physical health issues, substance abuse treatment needs, inadequate job skills and virtually no supportive family network, securing and maintaining employment that would support housing is almost impossible. As a result, the development of a housing continuum, both in the metro area and statewide, is the foundation on which to address the other factors that contribute to homelessness and to help a young person eliminate the barriers to self-sufficiency.

The provision of housing is also the area in which the definition of who is “homeless” and the age of the individual can become a barrier in and of itself. As defined in statute, the OHYS serves homeless youth, aged 15 – 22. In reality, this age range covers two distinct populations of youth with very different legal status. Minors 15 – 17 are extremely difficult to house. With this population, the first avenues of service are reuniting the young person with family or referring the case to social services for investigation. These efforts notwithstanding, many young people, particularly if they are

17 but not yet 18, will not go back home, are not wanted at home and social services does not find sufficient evidence to open a case. This creates what providers describe as a “no-mans land” for 17 year olds: not legally emancipated, not welcome at home, not able to sign a lease nor qualify for mainstream benefits meant to serve adults 18 and over, not likely to settle into prolonged shelter care and certainly not likely to address critical issues in their lives contributing to homelessness and instability. Older youth, aged 18 to 22, on the other hand, are easier to place in housing appropriate to their needs and can be legally responsible for the lease. It is important to note, however, that while housing young adults 18-24 may be easier in some ways, there are still a number of challenges to face, not the least of which is the supply of shelter beds, transitional units and subsidized apartments in relation to the demand for them.

Shelter Care

According to the most recent point-in-time data, there are over 600 youth, age 15 – 21 homeless in the Denver metro area. If you expand the age range to include 22 – 24 year olds as well, there are over one thousand homeless young people in the Denver area alone. Under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHY), federal dollars are available for shelter services to homeless and runaway youth and of the six RHY grantees in Colorado, four are located in the seven-county metro area: Comitis Crisis Center, Family Tree, Urban Peak and Volunteers of America. Between these organizations, just fewer than sixty emergency shelter beds are available for homeless youth specifically. Additional RHY dollars fund Urban Peak- Colorado Springs, a ____-bed shelter to serve youth in that area and Treehouse Homeless Youth Shelter in Grand Junction, a new 8-bed shelter set to open in March 2006.

Transitional Housing

Because of the unique challenges posed with housing minors, there are very few transitional options for youth under 18 and most of those focus on teen mothers or serve youth from other states now residing in Colorado who were legally emancipated in their state of origin. About 200 transitional units are available for young adults 18 – 24 but, again, a disproportionate number of those are set aside specifically for young mothers or other special populations such as Urban Peak’s STAR program or Rowan Gardens, for youth in substance abuse treatment or with mental health issues respectively. Another important resource, federal Family Unification Program vouchers, provide 18 month limited-term housing to young adults 18 – 21 who were in foster care on or after their 16th birthday. Other “hard to house” populations who have virtually no subsidized housing options with supportive services are young dads and juvenile sex offenders.

Conclusion: The foundation for a housing continuum has been laid in the metropolitan Denver area and can be expanded to respond to the realities of supply and demand. Even so, specific populations of young people such as juvenile sex offenders, young single dads and seventeen year olds in general will continue facing obstacles unless new resources are brought to bear and policy change occurs to ease those barriers to housing. From a statewide perspective, a housing continuum does not exist and a strong foundation for housing options must be developed.

SERVICES

The issue here is whether youth, once housed, have access to supportive services that “wrap” around the individual and provide what is needed to achieve self-sufficiency and independence and to what extent mainstream benefit programs provide the bulk of those services. There is no question that current homeless providers make every effort to provide comprehensive, wrap-around services to the youth they serve.

Some of the gaps include youth needing assistance in obtaining state issued photo identification, birth certificate, social security card, and other records; health care; affordable health insurance; medications; HIV and pregnancy testing; mental health; substance abuse treatment; parenting classes; life skills; access to mainstream benefits such as TANF, SSI, Food Stamps, CCAP, etc.

Conclusion: Current homeless youth providers and other community entities are providing an array of services, however significant gaps exist in making the spectrum of services available and accessible to homeless youth.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

To empower youth to take control of their lives and to be hopeful about their future, agencies and service providers should engage youth in meaningful ways, shifting their role from recipient of services to one of leader and decision-maker. Youth should be involved in all aspects of program development, service delivery and evaluation, organizational management and advocacy.

In part due to a comprehensive “assets” initiative in Colorado as well as a nearly universal paradigm shift from deficit-based approaches to strength-based approaches in understanding youth, most if not all youth providers believe in positive youth development principles and put that belief into practice.

Conclusion: Current homeless youth providers are active in providing youth leadership and empowerment opportunities across the board, as are most schools across Colorado. Providers often report, however, that they feel that state systems of care such as corrections and foster care lag behind in this area and have not made that fundamental shift in thinking that is required to truly empower youth to take control of their lives in a positive way.

INCOME

To ensure that youth are adequately prepared to earn a living wage in the future, services are needed to assist them with appropriate education and employment related services. It is important to note that job readiness not the same as having access to a job network. Current efforts in this arena include Multi-Link voicemail boxes, Urban Peak Hospitality Industry Pilot Project, Denver Office of Workforce Development YEA, some Workforce Investment Act locations waiving outcomes for homeless, Education, Colorado Youth for a Change, Academy of Urban Learning, CHAFEE Education and Training Vouchers.

Not all homeless youth have access to these services due to location, program design, program capacity and boundaries, or specific eligibility criteria.

Conclusion: There is a network of services available across the state that supports youth in preparing to earn a living wage. Not all workforce centers have waived the WIA outcomes for homeless youth. Many services are centered in the Denver metropolitan area. This network should be built upon in order to provide youth a foundation of skills that will sustain them in the future.

STABLE/PERMANENT HOUSING

With regard to youth and young adults, there is some question as to which housing construct is more appropriate, “permanent” housing or “stable” housing. The idea is this: the mobility of youth and young adults is not necessarily a negative thing; it is transience, disconnectedness to people or community and “drifting” that is not productive. If you think of a smart, motivated and successful young person, perhaps bound for college, perhaps not, you likely think of that person as on the move, or upwardly mobile. The question, then, is whether there is affordable and stable housing in the community for young people with a number of challenges and who will increase their income from a very low starting point gradually over time.

Regardless of whether housing is considered permanent or stable, there is some movement in Colorado toward addressing the homelessness of families, adults and youth by ensuring that there is an adequate supply of affordable housing. With regard specifically to homeless young people, 18 – 24, there are approximately sixty units of “permanent” housing with extremely low rent and the availability of supportive services.

Conclusion: The supply of affordable housing in any community or state will be a critical factor in successfully addressing the homelessness of single adults, families with children or unaccompanied youth. As conversations continue in Colorado—and particularly as a part of the Denver Plan—about the supply of affordable housing, homeless young people will benefit from any increase in the supply of such housing. Coupled with supportive services, affordable or subsidized housing that is not limited term (transitional) will be the final and most important component to a permanent solution to homelessness.