A COORDINATED, COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO END YOUTH HOUSING INSTABILITY

DEVELOPED BY THE YOUTH HOUSING STABILITY COALITION

VCU School of Social Work

United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg

You Belong! There's a place for all!

Introduction

This plan is the culmination of a collaborative effort between a great number of stakeholders and young people who were united in their commitment to ending youth housing instability in the Richmond, Henrico, and Chesterfield communities. This plan is both the end and the beginning. It reflects the efforts of the Youth Housing Stability Coalition, which formed in 2017, to learn together, build trusting partnerships, and think holistically about what young people need to gain and maintain stable housing. And it offers our communities a blueprint for how to leverage our collective knowledge, strengths, and resources as we move into the implementation phase. Whether you are an advocate, service provider, policy maker, or funder, there is a place for you in this plan. This plan is also a living document. It was developed with the local, state, and national context in mind. As those contexts shift, so will our plan.

Below you will find an introduction to our Coalition's planning process, the principles that guide our work, and the goals and tasks we have outlined together in each of eight domains that we believe are essential to addressing youth housing instability. Throughout this document, you will see the words of the youth who have been at the planning table from day one. Their words are centered in this document as a reflection of our commitment to center them throughout our work. You will also see images from our work together. These images are our way of centering the people who have been a part of this process - who have committed to one another to do hard work together.

We want to thank each and every person who touched this process in some way. We are grateful for the opportunity to work alongside you and are excited about the impact that is yet to come. We want to thank the funders who committed resources to the plan's development. Without those resources, we would not have been able to engage stakeholders and young people in the ways that we have. And we want to thank you for picking up this plan and considering how you might use it to guide your work. What we hope is that this will serve as a guide to create synergy in our efforts to end youth housing instability in our region. We believe it is possible.

Katina Williams
Director of Financial Well- Being and Health
United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg

Dr. Alex Wagaman
Assistant Professor
VCU School of Social Work
Co-Researcher
Advocates for Richmond Youth

The Birth & Formation of the Youth Housing Stability Coalition

Advocates for Richmond Youth (ARY), a participatory action research team of young people who have been directly affected by homelessness and housing instability, was formed in July of 2014. The team, with the support of Dr. Alex Wagaman at the VCU School of Social Work, began conducting research and engaging in advocacy to increase visibility of the issue of youth homelessness and identified key actions that our community needed to take to address this important issue. The team's research can be found on their website at https://rampages.us/advocatesforrichmondyouth/. The work of ARY gained momentum as many service providers and stakeholders in the community identified the challenges that they faced in serving youth successfully without much infrastructure to support them with their housing-related needs.

Partnerships began to form to develop programs and services for youth experiencing homelessness and housing instability, but there was still a need for a coordinated, systemic effort. Given the history and strength of the United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg in bringing together stakeholders, ARY asked for support in convening people and organizations to see if there would be interest in formalizing and streamlining our efforts around youth housing instability. United Way through its strategic framework *Steps to Success* (https://www.yourunitedway.org/what-we-do/steps-to-success/) has a strong belief in harnessing the power of community to address the needs of our region. This approach coordinates well with efforts to address this issue. This aligned with the national guidance from the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) for communities seeking to end youth homelessness.

Our use of the words "housing instability" is intentional. We recognize the strong efforts in our community to address literal homelessness in our region. Best practice suggests the characteristics of youth facing a housing crisis differ in significant ways from adults and require different interventions. Housing instability covers all federal definitions of homelessness which is utilized by USICH (https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Federal-Definitions-of-Youth-Homelessness.pdf) when addressing homelessness among youth.
In March 2017, the stakeholders who gathered for an initial meeting of the Coalition agreed that a coordinated, comprehensive community-wide planning process was an investment worth making. The stakeholders who were present identified a need to learn together and build trust with one another before beginning a planning process. At the time the Coalition identified its purpose as:

To build a coalition that takes a system-level approach to respond to the issues that impact the housing stability of youth ages 14 to 24 in the Greater Richmond region – building on our collective strengths and intentionally working to address gaps.

Recognizing that multiple systems and stakeholders are required to address the housing stability needs of young people in our region, this coalition will bridge multiple service sectors to identify ways that we can (1) prevent housing instability,

(2) quickly intervene if a young person does become housing insecure, and (3) provide long-term holistic support for young people once they are housed to minimize recurrence of housing instability.

Given the scope of work, the coalition will not rely on any single system to take the lead or carry the primary responsibility.

MARCH 2017
Youth Housing Stability
Coalition formation

JUNE 2017 – MARCH 2018
Coalition learning & training

JANUARY 2018
Funding secured from Richmond
Memorial Health Foundation
& Schaberg Fund

APRIL 2018
Youth Housing Stability Summit
— over 100 attendees

JUNE – NOVEMBER 2018
Coalition refinement
of the Summit goals

JUNE 2018
Advocates for Richmond
Youth meeting monthly

SEPTEMBER 2018
Advocates for Richmond Youth begin
holding bi-weekly drop-in hours at
Commonwealth Catholic Charities

DECEMBER 2018
Launch of the Coordinated
Community-Wide Plan to End
Youth Housing Instability

The areas in which learning and knowledge development were needed within the Coalition were collectively generated by the members. In June of 2017, the Coalition began monthly meetings at which experts in each area were invited to teach us and then facilitate us in the application of that learning to our purpose. For example, one month the Coalition members learned about trauma informed care and then collectively generated a list of things that can trigger a young person who is seeking services for housing-related needs. These areas of learning were used to generate a set of guiding principles for our work together - things that would be important to keep as central to our planning process - and that would allow us to be attentive to the unique needs of subpopulations of youth who are over-represented among youth experiencing housing instability, including youth of color, LGBTQ+ youth, youth who are pregnant or parenting, youth who have immigrated to the U.S., and youth who have been system-involved.
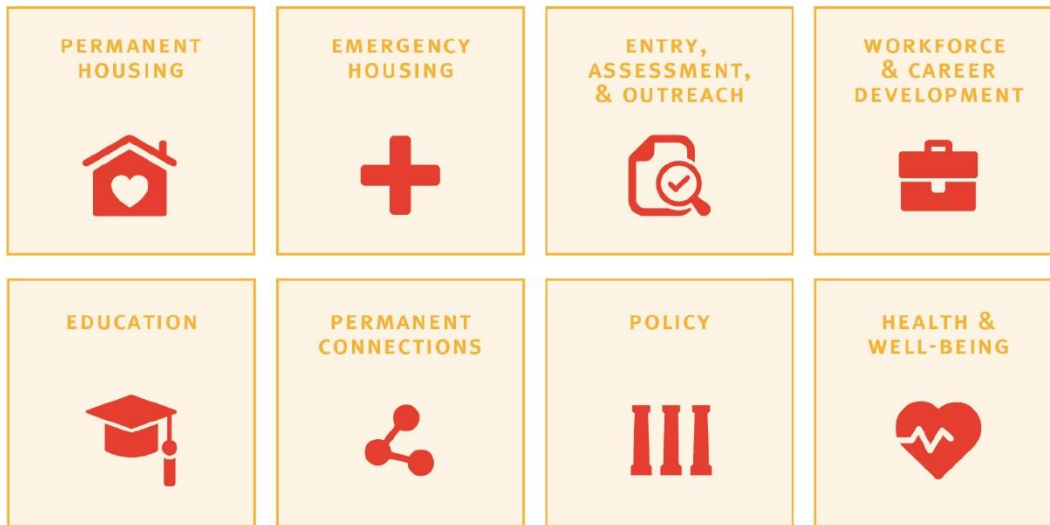
Guiding Principles & Knowledge Infrastructure

- Youth Centered & Affirming
- Trauma Informed Practices & Systems
- Policy & Advocacy Integration
- LGBTQ+ Affirming
- Data Informed
- Anti-Racist
- Immigrant & Refugee Inclusive
- Sensitive to Risks for Violence & Exploitation
- Honoring Harm Reduction

Development of the Plan

In January 2018, the Coalition received funding to move us into the intentional planning phase of our work. Using the USICH framework for a coordinated community response to youth homelessness as a guide, we developed a set of eight domains that would be important for our community to address in a plan. These domains are illustrated below. The domains guided our strategic outreach efforts to engage stakeholders who represented the knowledge and experience needed at the planning table. They included people across a number of sectors including LGBTQ+ organizations, anti-violence organizations, local government, child welfare, health and mental health systems and organizations, housing and homeless services, education (K12 and higher education), policy advocates, state government, and more. With the support of a national consultant, Dr. Jama Shelton, we began planning for a summit - an event that gathered stakeholders and young people together for concentrated visioning and planning - which was held in April 2018.
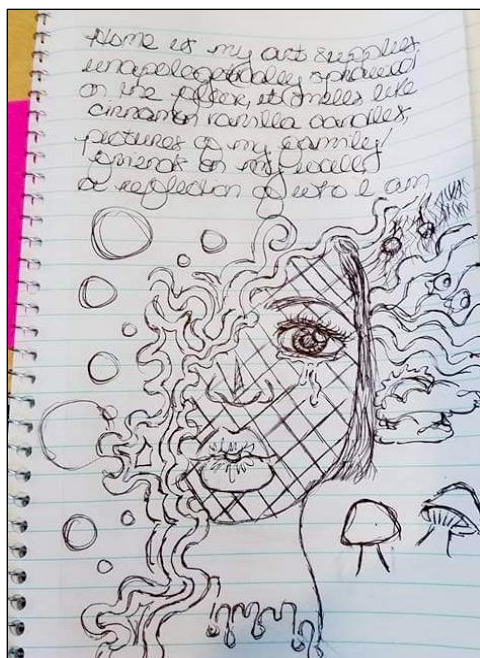
Youth Housing Stability

PERMANENT HOUSING	**EMERGENCY HOUSING**	**ENTRY, ASSESSMENT, & OUTREACH**	**WORKFORCE & CAREER DEVELOPMENT**
EDUCATION	**PERMANENT CONNECTIONS**	**POLICY**	**HEALTH & WELL-BEING**

Community Participation

25
YOUNG PEOPLE DIRECTLY IMPACTED BY THE ISSUE

100
COMMUNITY MEMBERS

16
DIFFERENT SECTORS

Youth Housing Stability Summit

The Youth Housing Stability Summit was held across three days and engaged over 100 stakeholders who are committed to ending youth housing instability. During the first day, funders were gathered together to hear about the scope of the issue of youth housing instability, the efforts of the Coalition, and how those efforts align with the national movement.

The second day was a youth day. Twenty-five directly-affected young people were recruited to join ARY in bringing youth voice to the Coalition and the planning process. ARY members brought these young people together to share experiences, develop leadership skills, and prepare to join the other stakeholders in the planning process.

The third day brought all of the Coalition members and other stakeholders together to conduct a community scan of existing assets and gaps, set priorities in each domain, and begin goal development. The work that was generated on this day was then refined over the course of five months by the Coalition.

Above: Photos from the Youth Housing Stability Summit

Above: Photos from the Youth Housing Stability Summit

The Coordinated, Comprehensive Plan to End Youth Housing Instability

- **Our Community Vision:** All youth in Greater Richmond have permanent, stable, safe housing that affirms them in all of their identities and allows them to thrive.

  - **Coalition specific:** Community stakeholders are preventing and responding to youth housing instability in a coordinated, rapid, affirming, youth-directed way.

Policy and Policy Advocacy

"We walk by so many homeless people within our city and don't say anything. It's time for us to speak up and speak out. If we don't speak up and speak out, we will never have change."

Policy and Policy Advocacy Goal 1: Ensure inclusion of youth directly impacted by housing instability at decision-making tables and ensuring that youth voice is reflected in policies addressing youth housing instability and support needed.

Tasks:

1. Identify state and local decision-making tables related to youth homelessness and housing instability where youth are not currently represented.

2. Initiate a proposal/formal request to include youth and strategies for doing so.

3. Develop a document with best practices for organizations, programs, and services addressing youth homelessness and housing instability on how to include directly affected young people in decision-making, particularly youth who belong to populations that are disproportionately impacted such as youth of color, LGBTQ+ youth, youth who have immigrated to the U.S., pregnant and parenting youth, and youth who have been system-involved.

4. Develop a commitment statement on engaging directly affected young people for organizations seeking to move any of the coordinated community-wide plan goals forward.

5. Disseminate document and offer training/technical assistance.

Policy and Policy Advocacy Goal 2: Make ending youth housing instability a priority for federal, state, and local policy makers.

Tasks:

1. Develop an advocacy campaign with strategies for engaging with policy makers which includes:

a. Strategies for making the issue personal for various stakeholder groups, including use of data collected by Advocates for Richmond Youth and others.

b. Plan and implement a youth-led event where youth teach other advocates (policymakers and other stakeholders) how to advocate on their behalf.

c. Engaging stakeholders to have face-to-face meetings with policymakers.

d. Strategies to engage local media in efforts to raise visibility and awareness.

2. Identify specific local and state policies that limit the ability of youth to find, acquire, and maintain stable housing, particularly youth who belong to groups that face added barriers such as youth of color and LGBTQ+ youth.

3. Develop policy recommendations based on #2 to be disseminated to policymakers.

Policy and Policy Advocacy Goal 3: Improve access to and education about public and private funding sources available at the federal, state, and local levels to address youth housing instability.

Tasks:

1. Develop a funding toolkit for Coalition member agencies and stakeholders that includes key information on youth housing instability and identified funding sources that are available to support programs and services for youth homelessness and housing instability.

2. Disseminate toolkit and make available in online forums.

3. Develop a toolkit for funders that includes key information on youth housing instability, the coordinated community-wide plan developed by the Coalition, and specific ways that local funders can have an impact on this issue.

4. Plan and host an event for policymakers to educate them on the issue of youth homelessness and housing instability and specific ways that public investment could make an impact, particularly for populations of young people who are disproportionately impacted including youth of color, LGBTQ+ youth, youth who have immigrated to the U.S., pregnant and parenting youth, and youth who have been system involved (foster care, juvenile and criminal justice).

Policy and Policy Advocacy Goal 4: Identify accountability measures for agencies, systems, and processes addressing youth housing instability.

Tasks:

1. Develop a bill of rights for youth experiencing homelessness that would address things that youth should be able to expect in interactions with service providers, including specific behaviors that affirm them in all of their identities.

2. Develop a survey for youth who seek services from organizations and systems to allow for feedback on experiences, particularly in relationship to the bill of rights.

3. Analyze feedback in a disaggregated way in order to evaluate experiences for specific populations of youth who are disproportionately impacted by housing instability, including youth of color, LGBTQ+ youth, youth who have immigrated to the U.S., pregnant and parenting youth, and youth who have been system-involved.

4. Identify other provider practices that are barriers for youth (or sub-populations of youth) based on data collected and data on youth who are not seeking/receiving services.

5. Develop training modules related to key areas of practice to be offered to organizations on an ongoing basis to support best practice implementation.

Policy and Policy Advocacy Goal 5: Increase education and awareness around housing policy among community members, policy makers, and youth directly affected by housing instability.

Tasks:

1. Develop a team of Advocates for Richmond Youth and other youth advocates to be trained as trainers/educators.

2. Using priorities identified in goal #2, develop a train-the-trainer to prepare youth advocates to educate others on policy issues affecting youth housing stability.

3. Identify forums and venues to deliver educational sessions.

Entry/Assessment and Outreach

"Ending youth housing instability is not only very important, but vital to our community. The youth are our future, and to keep them in a safe environment is an essential need."

Entry/Assessment and Outreach Goal 1: Increase outreach efforts specifically for youth including; physical materials (flyers, resource cards), social media campaign, the development of a youth outreach street team, and an information/resource hub (access point) for youth and service providers.

Tasks:

1. Develop a team of youth and service providers to inform and develop outreach materials and campaign, including existing outreach stakeholders such as RPD HOPE team. Ensure that team is representative of populations of youth who are disproportionately impacted by housing instability, including youth of color, LGBTQ+ youth, youth who have immigrated to the U.S., pregnant and parenting youth, and youth who have been system-involved.

2. Identify lead agency to apply for youth-specific outreach funding.

3. Develop an online portal for outreach requests, resources, and connections.

4. Develop an in-reach campaign/plan in partnership with McKinney Vento coordinators.

Entry/Assessment and Outreach Goal 1 (Sub-goal A): Develop one-stop app that provides real-time information and is linked to the online portal described in the overarching goal for youth-specific outreach.

Tasks:

1. Research other communities using app technology.

2. Create a youth task force to inform the development of the app.

3. Identify technology expertise to assist with development of app - Examples: Contact Code RVA, VCU technology students, Create-a-thon.

Entry/Assessment and Outreach Goal 1 (Sub-goal B): Develop system to conduct mobile intakes, bringing the resources to the young people or the young people to the resources as needed.

Tasks:
1. Talk to DMV Mobile about partnering.

2. Contact places that are already doing intakes- What do they have and what do they need in order to do mobile intakes?

3. Develop a streamlined intake form/tool and process for information sharing that agencies buy into using to access their services.

4. Develop a marketing (using social media) plan to get the information out to youth, including an online request for outreach that youth can complete.

5. Train people conducting mobile intakes; Include mobile intake workers in outreach team developed under overarching goal.

6. Based on youth input, determine best times/places to do mobile intakes

Entry/Assessment and Outreach Goal 1 (Sub-goal C): Raise awareness of how different definitions of homelessness - including "at risk" of homelessness and housing unstable - impact access to services.

Tasks:

1. Conduct participatory research to collect stories of youth who have a range of experiences.

2. Develop a comprehensive list of services and who can access what based on definition.

3. Based on gaps identified through tasks 1 and 2, collaboratively create a new, more inclusive definition to include in planning and program development going forward.

4. Create relationships between HUD and youth, state legislators, city council to educate them on differing definitions/experiences and need for broader service access.

Entry/Assessment and Outreach Goal 1 (Sub-goal D): Create youth- specific connection points (population specific as needed) that can meet/affirm population specific needs and connect youth to the hub (access point).

Tasks:

1. Identify populations that would need/require a connection point. Ensure that youth who belong to and are at the intersections of populations that are disproportionately impacted are emphasized in this process, including youth of color, LGBTQ+ youth, youth who have immigrated to the U.S., pregnant and parenting youth, and youth who have been system-involved.

2. Ask youth: what services they want, what do they want it to be/ look like?

3. Identify organizations with space/capacity to serve as a connection point.

4. Identify partners who can offer specific services.

5. Identify and address barriers to access for youth to get to connection points.

Entry/Assessment and Outreach Goal 2: Provide youth drop in center hours/days to increase access for youth experiencing a housing crisis and provide community resources.

Tasks:

1. Research youth drop-in center model, nationally and regionally, to design an effective model for our region.

2. Ensure the operation of the center is guided by the principles of the Coalition, which includes affirming youth voice, engaging in anti-racist and LGBTQ+ affirming practice, and having staff who reflect those being served.

3. Identify organization partner(s) to be anchor partners in the operation of the center.

4. Identify a location easily accessible to youth.

5. Identify organizations to provide housing resources (connected to emergency and temporary housing goals) and access to basic needs.

Entry/Assessment and Outreach Goal 3: Develop and implement a youth-specific assessment and screening tool to collect data that will inform community and program-level action and connect youth to resources most appropriate to their unique needs.

Tasks:

1. Identify key data points needed at a community level to assess the size, scope, and impact of youth housing instability, including but not limited to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, country of birth, immigration experience.

2. Identify tools and best practices used in other communities to assess youth for needs related to housing instability and effectively match them with services and supports.

3. Develop/adapt a tool tailored to local data and programmatic needs.

4. Identify strategies for implementation across systems/organizations to increase consistency in data collection, including a plan for analyzing data across sites to inform community-wide efforts.

Workforce & Career Development

"This has been one of the most rewarding processes to see young people be a part of the change we need to see in the city of Richmond."

Workforce and Career Development Goal 1: Develop pipeline programs from homelessness/unstable housing to college, vocational training, and/or stable employment through paid internships.

Tasks:

1. Identify primary pipelines that limit career development and education opportunities for youth experiencing housing instability (such as school-to-prison pipeline), particularly those that impact groups of youth who are disproportionately impacted by housing instability including youth of color, LGBTQ+ youth, youth who have immigrated to the U.S., pregnant and parenting youth, and youth who have been system-involved.

2. Select a pipeline to interrupt through the development of a pipeline into college/employment (example: college courses or vocational training offered in shelter/transitional housing for youth).

3. Identify key stakeholders to bring to the table.

4. Develop program design in partnership with youth.

Workforce and Career Development Goal 2: Develop alternative transportation options for youth to increase access to employment and college opportunities.

Tasks:

1. Develop an employer work group to establish a group of local employers willing to provide free transportation to employees. Focus primarily on large employers located outside of the public transportation routes.

2. Provide resources and support through access points to get current RPS students access to their free GRTC pass/ID.

3. Engage City of Richmond and GRTC to request reinstatement of reduced fare bus passes for nonprofits in Richmond serving young people.

4. Identify opportunities to extend agreement between VCU and GRTC (for student ID to get them free GRTC access) to other colleges and universities in the area.

Workforce and Career Development Goal 3: Develop an advocacy campaign on reducing barriers to employment for young people experiencing housing instability.

Tasks:

1. Develop tools to share with local employers about the benefits of having LGBTQ-inclusive non-discrimination policies, and specifically employment practices that minimize barriers related to documentation for transgender youth.

2. Advocate for employers who are in relationship with workforce development programs that place youth to participate in implicit bias training that explicitly addresses race, immigration status, and LGBTQ+ identities.

3. Actively support statewide efforts to pass legislation that protects LGBTQ people from discrimination in employment.

4. Engage a group of employers willing to examine their hiring practices, including expectations around credit and background checks, to identify strategies for reducing barriers that young people face in getting employed.

Workforce and Career Development Goal 4: Coordinate existing services through a collaborative database of programs that provide basic employment readiness including networking opportunities, interview and resume skill building, dressing for an interview, getting and maintaining employment. Ensure youth both in and out of school have access to database.

Tasks:

1. Identify existing networks through which this goal can be accomplished.

2. Identify all the organizations providing employment readiness and access services.

3. Conduct assessment of existing services including; What services do they have to offer? What population do they cater to? What are their requirements to access for services?

4. Develop central locations to house information gathered where youth can easily access it. (Website, database)

5. Develop system for maintaining database and assessing service access with youth input.

Workforce and Career Development Goal 5: Identify geographic communities where affordable housing (between 20%- 60% AMI) and employment that pays a living wage (to afford existing housing) are or could be co-located.

Tasks:

1. Identify networks and policymakers working to increase affordable housing in Richmond.

2. Engage in mapping affordable housing and employment access to identify geographic "opportunity zones".

3. Develop policy brief to present to policymakers with specific recommendations for increasing co-located areas for affordable housing and living wage employment.

Above: A photo from the Youth Housing Stability Summit

Education

"Our primary purpose in life is to help others and if we can't help them, at the very least do not hurt them."

Education Goal 1: Engage with youth to raise awareness among education staff. Use a media campaign that is followed by training. Develop a team of youth trainers to train school staff. Include information about trauma/trauma informed practice and implicit bias.

Tasks:

1. Work with Advocates for Richmond Youth to shape what this would look like

2. Work with McKinney Vento point person to coordinate trainings with McKinney Vento trainings.

3. Consult with Pat Popp regarding language to strengthen the message and impact.

4. Meet with McKinney Vento liaisons to develop plan.

5. Identify accountability and sustainability plan once education staff are trained & educated.

Education Goal 2: Provide wrap-around student-centered supports in K12 schools for youth experiencing housing instability (including the young parents of elementary aged students).

Tasks:

1. Identify ways that both the physical environment and the culture of the school can support students experiencing housing instability and affirm them in all of their identities.

2. Develop a service and support plan for schools to provide on site.

3. Work with McKinney Vento liaisons and school system administrators to develop an implementation plan.

4. Identify resources outside of the school that can be connections to services and supports.

5. Work with high school counselors as well as McKinney Vento liaisons to build the infrastructure and awareness needed to ensure that federal requirements that students who are experiencing homelessness are working on postsecondary goals with their school counselors is implemented.

Education Goal 3: Provide student-centered supports in postsecondary education sites.

Tasks:

1. Assess existing supports for students experiencing housing instability at colleges and universities in the Richmond area.

2. Identify a single point of contact (SPOC) at colleges and universities in the Richmond area to whom training is provided and a consistent role is communicated.

3. Create formal connections between SPOCs and McKinney Vento liaisons to ease transition of youth from local high schools into higher education.

4. Develop training and resource materials on financial aid access for students experiencing homelessness.

Education Goal 4: Collect and analyze the achievement gap between students who have experienced homelessness and those who have not using disaggregated data that includes race and other identities.

Tasks:

1. Contact local McKinney Vento liaisons to access data and solicit participation.

2. Contact Homeward to access data.

3. Contact Federal Reserve to access economic data.

4. Contact probation courts to access data.

5. Compile data and use to inform the campaign (see goals 2 and 3). Use to inform awareness.

Education Goal 5: Develop a campaign to raise community awareness, which includes definition of youth homelessness, what it looks like, how to help, remind community what schools do/don't do and how to supplement/complement.

Tasks:

1. Clearly identify target audience and goals of campaign

2. Co-create messages with the school community

3. Assess campaign strategies to ensure that they are culturally sensitive and accessible.

Above: A photo from the Youth Housing Stability Summit.

Health & Well-Being

"This community plan is vital to the Richmond community because it is the needed next step to address the issue of youth homelessness in the City of Richmond."

Health and Well-being Goal 1: Develop free, mobile, comprehensive healthcare (mind and body) hubs that provide high quality trauma-informed services, are accessible, and are community-based.

Tasks:

1. Identify capacity of existing Coalition members and recruit additional members to represent holistic health expertise.

2. Conduct a community needs assessment to understand holistic health and well-being needs and available resources to serve youth experiencing housing instability, including

the unique needs of youth who belong to populations that are disproportionately impacted by housing instability such as youth of color, LGBTQ+ youth, youth who have immigrated to the U.S., pregnant and parenting youth, and youth who have been system-involved.

3. Develop a collaborative model for providing mobile comprehensive healthcare, which includes a community liaison and peer navigators to solidify the connection between providers and youth.

4. Bring together community partners and funders interested in implementing collaborative model.

Health and Well-being Goal 2: Ensure that health and well-being services are accessible to and affirming of all youth experiencing housing instability.

Tasks:

1. Develop an inclusive and affirming youth screening and assessment tool to be used by service providers delivering health and mental health services.

2. Develop accessibility assessment tool for organizations providing health and mental health services to identify areas of growth in providing inclusive services for youth with differing abilities, youth who use different languages to communicate (spoken and non-spoken), LGBTQ+ youth, youth of color, and other populations of youth experiencing housing instability. (Combine with previously described organizational assessment tool under previous goal).

3. Provide technical assistance for organizations as they work on areas identified in above described organizational assessment.

4. Identify models for service provision (such as home visiting models) that reduce barriers such as transportation, particularly those that have been used in other communities with success.

5. Identify policy advocacy opportunities to increase access to health and mental health care with little or no cost to the youth.
6. Develop an outreach plan for supporting application completion for Medicaid under the new expansion for youth who are eligible, and ensure we are connected to & aligned with existing efforts.

Health and Well-being Goal 3: Develop meaningful relationships between health and well-being service providers and the community in order to address lack of trust.

Tasks:

1. Identify and acknowledge historical context of existing relationships between the community and service providers, which have impacted trust and relationships.

2. Identify competencies for health and well-being providers serving youth experiencing housing instability, and design training to increase competence in identified areas as well as consistency across providers (Link with bill of rights for youth experiencing housing instability).

3. Develop training for youth experiencing housing instability to self-advocate, and to understand competencies/expectations for providers.

4. Develop assessment tool for health & well-being providers to use internally to identify practices that could be strengthened to increase access and quality service to youth experiencing housing instability.

Health and Well-being Goal 4: Develop services and resources aimed at reducing the stigma of accessing and health and mental health care.

Tasks:

1. Identify services and resources that enhance health and well-being but have not been identified specifically as health services, such as social skills classes, health literacy, and empowerment.

2. Identify core content and intended outcomes of these services.

3. Offer services through collaborative partners and peer navigators at hub and other accessible locations in community.

Health and Well-being Goal 5: Ensure that staff and peer navigators who are providing health and well-being services reflect the communities they serve.

Tasks:
1. Working with organizations serving youth experiencing housing instability, assess the current state of hired professionals and the extent to which they reflect the young people they serve.

2. Draw from national expertise (such as Mark Dones of the Center for Social Innovation) on systemic strategies to shift the make-up of the workforce of people serving youth

experiencing housing instability/homelessness particularly with regard to race.

3. With local expertise, identify strategies to increase the extent to which the workforce reflects the youth served.

4. Work in partnership with a core group of community organizations willing to take on these strategies.

Permanent Connections

"We need to start back with our southern hospitality and be a voice that people need to hear."

Permanent Connections Goal 1: Develop training and support for youth on building and maintaining healthy relationships with peers and adults.

Tasks:

1. Identify healthy relationships and healthy support content to incorporate into life skills classes and that is inclusive of the unique experiences of populations that are disproportionately impacted by housing instability including youth of color, LGBTQ+ youth, youth who have immigrated to the U.S., pregnant and parenting youth, and youth who have been system-involved.

2. Identify existing curriculum/class models in the local community and nationally and assess for relevance and adaptability.

3. Work to identify effective strategies for implementation.

Permanent Connections Goal 2: Identify program models in other communities that have been successful in building sustainable permanent connections and mentoring relationships for youth experiencing housing instability.

Tasks:
1. Identify group mentoring programs implemented successfully in other communities for youth experiencing housing instability.

2. Identify individual mentoring programs implemented successfully in other communities for youth experiencing housing instability.

3. Identify peer mentorship models implemented successfully in other communities for youth experiencing housing instability.

Permanent Connections Goal 3: Develop and encourage use of screening and assessment tools to be used in existing and new programs and services for youth experiencing housing instability that will assist with identifying existing natural supports, as well as opportunities to enhance permanent connections for youth.

Tasks:

1. Identify existing screening tools to assess a youth's support network and permanent connection opportunities with particular attention to those that are sensitive to the unique experiences of youth of color, LGBTQ+ youth, youth who have immigrated to the U.S., pregnant and parenting youth, and youth who have been system-involved.

2. Assess tools for relevance and adaptability.

3. Work with programs and providers to implement, evaluate, and revise screening tool.

Permanent Connections Goal 4: Develop and implement a pilot permanent connection/mentoring program specifically for youth experiencing housing instability.

Tasks:
1. Based on research and identified program models from other communities, adapt/develop a model for implementation that meets the needs of youth in the Richmond community.

2. Identify a community partner and funding source for implementation.

3. Evaluate and adapt the model for replication.

Permanent Connections Goal 5: Conduct a research study on local assets that youth who have experienced housing instability have identified and benefited from for their permanent connection – both peer and adult connections - needs.

Tasks:
1. Work with Advocates for Richmond Youth to design and conduct a research study.

2. Analyze data using methods that allow for a disaggregated look at the unique experiences of youth of color, LGBTQ+ youth, youth who have immigrated to the U.S.,

pregnant and parenting youth, and youth who have been system-involved.

3. Based on research findings, develop a strategic plan for enhancing existing resources and opportunities used by youth to establish and maintain permanent connections.

Emergency/Temporary Housing

"I can go on all day about this, but it's very important to note that shelter is needed for human health. It's needed for a peace mind. It's needed for happiness."

Emergency/Temporary Housing Goal 1: Ensure access to immediate (24/7) emergency housing for any youth identified as sleeping in a place not fit for human habitation.

Tasks:

1. Work with current shelter providers to identify youth dedicated shelter beds.

2. Identify resources and community partners willing to provide emergency hotel vouchers with the goal of bridging to a temporary or permanent housing situation as quickly as possible.

3. Develop guidance for hotel voucher assistance programs that ensure safety of youth.

4. Work with the current and potential providers of host home programs to increase access.

5. Provide technical assistance for agency case managers to provide youth specific and affirming services during emergency/temporary placement.

6. Encourage the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care to create a Youth Homelessness Task Force.

Emergency/Temporary Housing Goal 2: Develop formal partnerships with organizations and systems that see and serve youth with emergency housing needs to identify and connect youth with housing.

Tasks:
1. Formalize relationship with existing hospitals in the region to develop process for identification of youth, connection to emergency housing, and resource allocation.

2. Identify other existing organizations and systems with whom formal relationships will be developed.

3. Connect with and actively support existing initiatives to reduce evictions, particularly those identifying and increasing eviction prevention resources.

Emergency/Temporary Housing Goal 3: Increase temporary and transitional housing options for youth with a variety of strengths and needs.

Tasks:

1. Develop a transitional housing program model that is youth-affirming.

2. Identify congregate living models that have been successful in other communities.

3. Identify housing models (for tasks 1 and 2) that are inclusive and affirming of all identities (for example, not defaulting to sex segregated programs).

4. Identify funding opportunities for transitional housing to rapid rehousing pipeline program/s.

5. Engage local colleges and universities in 12-month campus housing options and/or extension of existing campus housing to year-round availability.

Emergency/Temporary Housing Goal 4: Work with Coalition partners to enhance individual service plans for youth with a housing focus and building effective relationships with youth.

Tasks:

1. Develop a youth-oriented service plan template for housing and homeless service providers that includes attention to the unique needs of youth of color, LGBTQ+ youth, youth who have immigrated to the U.S., pregnant and parenting youth, and youth who have been system-involved.

2. Work with community partners and Coalition members to develop a plan for implementation, including necessary training.

Permanent Housing

"We can't let pride stop us from being and making our community great."

Permanent Housing Goal 1: Work with systems that serve youth in out-of-home care (such as foster care, detention, and incarceration) to reduce housing crises caused by transitions out of system involvement.

Tasks:

1. Collaborate with agencies working with youth aging out of foster care to reduce/divert the number of youth experiencing housing crisis.

2. Partner with local child welfare and criminal/juvenile justice systems to identify points in the re-entry process where intervention can occur to ease the transition to stable housing.

3. Identify partnership opportunities between systems and the Coalition members to support youth entering independence/community.

Permanent Housing Goal 2: Support efforts to extend 24/7 bus service to increase access to existing affordable housing for youth. Extended service and increased access would include more stops more frequently, reduced fare, more language supports, and expanded specialized transit for those with disabilities.

Tasks:

1. Identify existing community networks and initiatives to expand bus service and access.

2. Identify priorities to benefit youth.

3. Meet with GRTC.

4. Develop Coalition infrastructure to support and enhance existing advocacy efforts in the region, including alternative transportation options.

Permanent Housing Goal 3: Provide housing stability coaching as part of existing youth housing and homeless service programs for youth.

Tasks:

1. Design a culturally sensitive coaching model based on expertise of youth and providers to enhance capacity for maintaining stable housing, including financial, legal, and self-advocacy literacy.

2. Identify community programs willing to implement coaching model.

Permanent Housing Goal 4: Ensure a pathway for youth to obtain safe and affordable permanent housing that is aligned with their individual needs and capacity.

Tasks:

1. Increase youth rapid rehousing providers in the Richmond region.

2. Support the creation of permanent supportive housing programming that is accessible for and adapted to the unique needs of youth in policy and practice.

3. Draw from national best practice on roommate matching for youth and implement within our region.

Permanent Housing Goal 5: Investigate opportunities to create congregate living programs for youth for whom this permanent housing option would best meet their needs.

Tasks:

1. Identify other permanent congregate living program models for youth across the country to determine if the model would be useful in our region.

2. Identify providers who would be willing to implement the model.

Above (L-R): Dr. Alex Wagaman, Katina Williams, Dr. Jama Shelton