

Service Provider Interview

[Prior to the interview, find out what role the service provider and/or the organization have in the YHDP or youth homelessness system. Create a customized list of services provided by the organization to use in Section D of the protocol. Services could include outreach, prevention, diversion, social/community engagement, housing, mental health/substance abuse, education, employment, and other. For each service, note ahead of the interview, what information (e.g., number of units, eligibility) we already have from community documents.]

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview today. We really appreciate your help. We are researchers from Westat, a research company based outside of Washington DC. We have been contracted by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to learn about how the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) is being implemented in 10 communities across the country.

[YHDP sites] As you know, _____ is one of the communities involved in the demonstration. We are interviewing a number of people in your community to understand how youth are served and how the YHDP is unfolding here.

[Comparison sites] As part of this evaluation, we are also visiting other communities across the country to learn about their efforts to serve youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 60 minutes per response for this Service Provider Interview. HUD may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection information unless that collection displays a valid OMB control number 2528-xxxx, expiring xx-xx-xxxx.

The information requested under this collection is protected and held private in accordance with 42 U.S.C. 1306, 20 CFR 401 and 402, 5 U.S.C.552 (Freedom of Information Act), 5 U.S.C. 552a (Privacy Act of 1974) and OMB Circular No. A-130.

Before I get into more of the specifics of the interview, do you have any questions for me?

[See if there are any questions, comments, concerns.]

We'd like to record the session to make sure we get your answers accurately. Following our visit, the recording will be transcribed and used for analysis. At the end of the study in 2021, we will give copies of the transcription without names or any identifying information to HUD for their records. The recordings will be destroyed. You can ask us to turn off the recording at any time if you would prefer to talk about something and not have it recorded. Do I have your permission to record the interview?

[If permission is granted, turn on recorder.]

A. Background

I would like to begin with a few questions about your organization and your role in the organization.

1. What is the mission or focus of this organization?

2. What is your position in the organization? How long have you been in this position?
3. What is the nature of the population served through your organization? **[Probe for age, eligibility criteria, service needs.]**
4. What has been the history of the organization's role in serving youth experiencing or at risk for homelessness?

B. Role in the System

5. What role do you and/or your organization have in the **[select appropriate wording]** YHDP/youth homelessness system? Please note that I'm interested in the YHDP/youth homelessness system specifically, not the overall CoC system.
6. Did you or your organization participate in planning? In what ways?
7. Are you involved in the governance of the system? In what ways? **[Probe on member of the CoC, board, workgroups or committees.]**
 - o If yes, what changes in governance have occurred or are planned for the [select appropriate wording] YHDP/youth homelessness system?
 - o What are your perspectives of the governance structure now? The planned structure?
8. **[If applicable:]** How familiar are you with the Youth Board? What is your perspective on the role it has played? What has it offered? Are there ways to improve its contribution?

C. Services

I would like to ask you questions about the services you provide to youth facing or at risk of homelessness. **[Go to the service areas that correspond to the areas on the customized list developed before the interview. Confirm information pulled from documents and fill in missing information.]**

Outreach

9. Can you describe the nature of the outreach services a bit more?
[Probe on:]
 - o Where does the outreach occur? **[Probe for on the street; in schools; in drop-in centers.]** Are there certain times of day that outreach is conducted?
 - o Who conducts the outreach? What is the nature and number of staff involved?
 - o Are any resources or assistance provided to the youth? What type?
 - o How long do you work with the youth you identify?
 - o What happens to youth once they are identified? Can you describe the process of how they might get linked with the system?
 - o When did your organization begin conducting outreach? **[For YHDP sites, probe for whether this is a new effort with YHDP.]**
 - o **[only for YHDP]** Have the outreach services changed at all with the demonstration? Are they expected to change? In what ways and why?
 - o Describe any challenges you have had with conducting outreach.
 - i. What strategies did you use to try to overcome challenges?

Prevention

10. Can you describe the nature of the prevention services you provide a bit more?

[Probe on:]

- o What types of services are provided? **[This could include rental assistance, family mediation/counseling, legal assistance, supportive services, other types of financial assistance.]**
- o What is the nature and number of staff involved in providing prevention services?
- o Are there resources or assistance provided to the youth? What type?
- o Are there specific subpopulations that are targeted for the services? Can you describe how they are identified? **[Probe for whether they are referred.]**
- o Are there specific eligibility criteria for the services? How are youth screened for eligibility?
- o How long do you typically work with a youth?
- o What outcomes are you hoping for? How do you measure them? What are your findings? **[Probe for outcomes such as housing stability, employment, education, health.]**
- o What happens to youth once they are provided prevention services? Are they linked with any other services? **[If relevant]** Are they referred to coordinated entry?
- o To what extent are the prevention services coordinated with other systems (such as school systems, child welfare, juvenile justice)
- o When did your organization begin offering prevention services? **[Probe for whether this is a new effort with YHDP.]**
- o **[only for YHDP]** Have the services changed at all with the demonstration? Are they expected to change? In what ways and why?
- o Describe any challenges you have had with providing prevention services.
 - i. What strategies did you use to try to overcome challenges?

Diversion

11. How does your agency define diversion? **[Probe for how they engage with youth to get them back quickly into housing with families or friends.]**

12. Can you describe the nature of the diversion services you provide a bit more?

[Probe on:]

- o What type of services are provided? **[This could include rental assistance, family mediation/counseling, legal assistance, supportive services, other types of financial assistance.]**
- o What is the nature and number of staff involved in providing diversion services?
- o Are there resources or assistance provided to the youth? What type? **[Probe for both financial assistance and non-financial assistance such as mediation.]**
- o Are specific subpopulations targeted for the services? Which ones? Can you describe how they are identified? **[Probe for when they are identified - such as upon seeking homeless services or earlier; whether they are referred.]**
- o Are there specific eligibility criteria for the services? How are youth screened for eligibility?
- o How long do you typically work with a youth?
- o What outcomes are you hoping for? **[Probe for what would be "successful" diversion - accessing housing, reunifying with family/natural supports.]**

- o What happens to youth once they are provided diversion services? Are they linked with any other services? [**If relevant**] Are they referred to coordinated entry?
- o To what extent are the diversion services coordinated with other systems (such as school systems, child welfare, juvenile justice)?
- o When did your organization begin offering diversion services? [**Probe for whether this is a new effort with YHDP.**]
- o [**only for YHDP**] Have the services changed at all with the demonstration? Are they expected to change? In what ways and why?
- o Describe any challenges you have had with offering diversion services.
 - i. What strategies did you use to try to overcome challenges?

Family and Natural Support Engagement [not described in other areas]

13. We would like to know more about any family and natural support engagement that we have not already discussed. Can you describe the services you offer a bit more?

[**Probe on:**]

- o What type of services are provided? [**Probe for family counseling; case management services; financial assistance to reunify.**]
- o What is the nature and number of staff involved in the interventions?
- o Are there resources or assistance provided to the youth? What type?
- o Are specific subpopulations targeted for the services? Which ones? Can you describe how they are identified? [**Probe for when they are identified; how they are referred.**]
- o Are there specific eligibility criteria for the services? How are youth and families screened for eligibility?
- o How long do you typically work with a family?
- o What outcomes are you hoping for? How do you measure them? What are your findings?
- o What happens to youth once they are offered these services? Are they linked with any other services? Are they referred to coordinated entry [**if relevant**]?
- o To what extent are these services coordinated with other systems (such as school systems, child welfare, juvenile justice)?
- o When did your organization begin offering this type of services? [**Probe for whether this is a new effort with YHDP.**]
- o [**only for YHDP**] Have the services changed at all with the demonstration? Are they expected to change? In what ways and why?
- o Describe any challenges you have had with offering this type of service.
 - i. What strategies did you use to try to overcome challenges?

Housing for Youth

I would like to ask a few more questions about the housing that you provide for youth [aside from any rental assistance that we have already discussed].

14. Could we walk through each of the different types of housing you provide? [**Probe for rapid rehousing, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, host homes, others.**]

- o Could you describe the housing (# of units, type of housing (e.g., congregate, scattered site, etc.)?)

- o Are specific subpopulations targeted for the housing? Which ones? Can you describe how they are identified? **[Probe for when they are identified; how they are referred.]**
- o Are services available to help connect youth to the housing (e.g., Housing Navigation)?
- o Are there specific eligibility criteria for the housing? How are youth screened for eligibility?
- o Can the housing serve pregnant and parenting youth? Unaccompanied youth?
- o Is the housing coordinated with coordinated entry **[if relevant]**? In what ways?
- o Is there a time limit on how long a youth can stay in the housing?
- o Are any services provided with the housing? **[Describe type, who provides the services, whether the services are mandatory.]**
- o What outcomes are you hoping for? How do you measure them? What are your findings?
- o What happens to youth once they leave the housing? Are they linked with any other services?
- o To what extent is the housing coordinated with other systems (such as school systems, child welfare, juvenile justice)?
- o When did your organization begin offering this type of housing? **[Probe for whether this is a new effort with YHDP.]**
- o **[only for YHDP]** Has the housing changed at all with the demonstration? Is it expected to change? In what ways and why?
- o Describe any challenges you have had with offering this type of housing.
 - i. What strategies did you use to try to overcome challenges?

Shelter

15. Could you describe the shelter you offer a bit more? **[Probe for type of shelter (e.g., congregate, scattered site, etc.); # and type of units (single or shared occupancy, apartment or room).]**
[Probe on:]

- o Are specific subpopulations targeted for the shelter? Which ones? Can you describe how they are identified? **[Probe for when they are identified; how they are referred.]**
- o Are there specific eligibility criteria? How are youth screened for eligibility?
- o Can the shelter serve pregnant and parenting youth? Unaccompanied youth?
- o Is the shelter part of coordinated entry **[if relevant]**? In what ways?
- o Is there a time limit on how long a youth can stay in the shelter?
- o Are any services provided in the shelter? **[Describe type, who provides the services, whether the services are mandatory.]**
- o What outcomes are you hoping for? How do you measure them? What are your findings?
- o What happens to youth once they leave the shelter? Are they linked with any other services? With housing?
- o To what extent is the shelter coordinated with other systems (such as school systems, child welfare, juvenile justice)?

- o When did your organization begin offering this type of shelter? **[Probe for whether this is a new effort with YHDP, why was the shelter started, what needs was it designed to address.]**
- o **[only for YHDP]** Has the shelter changed at all with the demonstration? Is it expected to change? In what ways and why?
- o Describe any challenges you have had with offering this type of shelter.
 - i. What strategies did you use to try to overcome challenges?

Employment Services

16. Can you describe the employment services you offer a bit more?

[Probe on:]

- o What type of services are provided? **[Probe for job search, job training, internships, on the job coaching.]**
- o What is the nature and number of staff involved in the services?
- o Are resources or assistance provided to the youth? What type?
- o Are specific subpopulations targeted for the services? Which ones? Can you describe how they are identified? **[Probe for when they are identified; how they are referred.]**
- o Are there specific eligibility criteria for the services? How are youth screened for eligibility?
- o How long do you typically work with a youth?
- o What outcomes are you hoping for? How do you measure them? What are your findings?
- o What happens to youth once they are offered these services? Are they linked with any other services? Are they referred to coordinated entry **[if relevant]?**
- o To what extent are these services coordinated with other systems (such as workforce development, school systems, child welfare, juvenile justice)?
- o When did your organization begin offering this type of services? **[Probe for whether this is a new effort with YHDP.]**
- o **[only for YHDP]** Have the services changed at all with the demonstration? Are they expected to change? In what ways and why?
- o Describe any challenges you have had with offering this type of service.
 - i. What strategies did you use to try to overcome challenges?

Education Services

17. Can you describe the education services you offer a bit more?

[Probe on:]

- o What type of services are provided? **[Probe for GED, remedial education, community college.]**
- o What is the nature and number of staff involved in the services?
- o Are resources or assistance provided to the youth? What type?
- o Are specific subpopulations targeted for the services? Which ones? Can you describe how they are identified? **[Probe for when they are identified; how they are referred.]**
- o Are there specific eligibility criteria for the services? How are they screened for eligibility?
- o How long do you typically work with a youth?

- o What outcomes are you hoping for? How do you measure them? What are your findings?
- o What happens to youth once they are offered these services? Are they linked with any other services? Are they referred to coordinated entry **[if relevant]**?
- o To what extent are these services coordinated with other systems (such as child welfare, juvenile justice)?
- o When did your organization begin offering this type of service? **[Probe for whether this is a new effort with YHDP.]**
- o **[only for YHDP]** Have the services changed at all with the demonstration? Are they expected to change? In what ways and why?
- o Describe any challenges you have had with offering this type of service.
 - i. What strategies did you use to try to overcome challenges?

Other Services

18. Do you provide any other services to youth who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness?
[Probe for mental health, substance abuse, case management.]

19. Can you describe these other services you offer a bit more?

[For each service:]

- o What is the nature and number of staff involved in the services?
- o Are resources or assistance provided to the youth? What type?
- o Are specific subpopulations targeted for the services? Which ones? Can you describe how they are identified? **[Probe for when they are identified; how they are referred.]**
- o Are there specific eligibility criteria for the services? How are youth screened for eligibility?
- o How long do you typically work with a youth?
- o What outcomes are you hoping for? How do you measure them? What are your findings?
- o What happens to youth once they are offered these services? Are they linked with any other services? Are they referred to coordinated entry **[if relevant]**?
- o To what extent are these services coordinated with other systems (such as child welfare, juvenile justice)?
- o When did your organization begin offering this type of service? **[Probe for whether this is a new effort with YHDP.]**
- o **[only for YHDP]** Have the services changed at all with the demonstration? Are they expected to change? In what ways and why?
- o Describe any challenges you have had with offering this type of service.
 - i. What strategies did you use to try to overcome challenges?

D. Coordinated Entry [find out before the interview whether the organization assesses youth]

Now I would like to learn more about how your organization is involved with coordinated entry.

20. Is your organization connected at all with coordinated entry?

- o Probe for whether they refer youth to the system or receive referrals from the system.

- o **[if refer]** – can you describe the process of referring youth to coordinated entry? Have you had any challenges in having youth access the system through coordinated entry?
- o **[if referrals]** – can you describe how you receive referrals from coordinated entry? Have you had any challenges with the referrals?

21. How are the needs of homeless youth assessed as part of the entry process?

- o Do staff from your organization participate in the assessments in any way? Describe. **[Confirm the assessment tool(s) that are used.]** Have they been trained in its use? Have there been challenges in the implementation of the tool?
- o Was your organization involved in decision-making about what assessment tool(s) would be used? What is your opinion on the factors in the assessment and how much the factors are based on evidence?
- o Was your organization involved in setting prioritization policies to guide which youth vulnerabilities and service needs were prioritized? What is your opinion on the prioritization policies and how much the policies are based on evidence?
- o How are the individual assessments used (e.g., making housing referrals, other service referrals, etc.)? What are the eligibility criteria for the referrals?
- o Do your staff conduct any other assessments of youth?

22. **[only for YHDP]** Are you aware of any new or revised coordinated entry efforts planned/implemented as part of the YHDP? If so, please describe.

- o How will you participate in those activities?
- o How will that change the way you participate now?
- o Describe any additional challenges with coordinated entry.
- o Describe any TA received related to coordinated entry for youth.
 - i. Which TA has been helpful? How has it influenced the efforts? Which has not been as useful?
 - ii. What types of TA would you like in the future?

E. Data/Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS)

23. Do you currently participate in the HMIS?

- o For which of the programs we have discussed? **[For each program:]**
 - i. What data elements are collected?
 - ii. Describe any concerns with data quality, timeliness, completeness.
- o Do any of your programs collect Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) data?
 - i. What data elements are collected for these programs?
 - ii. Describe any concerns with their quality, timeliness, completeness.
 - iii. Are they linked to HMIS?
- o Do you collect and track data for homeless youth for any other data systems? If so, are the data linked?
 - i. Are there any tracking data on youth once they leave homelessness? For how long? Are these data part of the HMIS or separate?
- o Are there other data you collect that would better inform decisions about what housing and services are offered, or how or to whom they're offered?

F. Technical Assistance [only for YHDP]

24. Have you received any TA as part of the demonstration? **[Probe for what has been received and from whom.]**
- o Has it been helpful? In what ways? How has it influenced the efforts? What could be improved?
 - o What types of TA would you like in the future?

G. Funding

25. **[only for YHDP]** Have you received any new funding for the demonstration?
- o Review sources and amounts
 - o How are those funds being used?
 - o Are there restrictions on how that can be used? Do any funds ever go unused because of restrictions?

H. Coordination of Youth Homeless Services with Other Systems

26. **[only for YHDP]** Do you currently coordinate with other homeless service providers that serve other populations (family, adults)? How has that or will that change with the YDHP demonstration? **[Probe for coordination on coordinated entry as well as housing; on serving particular populations, especially young adults 18-24 and parenting/pregnant young adults 18-24.]**
27. Other than what we already have discussed, do you currently coordinate in other ways with:
- o child welfare system?
 - o juvenile justice system?
 - o education system?
 - o other mainstream service systems (such as health, behavioral health, employment)?

[For each, probe for the level of coordination prior to YHDP and current/planned.]

I. Systems Issues

I would like to ask you a few final questions about the overall system for youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

28. Currently, what are the key gaps in meeting the needs of youth experiencing homelessness? Where are youth most likely to fall through the cracks in the system? Are there certain characteristics of youth who are more likely to fall through the cracks or not get the services they need?
29. What would you say are the main unresolved issues in the youth homeless system that you are confronting?
30. What are the tensions in the system?
31. Are there disagreements in what the system should look like? What are the various views?
32. What do you see as the most exciting developments under way or being considered?

J. Context

33. Is there any other way that your agency/department is involved with serving youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness?

34. Are there any other factors that are important for us to understand in characterizing the context of the community? Economic factors? State or local political factors? Anything else (such as geography, transportation, culture, growth of the population)?

K. Developments

35. My final question is: What do you see as the most exciting developments under way or being considered that are relevant to youth homelessness?