

# Youth At-Risk of Homelessness

## (YARH)

*Provider Stakeholder Work Group Meeting*

**August 26, 2020**



# Who's here?

## Mathematica

- **Kelsey Chesnut**, stakeholder engagement
- **Megan Shoji**, task lead, stakeholder engagement
- **Morgan Woods**, stakeholder engagement
- **Andrew Burwick**, deputy project director
- **Rosalind Keith**, implementation study design lead
- **Missy Thomas**, survey director

## Project officers

- **Mary Mueggenborg**, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation
- **Catherine Heath**, Children's Bureau

## Colorado Pathways leadership

- **Trevor Williams**, Colorado Department of Human Services
- **Lanae Davis**, Center for Policy Research
- **Denise McHugh**, Spark Community Foundation
- **Derek Blake**, Colorado Department of Human Services

## Stakeholders

YARH Provider Stakeholder Work Group members

# YARH Provider Stakeholder Work Group

## **Beth Horwitz**

- All Chicago Making Homelessness History

## **Jack Theuerling**

- Cincinnati Children's Hospital

## **Jennifer Vidrine**

- ICF

## **Jonah DeChants**

- Colorado State University

## **Kaylene Quinones**

- Westchester, Bravelife Initiative

## **Meredith Hicks**

- Independent consultant

## **Tymothy Belseth**

- University of Texas, Austin

# Today's Goals

# Inform program engagement strategies for YARH-3 summative evaluation



Build the evidence base on promising strategies to prevent homelessness and support youth and young adults involved in the child welfare system



Assess implementation and impacts of Colorado's Pathways to Success (Pathways) program on key outcomes



Continue evaluation activities with Alameda to continue to strengthen the Youth Transitions Partnership (YTP) program





**66%**

of youth had used an overnight shelter or received public housing assistance before enrolling in Pathways.



**56%**

of youth had experienced homelessness because of running away from their family, foster, or group home.



**49%**

of youth spent time in jail or detention before turning 18.



**45%**

of youth had experienced homelessness as a result of violence at home by the time of their enrollment in the pathways program.

**Pathways Serves High-Risk Youth  
Enrolled Youth Report an Average of 4.9  
Risk Factors**

# Icebreaker

*In the chat window, share one effective, cool, promising, or go-to program engagement strategy for this population.*

# Gather your ideas for addressing two types of engagement challenges

1. **Situational challenges to engaging youth in Pathways**
2. **Challenges with engaging specific youth populations**





# Pathways Program Overview

# Pathways core components

## Navigators

- Caseloads of 10 or fewer youth
- Weekly contact with youth
- Provide case management services

## Coach-like engagement

- **Youth-driven:** Encourages youth to set their own goals, plan, and pace and to be their own advocates
- **Primary activities:** Listening, asking powerful questions, providing encouragement, approaching youth with curiosity rather than judgment, setting achievable challenges, and gently holding youth accountable

## Tools and resources

- ✓ Assessment and planning tools
- ✓ Flexible funds
- ✓ Warm referrals
- ✓ Housing vouchers

# Current Pathways strategies

Enrollment	Engagement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Request referrals for eligible youth who are screened for risk of homelessness<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Train referral partners in what Pathways is, how it can benefit youth, and how it differs from typical services</li></ul></li><li>• Coach-like engagement is developmentally appropriate and attractive model for this population</li><li>• Navigators communicate the benefits of coach-like engagement</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate commitment to youth by being persistent and non-judgmental</li><li>• Help youth move forward at their own pace</li><li>• Weekly contact with youth</li><li>• Attend appointments with youth (warm hand-offs)</li><li>• Authentically advocate for youth through:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Coach-like engagement</li><li>✓ Youth-driven goals</li><li>✓ Providing flex funds to achieve goals</li></ul></li><li>• Help youth address housing needs</li></ul>

# Addressing Pathways Engagement Challenges

# Situational challenges with engagement

Typical challenges	Current mitigation strategies
Loss of communication	Continue to contact youth using existing information, check-in with providers and permanent connections, welfare checks at known addresses or youth gathering places
Last minute lack of transportation	Provide flex funds to for bus cards or to fix vehicle and/or Navigators come to the youth / provide rides
Loss of vital documents	Navigators work with youth to replace vital documents and strategies to maintain them
“Cold Call” referrals	Navigators find a provider still in touch with youth to assist with engagement
COVID-19 pandemic	Mix of in-person and virtual meetings
Lack equipment for virtual meetings	Community resources; Flex funds

# Let's discuss! Situational challenges with engagement



Typical challenges	Current mitigation strategies	Other ideas?
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Typical challenges	Other ideas?
Loss of communication	
Last minute lack of transportation	
Loss of vital documents	
“Cold Call” referrals	
COVID-19 pandemic	
Lack equipment for virtual meetings	

# Challenges engaging younger youth

## Discussing risk of homelessness with younger youth (ages 14-16)

- Navigators emphasize making sure youth always have a safe and stable place to live no matter where they're at in their life
- Navigators avoid terms like "homelessness" and "stably housed"

## What advice or guidance do you have on how to engage younger youth?

- Is the above approach effective, or do Navigators need to be **more explicit**?
- How should Navigators **frame this issue** with younger youth? What are some **key “hooks”** to engage them?
- What are the **benefits** of talking about homelessness more explicitly? What are the **risks**?



# Challenges with other specific youth populations

## 1. Youth who may be distrustful of systems

- a) Legally-involved youth
- b) Failed adoptions

## 2. Rural youth

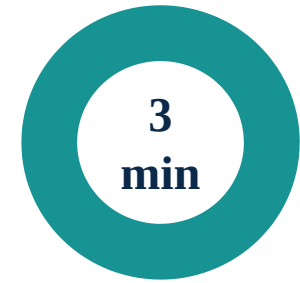
## 3. Transient youth

## 4. Youth experiencing domestic violence

## 5. Youth with targeted needs

- a) Youth with mental health and substance use issues
- b) Youth in residential care
- c) Youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities

# Potential solutions for challenges



## 1. Youth who may be distrustful of systems

- a) Legally-involved youth
- b) Failed adoptions

## 2. Rural youth

## 3. Transient youth

## 4. Youth experiencing domestic violence

## 5. Youth with targeted needs

- a) Youth with mental health and substance use issues
- b) Youth in residential care
- c) Youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities

# Wrap-Up

# Next Steps

- **You: Share any additional thoughts in writing by the end of the week**
  - Email to Kelsey Chesnut: [KChesnut@mathematica-mpr.com](mailto:KChesnut@mathematica-mpr.com)
- **Mathematica and Colorado teams: Use feedback to inform evaluation plans**
  - Summarize feedback and potential implications for evaluation plans
  - Share with federal partners
- **Next opportunity to contribute**
  - Stakeholder work group meetings on initial findings and reporting (summer/fall 2022 and winter 2023)
  - Potential invitations for ad hoc opportunities

Any questions



# For additional information or questions

- **Kelsey Chesnut, Mathematica (Stakeholder workgroup questions)**  
KChesnut@mathematica-mpr.com
- **Cay Bradley, Mathematica (general YARH questions)**  
CBradley@mathematica-mpr.com
- **Mary Mueggenborg, Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation**  
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