



Office of Homeless Youth Services
2011 Annual Report

Colorado Division of Housing

**OFFICE OF HOMELESS YOUTH SERVICES
2011 ANNUAL REPORT**

**COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS
DIVISION OF HOUSING**

INDEX

1. Cover Page
2. History of Homeless Youth Service (OHYS)
3. Alignment of the OHYS Annual Report
4. OHYS Objectives
5. OHYS Statutory Requirements
6. Creation of the OHYS Advisory Committee
7. Who are Homeless Youth?
8. 2011 Highlights
9. 2012 Priority and Special Projects
10. Appendix
 - a. A Special Thanks and Voice From the Youth
 - b. Resources from Colorado State Government Agencies for Children and Youth
 - c. Colorado Chafee Foster Care Independence Program List of Services
 - d. Interagency Prevention Systems Project that address prevention, intervention and treatment
 - e. Colorado Department of Education District McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaisons
 - f. Linking Housing and Services – Housing Continuum for Homeless Youth



STATE OF COLORADO

John W. Hickenlooper, Governor

Department of Local Affairs
Reeves Brown, Executive Director

Division of Housing
Pat Coyle, Director

January 13, 2012

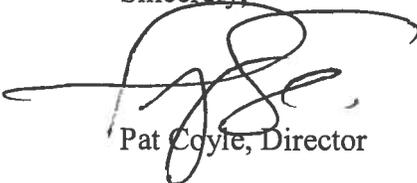
I am pleased to present the Annual Report for the Office of Homeless Youth Services (OHYS) located within the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Division of Housing. In July 2011 House Bill 1230 passed, authorizing the transfer of the OHYS from the Department of Human Services (CDHS), Division of Supportive Housing and Homeless Programs (SHHP) to the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Division of Housing (DOH). This was a result of the consolidation of SHHP and DOH's Housing Choice Voucher programs. These changes will allow DOH to better connect housing and services for homeless youth.

In keeping with the Revised Statutes 24-32-723, the OHYS consulted with the Prevention Division of Department of Public Health and Environment, the Division on Education for Homeless Children and Youth, Department of Education, and the Division of Children, Youth and Families Division of Child Welfare, Department of Human Services to put forward this report.

The 2006-2011 OHYS strategic plan has served as the framework for developing and implementing activities related to homeless youth. In 2012, the OHYS will focus on the changing needs of homeless youth. The OHYS will continue to work in partnership with the Advisory Committee to advance the efforts to end homeless youth, seek opportunities to encourage joint initiatives and approaches across state agencies, and to address the various aspects of homeless youth who are among some of the state's most vulnerable citizens.

The following report highlights the work in providing leadership to engage in the issues of youth homelessness through the OHYS. I want to thank the staff members of the state departments as well as the staff from the many community based organizations for committing resources and expertise to ensure progress towards the goals outlined in this report. Through the continued shared efforts of our public and private sectors, Colorado youth will be afforded the opportunities necessary for a successful transition to adulthood.

Sincerely,



Pat Coyle, Director



OFFICE OF HOMELESS YOUTH SERVICES 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS DIVISION OF HOUSING

This report is submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly in support of the Homeless Youth Services Act (C.R.S. 26-5.9) and the Office of Homeless Youth Services (C.R.S 24-32-723); it provides a summary of the highlights and priorities of the Office of Homeless Youth Services activities.

HISTORY OF THE OFFICE OF HOMELESS YOUTH SERVICES

2002 – The Legislature passed the Homeless Youth Services Act (House Bill 02-1159) in response to the overwhelming and diverse needs of homeless youth in Colorado. The intent of this legislation was to create a focus on the cooperation among agencies providing services to homeless youth statewide to break down the barriers and provide a seamless collaboration and effective services to fully serve the youth by facilitating interagency collaboration. This resulted in an ongoing collaborative effort between organizations all over the state to identify gaps, remove barriers, improve access and share information.

2004 - Initially, the Office of Homeless Youth Services (OHYS) was housed under the Colorado Department Public Health and Environment. On May 21, 2004 the Governor Bill Owens 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 (CDHS), Division of Supportive Housing and Homeless Programs (SHHP). A full time Homeless Youth Coordinator position was created and an Advisory Committee for Homeless Youth (ACHY) was convened in 2004 to assist with planning and implementation of the Statewide Homeless Youth Action Plan and assist OHYS in providing technical assistance to communities throughout Colorado.

2009 – The State of Colorado and Bridging the Gap at Mile High United Way (MHUW) formed a partnership to manage the Family Unification Program (FUP). The partnership resulted in affordable housing for homeless youth with foster care involvement coordinated with a broad array of supportive services.

2011 - House Bill 1230 authorized the transfer of the Office of Homeless Youth Services from the Department of Human Services (CDHS), Division of Supportive Housing and Homeless Programs (SHHP) to the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Division of Housing (DOH). This was a result of the consolidation of SHHP and DOH's Housing Choice Voucher programs in July 2011. These changes allow DOH to focus on connecting services to housing. Any solution to end homelessness must target the supply of safe, affordable housing as well as access to supports and services.

OVERVIEW OF THE OFFICE OF HOMELESS YOUTH 2011 REPORT

This report is submitted in accordance with legislation that refers to existing reports relating to the services provided to homeless youth. It makes reference to the State Agencies as well as the County Department of Social Services that provide: prevention, intervention, and treatment services. The report includes annual data that the Department of Education compiles on the number of homeless youth enrolled in public schools in the state, type of homelessness, list of services provided to such homeless youth, and outcomes derived from such services. Focusing on youth issues will provide us the opportunity to move Colorado closer to the goal of ending youth homelessness. In many important ways, Colorado has demonstrated a commitment to addressing homelessness. This plan will draw from existing priorities, policies and partnerships and will be aligned with the following statutes, plans and legislation:

- Colorado Revised Statute 24-32-723 Office of the Homeless Youth Service,
- Colorado Revised Statute C.R.S. 25-20.5-108, the Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment Services for Children and Youth Act with the purpose of coordinating services delivery through Colorado state agencies,
- 2010-2013 State Plan for Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment Services for Children and Youth identifies the list of prevention, intervention and treatment programs for children and youth,
- Senate Bill 11-120, a Bill of Rights for Foster Care youth.
- House Bill 04-1451, Collaborative Management Program
- Support Services Rural Homeless Youth (SSRHY) Demonstration Grant for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children and Families, Family and Youth Service Bureau,
- Opening Doors 2010 Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

OBJECTIVES OF THE OFFICE OF HOMELESS YOUTH SERVICES

The Office of Homeless Youth Services continues to provide information, coordination, and support services, and works with leaders from State and local government, private nonprofit organizations, federal departments, homeless and formerly homeless youth, and other key stakeholders in the community. The Office of Homeless Youth Services seeks to:

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

OHYS MINIMUM STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES

- To 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;

- To identify both procedural and substantive obstacles to the provision of services and to make recommendations to the entities specified above concerning procedural, regulatory, or statutory changes necessary to remove such obstacles;
- To obtain information from service providers concerning known services available for the homeless youth population in the state of Colorado and to post such information on a web site on the internet;
- To develop, maintain, and make available a listing of all rights and organizations that may be relevant to the homeless youth population in the state of Colorado, including but not limited to a listing of legal, educational, and victims' rights and organizations related thereto;
- To obtain information concerning known funding sources available for the homeless youth population in the state of Colorado;
- To 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
- To prepare and submit a written annual report for the Governor and the General Assembly concerning the performance of the OHYS.

CREATION OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON HOMELESS YOUTH

The OHYS created the statewide Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth as a way 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. Their passion and knowledge of the issue of homeless youth is invaluable to ending homelessness for Colorado youth.

UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM OF HOMELESS YOUTH

At the time of the last statewide Point In Time Homeless Count in 2007, there were approximately 1,500 youth and young adult ages 12 to 24 living on the street or in emergency shelters. There are up to 185 youth in corrections in Colorado discharged to a situation of homelessness, and about 25% of youth experienced homelessness within 4 years of leaving foster care. The number of homeless youth that were provided services in the rural areas doubled from 30 in 2010 to 60 in 2011 in Alamosa, Garfield, Huerfano, Moffat, Montezuma, and Montrose. In 2011, Urban Peak served 2,280 unduplicated youth originating from 23 counties from across the State. Although these numbers give us an estimate of number of youth who are currently homeless, there is no definitive data on youth homelessness.

Unaccompanied homeless youth (youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) present challenges to existing homeless assistance systems. Most organizations are built around the needs of homeless adults and families, not around young people. Homeless youth are at risk for physical abuse, sexual exploitation, mental health disabilities, chemical or alcohol dependency, and death. Many homeless youth have been physically, sexually, and or emotionally abused by their guardians and are frequently re-

victimized while living on the streets and shelters. Homeless youth who lack the resources necessary to secure basic needs, including access to housing, food, clothing, and medical health care are at a higher risk to drop out of high school, at risk of poverty, and are more likely to be unemployed, turn to crime, need state-funded medical care, receive welfare, and pay no taxes. Due to the current economic climate, it appears that the number of youth experiencing homelessness across Colorado has increased over the past year. Direct service providers reported that they consistently operated over their capacity in recent months.

Data collected from local school districts across the state by the Colorado Department of Education indicates a 17 percent increase in homeless students from the 2009-2010 school year to the 2010-2011 school year. **In that same time period, the number of unaccompanied homeless youth identified and served in Colorado public schools increased 31%, from 1,325 to 1,735 youth.** More young people than ever have been left to fend for themselves during these uncertain economic times.

Overall, the number of students experiencing homelessness has increase significantly. During the 2010-11 school year, **21,487** students experiencing homelessness were identified and served in Colorado public schools, grades PK-12. Based on end of year data collection counts submitted by Colorado public school districts, since the 2003-04 school year, the number of public school students experiencing homelessness in Colorado has tripled.

2010-2011	21,487		
2009-2010	18,408		
2008-2009	15,834		
2007-08	12,302		
2006-07	11,954		
	12,689		
2005-06	(Hurricane Katrina/Rita School Year)		
2004-05	9,309		
2003-04	7,319		
Sheltered 2010-11	Doubled Up 2010-11	Unsheltered 2010-11	Hotels/Motels 2011-11
2907	17,129	531	920
Grade 10 2010-11	Grade 11 2010-11	Grade 12 2010-2011	Total
1238	1191	1717	4,146 youth between grades 10-12

A gap exists in the data collection of unaccompanied homeless youth under the age of 24 that are not attending public schools. Youth may be afraid or unwilling to enter into shelters and there are scarce resources, beds, and units dedicated to these youth. Youth are often not engaged in traditional homelessness assistance programs and congregate in different areas than older individuals experiencing homelessness. Without having accurate data there is a danger that youth will continue to be underserved.

COLORADO HOMELESS YOUTH ACTION PLAN

The Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan is updated annually to ensure that the primary objectives outlined in the Homeless Youth Services Act are accomplished. The following summary outlines the highlights and the priority areas of homeless youth issues in Colorado.

2011 HIGHLIGHTS

- House Bill 11-1230 passed and The Office of Homeless Youth Services oversight was transferred from the Department of Human Services to the Division of Housing.
- House Bill 11-1079 concerning methods to reduce the number of homeless youth passed, which added host homes as an allowable shelter category for youth, and amended the definition of homeless youth. The licensing of Host Homes will be a huge benefit to the Rural Collaboration efforts to incorporate into the continuum of housing support that can be offered to youth in need.
- State Adolescent Champions – The OHYS partnered with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), Prevention Services Division to host networking meetings for state agency coordinators of adolescent initiatives and programs. Results include increased cross-systems partnerships, networking, awareness, and collaboration. The group was represented during a statewide youth systems transformation planning process in late 2010-2011 with the goal of better coordinating efforts to break through silos that may exist at the initiative, program, or agency levels.
- RCHY – Six rural regional sites across Western and Southern Colorado (Huerfano, Alamosa, Montezuma, Montrose, Garfield, and Moffat counties) continued to develop services and housing for homeless and runaway youth. Several collaborative grants provided seed money for the project and sustainability planning is underway.
- Colorado Homeless/Runaway Youth Awareness Month – Governor Hickenlooper issued proclamations declaring November 2011 as Colorado Homeless and Runaway Youth Awareness Month. A special thanks to the collaborative partners on the planning committee.
- Mile High United Way (MHUW) - In 2011, 137 youth obtained Family Unification Program (FUP) housing vouchers. Thirty youth received HPRP (Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-housing) funding to help with security deposits and utilities. MHUW provided additional services provided through

Bridging the Gap: Asset Development, Youth Leadership training and Signature events - opportunities for youth to attend information sessions facilitated by corporate partners on topics related to legal issues, employment, and financial literacy. Youth also participated in “Take a Foster Care Youth to Work” Day. Bridging The Gap youth were instrumental in the drafting and passage of Senate Bill 11-120, a Bill of Rights for Foster Care youth. MHUW supported the annual PJ Day Event in an effort to raise awareness about the 1,700 students in DPS currently experiencing homelessness. Over 30 DPS schools participated in this event to support Denver’s Road Home.

- Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Data Collection and Program Enhancements in Education
 - The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) began collecting data on unaccompanied homeless youth from all districts in the state, setting the initial benchmark for future data analysis and program planning. In 2010, the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education program at CDE increased technical assistance, training and capacity building in areas of the state with high poverty rates and low identified McKinney student numbers. Further, McKinney-Vento Homeless Education program applications now include unaccompanied homeless youth as a priority population for educational services.
 - Collaboration was conducted with CDE’s data collection unit and school districts to gain a greater understanding of data available and effective identifiers to measure and track educational success of homeless youth. Systems are now in place to track data on graduation rates, drop-out rates, mobility rates, expulsion/suspension rates, and proficiency on assessment testing for youth experiencing homelessness.
- K-12 and Higher Education New Model of Service for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth- New collaborations and programs between CDE and the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) have led to increased identification, access and successful transitions into higher education for homeless youth. Partners include CDE, the CDHE, public school districts, higher education institutions, scholarship providers, homeless service providers and other public agencies. As a result of national legislation passed addressing barriers for accessing financial aid for unaccompanied homeless youth, CDE and CDHE established the Colorado Taskforce on Higher Education for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth. Results include:
 - Higher education liaisons for homeless youth have been established at 100% of universities and nonprofit colleges in Colorado. Higher education liaisons for unaccompanied homeless youth streamlined communications between admissions, financial aid, academic support services, student services and housing. They identify peer and support networks while sharing resources and practices, as well as work with the financial aid office administrator.
 - Recommended practices in transitioning homeless students into higher education have been developed and shared nationally with the K-12 and higher education communities.

- Accessibility to vital documents and other documents needed for enrollment into higher education has been increased. Unaccompanied homeless youth can centrally store personal documentation through a confidential, state-supported web site accessible by the youth over their lifetimes at: www.collegeincolorado.org.
- Barriers were addressed and verifications increased on behalf of unaccompanied homeless youth for the purposes of financial aid. A process standard has been created between all parties including colleges, universities, high school and McKinney-Vento liaisons that include utilizing a streamlined process to other services within colleges/universities.
- A single form template for unaccompanied homeless youth verification within the same school year was adopted and is being utilized by all stakeholders.

2012 PRIORITIES AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Plan Development – The first five years of the Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan will be evaluated and a plan for post 2011 will be developed by the OHYS and the ACHY membership.
 - OHYS, in conjunction with the members of the Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth (ACHY), will continue to work together to make recommendations and progress in carrying out the Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan.
- RCHY – This collaborative will focus on sustainability plan completion and housing and supportive services delivery.
 - OHYS will commit 5% of its time to the Support Services Rural Homeless Youth (SSRHY) Demonstration Grant for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children and Families, Family and Youth Service Bureau.
 - OHYS will support an application to the Daniels Foundation for funds that will assist with a community readiness survey on youth issues as well as fund the counties to provide supports and services to the youth.
- Counting Homeless Youth - A critical first step is to ensure that homeless youth are included in all homeless counts.
 - OHYS will gain access to the CDPHE ASPIRE database.
 - OHYS will work to identify where to find homeless youth. They are often not engaged in traditional homeless assistance program and congregate in places it is more difficult to count.
 - OHYS will support Urban Peaks efforts in January 2012 Point Time Count of homeless youth.

- OHYS will encourage communities to investigate ways to include and track the number of homeless youth and incorporates strategies to identify and survey youth age 24 and under who are experiencing homelessness.
- OHYS will focus on collecting data that will demonstrate a shared cost saving across systems that serve the youth and use findings to educate policymakers and the public about youth homelessness in Colorado.
- Outreach – Increase collaborative outreach statewide to link vulnerable youth to appropriate housing with resources and supports.
 - OHYS will work with Dana Scott, CDE State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, to be aware of Colorado public school homeless liaison service activities in each county.
 - Work on adding language to the state’s consolidated plan that addresses homeless youth initiatives.
- Prevention - Focus on discharge planning by identifying what is being done to ensure that youth are able to successfully transition from the systems listed below into their local communities thereby preventing homelessness and the cycle of poverty.
 - OHYS will coordinate with the Child Welfare as they are rebuilding their system with a focus on finding permanency for older youth/preventing homelessness
 - OHYS will coordinate with the Department of Youth Correction as they start transition planning earlier.
- Supportive Services - Provide comprehensive, wraparound services to achieve maximum self-sufficiency or family reunification.
 - OHYS, in conjunction with the members ACHY will develop a list detailing the 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.
 - OHYS, in conjunction with the members ACHY will ensure homeless youth have comprehensive access to and support to navigate appropriate physical, behavioral, and mental health and substance abuse services.
- Education/Awareness – Increase awareness and education of homeless youth issues and establish best practices and policies based upon accurate data and strategic planning that will ensure interagency collaboration and coordination of services, resources and to connect with regional and national efforts to address the issue of youth homelessness.
 - OHYS and CDE in conjunction with the Homeless/Runaway Youth Awareness Planning Committee will use November to create a public awareness campaign for National Homeless Youth Awareness/Runaway

Prevention Month on the issues facing homeless and runaway youth, and the role the public can play in crafting solutions.

- OHYS will participate in the annual PJ Day Event. PJ Day serves as a reminder that not everyone has a place to put on their pajamas and go to sleep at night.
- OHYS, in conjunction with the members of the Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth (ACHY), will continue to eliminate barriers for youth seeking employment and housing, and assist in the transition to self-sufficiency with the “vital documents tool kit,” a resource to be shared with agencies that have contact with homeless youth.
- OHYS will ensure homeless youth voice to inform policy initiatives through active evaluation and appropriate listening systems, such as continued youth focus groups.
- OHYS will create and distribute Office of Homeless Youth Services annual report.
- Colorado Department of Education – The Department of Education conducts outreach, identification, and coordination with other agencies serving homeless children and youth to improve academic outcomes.
 - OHYS will co-host three regional trainings with CDE to be held in communities throughout Colorado on connecting housing and education services for students experiencing homelessness in Colorado public schools.
 - OHYS will keep informed of CDE’s focus on increased collaboration planned between the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education program and 21st Century Community Learning Programs, resulting in increased access to quality before and after school programming for students experiencing homelessness. The 21st Century Community Learning Program’s 2012 request for proposal will include homeless students as a prioritized population for proposal consideration.
 - OHYS will track progress CDE and CDHE’s collaboration to provide technical assistance, trainings and program collaborations with eight TRIO sites in Colorado, launching a pilot program geared toward meeting the unique needs of homeless youth transitioning into higher education. It is anticipated that results will be shared with other TRIO programs in Colorado and on the national level.
 - OHYS will track the progress of replicating Colorado’s Higher Education Liaison model outlined in the 2011 accomplishments section of this document. CDE and CDHE representatives are a part of the national replication committee, with the goals of four states replicating the model by the end of 2012.
 - OHYS will keep informed of CDHE and CDE’s goal to increase completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and consumer financing of higher education for homeless youth. CDHE will work with

McKinney-Vento K-12 liaisons to increase FAFSA completion and awareness of and access to higher education. Goal includes facilitating the FAFSA completion of students identified as homeless youth and increasing completion by 50%. According to the Chicago Public School's study, 90% of students who complete a FAFSA during their senior year in high school enroll in college within 12 months.

- OHYS will keep informed of CDHE's goal to work with community partners to maintain college financial access programs for homeless and foster youth, as well as other student populations at risk of not enrolling in or completing college. Programs will be maintained in 15 school districts with adoption by 30 school districts by August 2012. FAFSA completion and postsecondary enrollment for independent youth as determined by FAFSA will be tracked.
- Housing – To have safe, appropriate, and accessible housing that is dispersed throughout the community with private landlords rentals, multi-family buildings dedicated to the youth, and set aside units for youth in affordable housing developments.
 - OHYS, David Collins, Division of Child Care, and the RCHY will work together to complete formal rulemaking for Homeless Youth Shelter/Host Home licensing and present the rules to the State Board of Human Services.
 - OHYS will work with RCHY to identify host home sites, capacity and funding sources for the acquisition, rehabilitation and support services for host homes in rural Colorado.
 - OHYS will work with ACHY members on the housing continuum to identify funding resources and gaps, and will convene key parties across the state for the purpose of identifying housing resources for youth to meet the local needs for homeless youth.
 - OHYS will work with Mile High United Way, the Denver Children's Home, and the Denver Metro area County Social Services to identify funding sources to utilize the Discovery Home as transitional housing for homeless youth with disabilities.
 - OHYS, the Department of Education, and Boulder County will continue to work on designing a Tenant Based Rental Assistance (TBRA) program in the Boulder County area, for both the St. Vrain & Boulder school districts.
 - OHYS will work with CDHS-DCW to gain TRAILS access to determine eligibility of the FUP youth. The TRAILS data base acts as the Public Child Welfare Agency verification for youth who have received services from the Colorado County Departments of Human/Social Services.
 - OHYS will coordinate a meeting with MHUW and CDHS-DCW staff to revisit the MOU process currently in place with agencies regarding the provision of case management and wraparound services. It is critical that

youth are working on permanency plans during their 18-month voucher so that they do not become homeless once their voucher expires. MHUW has continued to identify the best way to provide wraparound support for youth in the FUP program and it has become clear that one person managing all 167 vouchers is a challenge.

- OHYS will work with MHUW to identify resources that will support youth with rental deposits, utilities, and other independent living expenses.
- Committee Involvement – OHYS will reconnect with the following initiatives and yield good information sharing and collaboration.
 - OHYS will reconnect with the Advisory Members, schedule quarterly ACHY meetings and communicate the plan to the members and ask members to assist with projects moving forward.
 - OHYS in partnership with CDPHE, Prevention Services Division will host the State Adolescent Champions quarterly networking meetings. These meetings will be reinvigorated to facilitate collaborative partnerships and networking for youth serving programs across State Agencies and Divisions
 - OHYS will attend the quarterly partnership meeting for partners that are working with youth in transition hosted by MHUW. Attendees include Chafee workers, Colorado McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaisons, and youth-serving nonprofits. This forum provides an opportunity for partners to share information, participate in shared training, and identify support services as well as gaps in services for youth in transition.

SUMMARY

Many Colorado youth continue to find themselves in situations without stable housing or support from caring adults and positive influences. Youth end up on their own for three reasons: family problems, economic problems, and residential instability. The problem directly relates to the disconnection from adults. Ending homeless youth requires fostering supportive and positive relationships between youth and adults -primarily between youth, families, and adults who become their support system when biological families are unable or unwilling to do. Youth that can not depend on family support, need programs and services to meet their basic needs as well as help to prepare them to be independent. Unique problems experienced by homeless youth cross many systems, requiring synchronized targeted supports, services, and funding allocations.

Through the continued collective efforts of our public and private sectors, Colorado youth will be afforded the opportunities necessary for a successful transition to adulthood. While challenging, youth homelessness can be eliminated through braiding and blending of awareness, policy partnerships and resources.

A Special Thanks - Mile High United Way, Urban Peak, Soxplace, the Rural Collaborative, Department of Education, Department of Public Health and Environment - Prevention Services Division, Department of Human Services, Office of Children, Youth and Families Division of Welfare, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation- Colorado Department of Human Services, Colorado Behavioral Health Transformation Council, Child, Youth, and Family Mental Health Programs - Department of Human Services, Division of Behavioral Health, and the OHYS Advisory Committee for contributing input to the report.

A series of homeless youth focus groups were conducted by Mile High United Way. The youth articulated they needed opportunities to save money; obtain housing, scholarships for higher education, job skills training, access to transportation and cell phones to better communicate and contribute with their communities.

Colorado Homeless/Runaway Youth Awareness Month Planning Committee

Amanda Cleveland -Urban Peak/SSRHY
Sheree Conyers- Jeffco Schools/CDE
Katie Donahue -Montrose
Val Gildea -Third Way Center
Diana Hall -Posada
Robert Ham -Urban Peak
Liz Heuer -Volunteers of America
Steve Hughes -Urban Peak
Dawn Hurlburt -Graphic Designer
Chris Lingham -Attention Homes
Randle Loeb-MDHI
Andie Lyons-Urban Peak
Paula Reed -Moffat RHY
Jim Rianoshek -Attention Homes
Roscoe Rowe -Family Tree Gemini
Gary Sanford -Governor's Office
Nicole Sherwood -Family Tree Gemini
Brenda Wagner -Garfield County Human Services
Kelley Walker Bannock -Youth Center
Susan Zimmerhackel -Dry Bones

For more information on the work of the Office of Homeless Youth Services, please visit <http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/DOLA-Main/CBON/1251595346101> or call Autumn Gold at 303-866-4648.

Garfield County RRHY Success Story~

Gina was a runaway from the time she was 13. She worked hard to graduate from an alternative high school and became involved with the STEPS program. Gina obtained a job at a GNC store and became very passionate about her work and her health. Within about 18 months, she worked her way up to a management position and continued to impress the regional managers. Gina was recently qualified to buy her first home (at age 20). Gina has been diligent in maintaining her budget, is working towards a down payment and has recently obtained two more jobs. Gina inspires us all to be better to ourselves and to always take to time to help others as she does.

Denver Urban Peak Success Story~

Joe had a rough start to his stay in the STAR (Starting Transition and Recovery) program through Urban Peak. Joe first contacted STAR in November 2010 while in in-patient treatment. Joe reported that he had heard good things about the STAR program and thought it would provide the extra treatment and support that he needed to stay sober. After completing in-patient treatment, Joe attended many meetings and assessments as part of the application process for STAR despite being homeless and struggling with sobriety. Joe was accepted into the STAR program on December 1, 2010 but admitted that he had been using heroin since being out of in-patient treatment. Joe was still accepted into the program but was told he would not be able to move into his apartment until he was able to pass a drug test.

On December 7, 2010 Joe admitted to staff that he was unable to stop using heroin and would not be able to pass a drug test. Joe was homeless, unable to stop injecting heroin and had nobody to turn to. Joe was given the option to go to detox; Joe agreed to go with the understanding that he would be able to move into STAR after completing detox and passing a drug test. Although Joe desperately wanted the support from STAR, his addiction to heroin had a deadly grasp on him. Instead of going to detox Joe continued using heroin on the streets for the next month.

At the beginning of January 2011, Joe contacted STAR and humbly asked for another chance in STAR. It was obvious that Joe both wanted and needed the support, guidance, and community that STAR could provide. Joe was given an opportunity to meet with the treatment team. Joe admitted that he was struggling and desperately wanted to change but did not have the ability to do it on his own. At this time Joe had been sober for six days. Joe was given the opportunity to show that he was invested in the program and his sobriety. Joe began attending group therapy at The Council with the rest of the youth at STAR. Joe would need to continue to do this while staying with his parents for the next two weeks to show that he was invested in the treatment at STAR. If Joe was able to do this and stay sober he would be able to move back into STAR.

Over the next two weeks Joe attended groups eager to participate and accept the help that the program had to offer. On the last day of the two week trial period, Joe admitted that he had relapsed on heroin while staying with his parents. Joe explained that his brother was also a heroin addict and was using around him at his parents house. Although Joe had the desire to change his life, his heroin addiction once again took over. Joe expressed regret for his moment of weakness and begged for one last chance. Joe's treatment team, along with the STAR community, decided to give Joe this chance.

Joe was allowed to move into STAR in attempt to remove him from a home environment that was not supportive of his sobriety. Joe was given four days to pass a drug test; Joe passed the test and was allowed to remain at STAR. Since this time Joe has not used heroin or any other substance. Joe is now in Phase 4 of the program, which is the highest phase. Joe has been working a full-time job since July of 2011, was able to save enough money to buy his own car, has been paying rent every month, and is saving up to move into his own apartment. Joe is actively involved in the 12-step community, has completed the twelve steps and has starting sponsoring others in recovery. Joe has been a role model to the entire STAR community and takes time each week to host a game night in the STAR community room. The progress Joe has made since entering into the program unable to stop using has been phenomenal. Joe's dedication, hard work, and perseverance have been an inspiration to not only the other youth at STAR but the treatment team who has worked with him from the beginning.

Chafee Foster Care Independence Program

Services to Youth age 16 and under: CFCIP funding has provided states with the opportunity to broaden the eligible population to include youth in out-of-home placement under the age of 16 who have a current permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement/long term foster care/emancipation.

This opportunity allows county departments to discuss the importance of beginning to prepare youth for independent living prior to their turning 16. County departments have the option to provide services to youth under the age of 16 in the following ways:

- Educating county caseworker of the IL needs of youth in foster care
- Identifying youth under the age of 16 who are on the ‘emancipation’ track
- Providing concurrent case planning for youth that includes both goals of returning home and emancipation
- Being available for case consultation
- Providing literature that outlines the IL/emancipation process
- Utilizing aftercare youth to provide orientation and/or group discussions about IL to youth under the age of 16
- Providing Treatment Plan Reviews
- Participating in multidisciplinary team meetings which include the youth
- Promoting the use of the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Assessment (ACLSA) by caseworkers, group homes and foster parents (www.caseylifeskills.org). The ACLSA is used to identify the youth’s strengths and weaknesses.
- Participating in Permanency Planning Review Team meetings that meet to discuss permanency issues for youth in care
- Educating and collaborating with foster parents
- Providing orientation for 14 and 15 year olds to introduce and explain the Chafee Program.

<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDHS-ChildYouthFam/CBON/1251589743194>

County/Regional Chafee Programs:

Adams, Alamosa, (Host to—Costilla, Conejos, Huerfano, Las Animas, Mineral, Rio Grande and Saguache), Arapahoe (Host to—Elbert and Douglas), Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, El Paso, Fremont, (Host to—Chafee, Custer and Teller), Garfield, Jefferson (Host to—Gilpen and Clear Creek), La Plata (Host to—Archuleta, Dolores, Montezuma and San Juan), Larimer (Host to—Jackson), Mesa, Montrose (Host to—Ouray, Delta and San Miguel), Morgan, Pueblo (Host to—Otero and Crowley), Weld, Yuma, Colorado Department of Human Services—Division of Child Welfare—Chafee Foster Care Independence Program

Focus on Children and Youth Resources from Colorado State Government Agencies, by The Staff of the Colorado State Publications Library - Revised October 2010

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/stateinfo/slstpfocusbiblio.htm>

Interagency Prevention Systems Project

In May 2000, the legislature passed HB00-1342, the Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment Services for Children and Youth Act.

The overall purpose of the legislation was to create a more unified, effective and efficient approach to the delivery of state and federally-funded prevention, intervention and treatment services for children and youth in Colorado.

This legislation requires the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to develop systems to coordinate and streamline state processes, increase local community access to information and resources, and to enhance the overall quality and accessibility of prevention and intervention services for children and youth in Colorado.

<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/ps/ipsp/index.html>

Colorado Department of Education’s Statewide List District McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaisons

Northwest North Central Northeast Metro Area Pikes Peak West Central Southwest Southeast

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/homeless_index.htm



Colorado Department of Education

2010-2011 Homeless Youth Enrolled in Public School

County and Primary Night Time Residence

<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/DOLA-Main/CBON/1251595346101>

Linking Housing and Services by Identifying Funding Sources and Gaps

Housing Option	Type	Appropriate Support Services
Shelters	BASIC CENTER: agency based can provide up to 15 days of shelter for up to 20 youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food, clothing, medical care, or other services that youth need (offered either directly or by referral) • Individual, group, and family counseling • Recreation programs • Outreach targeting both youth who may need assistance and other public or private agencies that work with youth and families • Aftercare services for youth after they leave the shelter
	HOST HOME: rooms in family homes	
	HOTEL VOUCHER	
	CRISIS CENTERS	
	BEDS IN ADULT SHELTERS WITH EDUCATION TO STAF	
Subsidized Housing	FAMILY UNIFICATION PROGRAM – YOUTH: housing services for youth who have left the foster care system and lack adequate housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe, stable living accommodations • Basic life-skill building, • Interpersonal skill building • Educational opportunities • Assistance in job preparation and attainment, • Care Management • Links to community resources and services
	SHELTER PLUS CARE: provides housing and supportive services on a long-term basis for homeless persons with disabilities	•
	TRANSITIONAL LIVING PROGRAM: agency based that provide longer term residential services to youth that are designed to help youth make successful transition to self-sufficient living.	•
	STIPEND BASED: agency provide stipend for rent and independent living needs.	•
	SUPERVISED APARTMENTS: agency leased/owned housing that is supervised by either on sight or regular staff involvement	•
	HOST HOME: rented rooms in family homes that are linked to agencies	•
	COMMUNITY PLACEMENT: agency based living for youth with identified treatment (i.e. SO, Mental Health, Substance Abuse)	•
	INDEPENTANT LIVING GROUP HOME: agency based homes for youth with specialized needs or major barriers to living independent (i.e. dd, maternity, etc)	•

Housing Option	Type	Appropriate Support Services
Community Living	SCATTERED SITE APPARTMENTS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe, stable living accommodations • Basic life-skill building, • Interpersonal skill building • Educational opportunities • Assistance in job preparation and attainment, • Link to community resources and services • Care management
	SUPERVISED APPARTMENTS: agency owned with on site manager	
	SPECIALIZED FOSTER HOMES: homes where youth is placed with a community family.	
	SHARED HOMES: minimally supervised housing shared by several youth who take responsibility for the house and personal affairs	
	BOARDING HOMES/HOSTLES: facility that provides individual rooms for a youth with minimal supervisory exceptions	