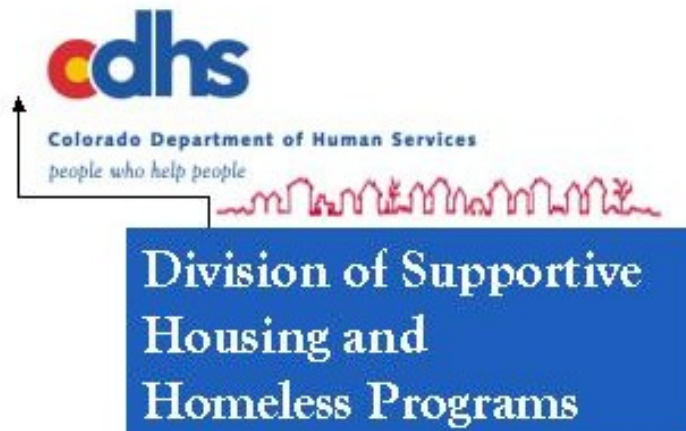




Office of Homeless Youth Services 2008 Annual Report

Colorado Department of Human Services,
Division of Supportive Housing and Homeless
Programs



STATE OF COLORADO



Colorado Department of Human Services

people who help people

1575 Sherman Street
Denver, Colorado 80203-1714
Phone 303-866-5700
www.cdhs.state.co.us



Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor

Karen L. Beye
Executive Director

January 31, 2009

I am pleased to present the 2008 Annual Report for the Office of Homeless Youth Services located within the Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Supportive Housing and Homeless Programs.

These are tough times for Colorado. This is especially true as the Colorado Department of Human Services works to design and deliver quality human services for some of our most vulnerable citizens; homeless and runaway youth on their own. Despite the many challenges, significant progress has been made over the past several years.

I want to thank the many staff members of the state departments as well as the staff from the many community based organizations for committing considerable resources to ensure significant progress towards the goals outlined in this report.

The following report and attached Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan highlight the work of the Colorado Department of Human Services in providing leadership to collaboratively tackle the issue of youth homelessness through the Office of Homeless Youth Services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Karen L. Beye'.

Karen L. Beye
Executive Director

STATE OF COLORADO



Colorado Department of Human Services

people who help people

OFFICE OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND HOUSING
Joscelyn L. Gay, Deputy Executive Director

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING AND HOMELESS PROGRAMS

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Paulette St. James, Ph.D.
Director



Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor

Karen L. Beye
Executive Director

January 31, 2009

I am pleased, on behalf of the Colorado Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth, to present to you the 2008 Annual Report of the Office of Homeless Youth Services. The Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth advises and assists the Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Supportive Housing and Homeless Programs in carrying out the legislative intent of the Colorado Homeless Youth Services Act. This is accomplished primarily through the successful implementation of the Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan.

The attached report provides a review of the progress and findings of the Office of Homeless Youth Services as well as the collaborative efforts of the Colorado Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth members. Many dedicated individuals representing public, private, and non-profit community agencies provided the time and resources necessary to accomplish the progress thus far in preventing and addressing youth homelessness across Colorado.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Johnson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Andy Johnson, Chair
Colorado Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth

Our Mission is to Design and Deliver Quality Human Services that Improve the Safety and Independence of the People of Colorado



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

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

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

City and County Officials	
City and County of Denver Allen Pollak, Director, Children and Families Denver Department of Human Services	Jefferson County Roxanne Sabin, Child & Youth Services Supervisor Jefferson County Human Services
Rena Walker, Youth Administrator Denver Department of Human Services	Anne Powley Chafee Independent Living Program Jefferson County Human Services
Leigh Hinze, Chafee and Independent Living Unit Supervisor Denver Department of Human Services	Kristen Waites Chafee Independent Living Program Jefferson County Human Services
Edwin Chambers, Social Caseworker Denver Department of Human Services	El Paso County Maija Schiedel, Manager, Permanency Division, Children and Family Services El Paso County Department of Human Services
Jerene Petersen Denver's Road Home Denver Department of Human Services	Ann Carlisle, Supervisor, Residential Placement El Paso County Department of Human Services
Commander Deborah Dilley Denver Police Department, District 6	Larimer County <i>Vacant</i> <i>Larimer County Department of Human Services</i>
Ginger Hecht, Business Development Assoc. Denver Office of Economic Development	Boulder County Paula McKey, Director Boulder County Department of Social Services
Adams County <i>Vacant</i> <i>Adams County Social Services Department</i>	Wade Branstetter, Social Caseworker Boulder County Department of Social Services
Arapahoe County Michael Degretto, Adolescent Supervisor Arapahoe County Department of Human Services	Andrea Righi, Chafee Program Boulder County Department of Social Services
Carly Daelli, Youth Workforce Specialist Arapahoe/Douglas Works	Nicole White, Chafee Program Coordinator Boulder County Department of Social Services
Mesa County Mark Neujahr Mesa County Department of Human Services	Christina L. Pacheco, Children and Youth Resources Manager City of Longmont
Elbert County Debbie Bowers Elbert County Department of Social Services	Pueblo County <i>Vacant</i> <i>Pueblo County Department of Human Services</i>
Schools	
Heather Powers Colorado's Finest Alternative High School Englewood Public School District	Anna Stout, Homeless Liaison-South Quadrant Denver Public Schools Educational Outreach
Cathy Haller, Prevention Services Coordinator Mesa County Valley School District 51	Jackie Ulmer, Homeless Liaison-North Quadrant Denver Public Schools Educational Outreach
Sheree Conyers, District Homeless Coordinator Jeffco Public Schools	

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

**Office of Homeless Youth Services
2008 Annual Report**

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**Office of Homeless Youth Services
2008 Annual Report**

**Colorado Department of Human Services
Division of Supportive Housing and Homeless Programs**

Executive Summary

This report is submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly in support of the Homeless Youth Services Act (House Bill 02-1159 and House Bill 04-1107) concerning the accomplishments of the Office of Homeless Youth Services. This report provides a summary of the Office of Homeless Youth Services activities. More detailed information is available on the Homeless Youth Services website at: <http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/shhp/Homeless-Youth.htm>. The submission of this report is not legislatively required and is provided for informational purposes only.

History of the Office of Homeless Youth Services

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

Initially, the Office of Homeless Youth Services (OHYS) was housed under the Colorado Department Public Health and Environment with proposed federal funding to support a full time staff position. However, the anticipated funding did not become available and the OHYS was in operation for just one year (July 2002 through June 2003) with a half-time staff position.

On May 21, 2004 the Governor signed House Bill 1107, authorizing the transfer of the Office of Homeless Youth Services from the Department of Public Health and Environment to the Department of Human Services, Division of Supportive Housing and Homeless Programs (SHHP). A full time Homeless Youth Coordinator position was created, supported with federal funding administered by SHHP. The OHYS became fully operational in December 2004.

Objectives of the Office of Homeless Youth Services

The Office of Homeless Youth Services is strongly encouraged by statute to work with the Executive Directors, or their designees, of the Departments of Corrections, Education, Health Care Policy and Financing, Human Services, Public Safety, Public Health and Environment, the Judicial Department, as well as private nonprofit and not-for-profit organizations, appropriate federal departments and other key stakeholders in the community. The Office of Homeless Youth Services seeks to:

- Identify and remove obstacles to the provision of services to homeless youth;
- Improve the quality of services provided to homeless youth;

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

Colorado Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth

An Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth (ACHY) was created to advise and assist the OHYS in carrying out the intent of the Homeless Youth Services Act. The ACHY meets quarterly with participation from approximately 60 members representing federal, state, and local government entities; school districts; homeless and other human service agencies; elected officials; and homeless youth. An additional 45 ACHY workgroup meetings were held during 2008.

Trends: Youth Homelessness in Colorado

According to recent point in time counts of the homeless conducted in Colorado in 2006 and 2007, there are approximately 1500 homeless youth on any given night. In addition, a March 2008 survey of homeless persons receiving services in Denver found over 400 homeless unaccompanied youth just in the City and County of Denver alone.

Unfortunately, this may be an undercount as homeless youth are especially difficult to count due in part to Colorado's largely rural and mountainous landscape and the transience of youth staying in temporary housing situations. Youth come from a wide range of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. Many family and systemic issues contribute heavily to youth homelessness.

Although homeless youth in Colorado are not a well researched group, homeless youth shelter providers in Colorado recently reported that the number of sheltered youth experiencing major mental health issues has increased to at least 70%. This causes significant challenges as providers attempt to reunify these youth with family or assist them in transitioning towards independence.

The Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan: An Overview

In 2007, the Homeless Youth Coordinator, with significant participation from members of the Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth (ACHY), facilitated the development of a five-year strategic action plan. The plan is designed to prevent and address youth homelessness in Colorado and to ensure that the primary objectives outlined in the Homeless Youth Services Act are accomplished. Ultimately, the implementation of this plan is intended to ensure that Colorado youth have the necessary opportunities and support for a successful transition to adulthood.

The Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan includes the following priority areas:

1. **Prevention:** *To prevent youth homelessness by promoting a culture of individual, familial, community, and government responsibility.*
2. **Housing:** *To have safe, decent, easily accessible, and developmentally appropriate homes for every youth.*

3. **Supportive Services:** *To provide comprehensive, wrap-around services to achieve maximum self-sufficiency or reunification with families.*
4. **Planning and Awareness:** *To create awareness and establish best practices and policies based upon accurate data and strategic planning.*
5. **Outreach:** *To identify and link vulnerable youth to appropriate housing and services.*

The Homeless Youth Coordinator has primary responsibility for facilitating the overall plan implementation and monitoring progress towards the objectives. The ACHY created workgroups, representing each one of the five aforementioned priority areas, to complete specific action steps and to make necessary recommendations. Several other key youth initiatives have partnered with OHYS to collaboratively implement many of the plan strategies.



Youth receive services at the Colorado Homeless and Runaway Youth Awareness Month Kickoff Event on November 6, 2008.

Office of Homeless Youth Services 2008 Annual Report

Chapter 1 - 2008 Outcomes and Accomplishments

During 2008, the Office of Homeless Youth Services (OHYS) made significant progress in each section of the Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan. The highlights are listed below by plan priority area.

1. Prevention

- The Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth (ACHY) conducted a statewide survey on current life skills practices and resources as a part of a gap analysis process. (January 2008)
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Vital Records Registrar assisted in removal of barriers to obtaining birth certificates. (January 2008)
- ACHY and Bridging the Gap at Mile High United Way worked with the Colorado Office of the Child's Representative (OCR) to create birth certificate acquisition and resource training film for caseworkers and guardian's ad litem. (February 2008)
- OHYS and Bridging the Gap at Mile High United Way trained county vital records registrars on the streamlined birth certificate acquisition process at the 2008 Vital Records Conference. (April 2008)
- The Colorado Division of Child Welfare drafted a proposed rule, which would require all youth in the child welfare system to be provided with their photo identification, Social Security Card, and birth certificate prior to exit. Rule making hearings are scheduled for early 2009. (December 2008)
- OHYS presented on youth homeless prevention and discharge planning at OCR training for judges and guardians ad litem. Presentations were provided in Adams, El Paso, and Denver Counties as well as during the OCR Statewide Conference. (January - May 2008)
- Several ACHY members attended the 2008 Homeless Youth and the Law Conference hosted by the American Bar Association and the National Network for Youth. Model state laws were drafted and state specific modifications are currently in process. (June 2008)

2. Housing

- OHYS presented an overview of the steps being implemented in Colorado to strategically address youth homelessness statewide at the 2007 and 2008 Ohio Homeless Youth Summit. Ohio and Colorado have formed an ongoing relationship that allows for best practice and innovation sharing. (December 2008)
- Urban Peak began leading a collaborative process to plan for a congregate care housing model to serve homeless youth with co-occurring disorders. (June 2008)
- The Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Supportive Housing and Homeless Programs (SHHP) created a permanent supportive housing project,

- in partnership with the City of Denver and Urban Peak, serving 10 homeless youth who exited the juvenile justice and/or child welfare systems. (May 2008)
- Forward Steps Foundation, a new transitional housing program for former foster youth and homeless youth, began housing youth in the Denver Metro Area. (2008)
- ACHY hosted a statewide summit to begin planning and visioning for the creation of rural host home that will shelter homeless and runaway youth in underserved parts of the state. (April 2008)
- OHYS provided technical assistance to San Luis Valley agency to design a rural host home model and to submit an application for federal funding assistance. (July 2008)

3. Supportive Services

- ACHY and Bridging the Gap at Mile High United Way produced a report summarizing the results of information and referral needs survey and focus groups. (January 2008)
 - Report results delivered to the National Runaway Switchboard and YouthNet. (April 2008)
 - OHYS hosted a statewide training conducted by the National Runaway Switchboard for service providers covering their information and referral resources. (April 2008)
 - Youth Net assigned the task of implementing appropriate suggestions to the State Youth Council of the Colorado Workforce Development Council. (December 2008)
 - Links to the key information and referral resources were added to the OHYS website. (February 2008)
- Homeless education liaisons and the State Coordinator for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth attending CONET and ACHY quarterly meetings to better connect with homeless youth direct service providers. (January 2008)
- CDE and CDHS hosted joint training with homeless education liaisons and direct service providers. (November 2008)
- Pilot projects to create partnerships between local school districts and non-profit organizations were developed. (2008)
- CDE put systems in place to measure and track educational success of homeless youth in Colorado school districts. Data collection results to be available in June 2009. (June 2008)
- As of the 2008-2009 school year, CDE is leading the nation by collecting specific unaccompanied youth data from all Colorado school districts. (2008)
- OHYS presented a workshop at the Rocky Mountain Workforce Development Conference on strategies to engage homeless youth in workforce services. (May 2008)
- OHYS promoted homeless youth as a priority area during planning with the State Youth Council of the Colorado Workforce Development Council. (February 2008)

- Urban Peak completed an expansion of their shelter building in Denver, thereby allowing for additional space to provide supportive services to shelter youth and drop –in youth. (October 2008)
- The Mile High Council on Substance Abuse and Mental Health and Urban Peak Denver received funding for the new Beat the Street program, which targets homeless and at-risk young adults in the Denver metro area with substance abuse, mental illness or co-occurring disorders. Its purpose is to improve youth's residential stability and self-sufficiency by integrating age-appropriate housing and support services with individualized substance abuse and mental health treatment. (2008)
- The Mental Health Center of Denver, in partnership with Urban Peak Denver and the Mile High Council on Substance Abuse and Mental Health, received funding to conduct outreach, conduct Street Smart groups, provide rapid HIV testing and service planning, provide therapy and psychiatric services to the youth referred through the outreach efforts. The program targets young people of color who have HIV or are at risk of contracting HIV.

4. Planning and Awareness

- A homeless point in time count was conducted by SHHP for Denver's Road Home. The survey showed that over 400 youth between the ages of 13 and 24 were on their own in the City and County of Denver on any given night. (March 2008)
- Several youth were identified and trained by Mile High United Way for a youth speakers' bureau. (November 2008)
- OHYS co-hosted Colorado Adolescent Champions quarterly luncheon (along with CDPHE Adolescent Health Director) for program coordinators/managers from across all state government departments who run programs addressing the needs of youth/adolescents. OHYS will continue to work with CDPHE to ensure that this networking group continues to meet quarterly for the purpose of better coordinating our state's adolescent services across departments and divisions. (Quarterly beginning November 2007)
 - Colorado Adolescent Champions attendees created a chart showing all functional program areas in state government working on adolescent/youth issues. (March 2008)
 - A subset of this group began meeting to explore state technology strategies to engage youth and rural providers. (June 2008)
- OHYS worked with The Colorado Department of Education (CDE), Family Tree, Inc., Mile High United Way, Stand Up for Kids, The GLBT Community Center of Colorado, Urban Peak and Volunteers of America to conduct a public awareness campaign promoting November 2008 as Colorado Homeless and Runaway Youth Awareness Month. (November 2008)
 - A Kickoff Event was held with approximately 250 attendees, including approximately 100 homeless youth who received information about accessing education, employment, housing, shelter, and emergency services. Basic medical care, food and other necessities were distributed to the homeless youth in attendance. Proclamations declaring November 2008 as Homeless

and Runaway Youth Awareness Month were issued during the event by Governor Bill Ritter, Jr. and Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper. A proclamation issued by Colorado Springs Mayor Lionel Rivera was also announced at the event. Green light bulbs were distributed to community members to help them show their support and raise awareness of the issues facing homeless youth in Colorado.

- Numerous community events were held during the awareness month campaign including fundraisers, a provider training conference sponsored by CDE and CDHS, a film screening and discussion panel, service learning programs with local schools and youth boards, and booth space at local events.
- A CDE public service announcement on the educational rights of homeless youth was aired on Colorado television stations.
- A fact sheet on youth homelessness in Colorado was created and distributed.
- The Homeless Youth Coordinator participated on the National Runaway Prevention Month Task Force, and was able to align Colorado's planning process with the national awareness campaign.
- OHYS and Urban Peak Colorado Springs presented on youth homelessness and the work of the OHYS at the annual Colorado Springs Homeless Conference. Facilitated a community needs and opportunities conversation with community providers. (September 2008)
- OHYS developed an electronic bimonthly newsletter that is distributed statewide with information on upcoming events, available funding resources, recent research findings and other information related to homeless youth issues. (July 2008)
- The Colorado Division of Child Welfare received a federal demonstration grant to facilitate collaborative planning and support systems for rural homeless youth. The ACHY is acting as the steering committee for this grant, which will assist rural communities in creating local community plans to better service homeless and runaway youth. (October 2008)

5. Outreach

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

Continuing the Work: Action Items for 2009

OHYS will continue to focus on developing a more coordinated service delivery system to prevent and address youth homelessness in Colorado. Some of the activities outlined in the Colorado Homeless Youth Action plan, which are targeted for completion during 2009, include:

1. Prevention
 - Identify life skills, mentoring and support service gaps and best practice models for youth at risk of homelessness.
 - Reduce caseworker barriers to vital document acquisition and continue to develop a vital document retention/storage process for transition age systems youth. Ensure that all youth exiting systems of care have access to their vital documents.
 - Create recommendations for the child welfare and juvenile justice systems on appropriate discharge planning and policies.
 - Create emancipation policy recommendation.
2. Housing
 - Facilitate the creation of additional units of housing and shelter for homeless and runaway youth based on best practice models.
 - Apply for an additional 100 Family Unification Program transitional housing vouchers to support homeless former foster youth.
3. Supportive Services
 - Work with information and referral providers for youth in Colorado to improve youth access to resources and services;
 - Collaboratively develop recommendations, carry out actions, and promote awareness of the need for increased access to and the creation of developmentally appropriate mental health services, mentoring programs and other promising program models.
 - In partnership with the Colorado Department of Education, create recommendations and facilitate the replication of best practice models to address the educational gaps and needs of homeless youth.
4. Planning and Awareness
 - Increase homeless and runaway youth data captured in the statewide homeless count scheduled for January 27, 2009 and in the Homeless Management Information System that is generating the report.
 - Develop a document that maps the connections and opportunities for partnership between the various functional program areas serving adolescents/youth in state government.
 - Provide technical assistance to communities as they implement local plans to address youth homelessness.
 - Continue to raise awareness in Colorado of the unique needs of homeless youth through the promotion of Homeless and Runaway Youth Awareness Month and the distribution of newsletters and reports related to youth homelessness.
 - Create a report of the key homeless youth survey findings for use in conducting specific gaps analysis.

5. Outreach

- Coordinate quarterly human trafficking/exploitation trainings for homeless service and other youth serving providers across Colorado.
- Increase relevant content on the OHYS webpage.
- Facilitate collaborative partnerships to reach homeless and runaway youth across Colorado.



2008 Homeless and Runaway Youth Awareness Month Provider Training Forum

Summary

Youth Homelessness remains a significant issue in Colorado and it is imperative that the needs of these youth are elevated to a high priority. These needs can be addressed through a combination of awareness, action, policy decisions, and targeted funding allocations. Through the collective efforts of our public and private sectors, Colorado youth will be afforded the opportunities necessary for a successful transition to adulthood.

For more information on the work of the Office of Homeless Youth Services, please visit <http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/shhp/Homeless-Youth.htm> or call 303-866-7366.

Office of Homeless Youth Services 2008 Annual Report

Chapter 2 - The State of Youth Homelessness in Colorado

Too many Colorado youth have been left to fend for themselves, without a safe and stable place to stay. The term ‘homeless youth’ refers to young people who are on their own and not under the care and supervision of a parent or guardian. Youth Homelessness is a problem in urban, suburban, and rural areas of Colorado. While the largest numbers of youth have been identified in urban areas of the state, concerned agencies and citizens in the rural and suburban areas of the state have identified an increasing number of youth experiencing homelessness as well. While gathering data on this population is challenging, efforts by communities and service providers estimate that between 1200 and 1500 youth and young adults ages 12 to 24 are homeless in Colorado at any given time.¹ Many providers and youth believe that this is actually a significant undercount, due to the number of youth who remain “under the radar” in local communities.² Researchers also estimate that between 5 to 7.7 percent of all adolescents in the United States experience homelessness each year.³ There has been a significant increase in the number of younger youth experiencing homelessness in recent years. The National Runaway Switchboard, a federally designated communication and support center for homeless and runaway youth, operates a 24-hour crisis hotline. Callers to this hotline who are under the age of 12 have increased by 172 percent since 2000 and callers between the ages of 12 and 13 have increased substantially as well.⁴

Youth become homeless for a wide variety of reasons. Although many stereotypes may exist in the minds of the general public, each young person has been on a unique journey that led to their state of homelessness. Homeless and runaway youth face unbelievable circumstances and obstacles in their lives. Youth homelessness is largely a reflection of family breakdown. Homeless youth often flee homes where they experience physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. Other key factors include parental substance abuse or mental health issues. Family conflict surrounding the sexual orientation, parenting status, or disability status of the young person is also common. Youth exiting the child welfare and juvenile justice systems make up a large number of the homeless and runaway youth population. National figures estimate that around 21-53% of youth who become homeless were formerly a part of the child welfare system.⁵ According to the Colorado Division of Child Welfare, Colorado emancipates between 300-400 foster youth per year. Approximately 10-18% of youth exiting youth corrections in Colorado are discharged to

¹ Colorado Interagency Council on Homelessness. *The Colorado Statewide Count, Summer 2006 and Winter 2007*. <http://www.colorado.gov/cich/pit.htm>

² O'Brien, T. & Applebaum, L., Ph.D. (2007). *Colorado Statewide Homeless Count, Winter 2007*. http://www.colorado.gov/cich/Winter%20Report%20Release/Winter_2007_Statewide_PIT.pdf

³ Robertson, M.J., and Toro, P.A. (1998). *Homeless Youth: Research, Intervention, Policy*. National Symposium on Homelessness Research. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

⁴ National Runaway Switchboard (2008) *Callers to National Runaway Switchboard Getting Younger*. http://www.1800runaway.org/news_events/TrendsStatistics.htm

⁵ Toro, P., Dworsky, A. & Fowler, P. (2007) *Homeless Youth in the United States: Recent Research Findings and Intervention Approaches*. <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/homelessness/symposium07/toro/index.htm>

a situation of homelessness due to a lack of housing options.⁶ These youth were many times raised within the ‘system’ and may not be adequately prepared or have the resources to transition from the system to some form of stable housing. Another category is youth who are parenting. These youth may also fall into one of the previously mentioned categories, but have the added challenge of a young child of their own to care for. Although some of these youth are asked to leave home due to their pregnancy or parent status, many do not become pregnant until after seeking survival on the streets.⁷

Safe shelter programs for homeless and runaway youth are concentrated primarily in the Denver Metro area with a few beds existing in locations such as Colorado Springs as well as in Taowac on the Ute Mountain Ute reservation. Limited transitional housing programs exist, however these services are primarily limited to the Denver area. Despite the significant obstacles faced by these young people, a large majority continues to attend school.⁸ Other entities are working hard with limited resources to meet the complex needs of the homeless and runaway youth population. However it is not enough.

Youth on their own operate in survival mode and experience negative outcomes in the areas of health, education, and employment. Without prevention and early intervention, these youth are not likely to transition successfully to adulthood. Instead these youth are at high risk for HIV and STI infection,⁹ suicide, incarceration, dropping out of school, teen parenting, and system dependence. Without the appropriate opportunities and supports, homeless youth are likely to become a part of the adult chronically homeless population.¹⁰

Youth on their own are at great risk for further victimization and exploitation. Thirty percent of homeless youth will be actively recruited for the purposes of sexual exploitation and other forms of human trafficking within 48 hours of leaving home. Researchers estimate that at least 162,000 homeless youth are victims of commercial sexual exploitation in the United States.¹¹ Unfortunately, Colorado is situated along a key domestic sex trafficking route.¹²

The issue of funding has become much more significant as the entire nation feels the strain of these uncertain economic times. Recently, Colorado was notified that the two agencies operating the Transitional Living Program for homeless youth ages 16-21 were not going to be refunded starting in 2009. Unfortunately, these two programs served 41

⁶ Hall, J., Ph.D. (2008). *Personal interview June 30, 2008 with Jennine Hall, Ph.D. Program Manager of Transition and Parole Services, Division of Youth Corrections, Colorado Department of Human Services.*

⁷ Greene, J.M., & Ringwalt, C.L. (1998). Pregnancy among three national samples of runaway and homeless youth. *Journal of Adolescent Health, Volume 23, Issue 6.* <http://www.jahonline.org/article/PIIS1054139X98000718/Abstract>.

⁸ Congressional Research Service, Fernandes, A. (2006) Runaway and Homeless Youth: Demographics, Programs, and Emerging Issues.

⁹ Van Leeuwen, J M, Hopfer, C., Hooks, S., White, R., Petersen, J., & Pirkopf, J. (June 2004). A snapshot of substance abuse among homeless and runaway youth in Denver, Colorado. *Journal of Community Health, 29, 3.* p.217(13).

¹⁰ National Network for Youth. (n.d.) *Issue Brief: Consequences of Youth Homelessness.*

http://www.nn4youth.org/media/factsheets/IssueBrief_Youth_Homelessness.pdf

¹¹ Ekstrom, Bob. (n.d.). *They can't work at McDonalds, so their choice is to sell drugs or themselves.*

<http://www.windyouth.org/index.htm>.

¹² Lloyd, R. & Orman, A. (2007). *Training Manual on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.* CSEC Community Intervention Project, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

youth per year in the Denver metropolitan area. One of the agencies had been operating the program for 17 years. Homeless youth service agencies also report other significant losses of funding in recent months for case management and other support services. Youth continue to report being turned away from shelter and housing due to a lack of space. Supportive services providers also report experiencing capacity issues to service this population. Lack of funding and coordination appear to be high on the list of issues facing the existing service delivery system.

**Office of Homeless Youth Services
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Chapter 3 – Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan Summary

The Colorado Homeless Youth Action is designed to prevent and address youth homelessness in Colorado and to ensure that the primary objectives outlined in the Homeless Youth Services Act are accomplished. The following summary outlines the priority areas and key strategies contained in the plan. The full plan is outlined in Chapter 4.

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

Key Strategies:

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

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

Key Strategies:

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

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

Key Strategies:

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

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

Key Strategies:

- Recreate Colorado Network of Homeless Youth Providers (CONET) to ensure interagency collaboration and coordination of services, resources and to connect with regional and national efforts to address the issue of youth homelessness;
- Create a public awareness campaign for National Homeless Youth Awareness/Runaway Prevention Month each November;
- Increase awareness and education of Homeless Youth Issues

- Coordinate research and data activities related to homeless youth;
 - Ensure homeless youth voice to inform policy initiatives; and
 - Create and distribute Office of Homeless Youth Services annual report.
5. **OUTREACH:** *To identify and link vulnerable youth to appropriate housing and services.*
- Key Strategies:**
- Train providers on human trafficking issue and victim identification;
 - Create homeless youth outreach web pages that include: 24-hour runaway and homeless youth crisis lines, human trafficking and suicide hotlines, and frequently asked questions; and
 - Increase collaborative outreach statewide to link homeless and at-risk youth with resources and support.

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Chapter 4 – Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

January 2007-December 2011

The Office of Homeless Youth Services (OHYS) created the statewide Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth (ACHY) as a vehicle to assist with implementation of the Homeless Youth Services Act.

- **Vision Statement:** Public, private, and faith-based agencies working together to end youth homelessness in Colorado.
- **Mission Statement:** To end youth homelessness by improving the quality, availability, and accessibility of services provided to homeless youth and those at risk of homelessness.



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

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

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

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

Strategy 1.2. To ensure that youth have access to their state issued photo identification, Social Security Card, and birth certificate upon exit from the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Many youth exit these systems of care without access to

these important life documents, making it nearly impossible to acquire housing, education, employment, supportive services and other necessary supports. Many of these youth end up at homeless service providers, in part due to a lack of access to their vital documents. In order to tackle this issue, the ACHY will form a joint workgroup with Bridging the Gap at Mile High United Way. This workgroup will develop a project plan that will focus on the acquisition of these documents before the youth leave care, safe storage options for these documents during the transition process, and creating a life skills curriculum so that youth exiting care are better educated on how to access and secure these important documents.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strategy 2.3. Resources to support existing and new housing options need to be identified and increased. This may include funding recommendations where funding gaps exist. The plan calls for the identification of potential partners to support and to carry out the development of new housing resources. These potential partners may include non-profit organizations, faith based organizations, community or neighborhood

associations, as well as property management and business partners. By using a collaborative partnership model, many existing resources will be leveraged in order to acquire new and enhance existing housing services.

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

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

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

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

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

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

development of a plan for homeless youth to gain access to developmentally appropriate and affordable health, mental health, and substance abuse services across Colorado.

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

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

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

This strategy also calls for increased collaboration between agencies collecting data on homeless youth in order to identify effective ways of measuring educational success. School districts and other agencies are to collaborate with the Colorado Department of Education's data collection unit in order to gain a better understanding of the data available and effective identifiers in order to measure and track educational success for homeless youth. As a result of this collaboration, systems will be put into place that track data on homeless youth in terms of retention and dropout rates, expulsion and suspension rates, and proficiency on assessment testing. Other indicators will be discussed and researched. This includes a focus area on addressing credit accrual issues for homeless youth who enroll mid-semester.

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

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

Strategy 3.5. To develop a continuum of supportive services for homeless youth within local communities across Colorado. The ACHY will conduct an environmental scan of current supportive services accessible by homeless youth across Colorado. Using

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

Priority Area Four - Planning and Awareness: To create awareness and establish best practices and policies based upon accurate research and data, youth engagement, and strategic planning.

The fourth priority area calls for increased public and political will through coordinated public awareness activities. In addition, data and research are to be compiled collaboratively to ensure that local and statewide planning is based on the best evidence available. Youth must be actively engaged in this process using the positive youth development framework in order to achieve maximum levels of success.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Strategy 5.1. To educate providers and communities statewide regarding the risk posed to homeless youth of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. To begin with, the ACHY will link with the Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking in order to coordinate efforts most effectively. The plan calls for homeless youth outreach

organizations to begin using information from anti –trafficking organizations in outreach presentations such as with local schools. In addition, local homeless education liaisons are to be trained to identify trafficking victims and create awareness in local schools. The direct service staff members from homeless youth service agencies are to be trained in basic human trafficking knowledge. This will allow the staff to identify current and potential victims of human trafficking/exploitation and to offer appropriate assistance and referrals as the staff develops relationships with the youth. The OHYS website will contain a resource page with links to human trafficking materials, hotlines, and key resource information.

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

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

Funding

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

Evaluation

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

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

Office of Homeless Youth Services 2008 Annual Report

Chapter 5 – Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan Matrix

January 2007-December 2011

PRIORITY AREA ONE - PREVENTION: To prevent youth homelessness by promoting a culture of individual, familial, community, and government responsibility.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Completion Date (Estimated)	Progress to Date
Strategy 1.1 Enhance transferable life skills and other supportive services provided to youth in systems of care and other at-risk youth to assist them in gaining the developmental assets needed for transition to adulthood	Action 1.1.1 Identify current practices in systems of care in areas such as life skills/developmental assets, as well as financial/asset management	Prevention Workgroup	Greater awareness of current services available and populations served allowing for better program planning	List completed, reviewed by Advisory Committee on Homeless Youth (ACHY) List placed on the Homeless Youth website	October 2007 November 2007	In process
	Action 1.1.2 Conduct a gaps analysis of life skills available across the state	Prevention Workgroup, Planning Workgroup	Life skill categories needing increased availability are identified	Conduct a review of current life skill practices across the state	January 2008	Statewide review conducted 1/08
			Locations across the state needing additional life skills identified	Conduct analysis of life skill gaps	January 2009	In process

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA ONE - PREVENTION: To prevent youth homelessness by promoting a culture of individual, familial, community, and government responsibility.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Completion Date (Estimated)	Progress to Date
	Action 1.1.3 Develop best practice guide containing developmental and financial asset building models that can be replicated at local agencies or in local communities statewide	Prevention Workgroup	Model is replicated statewide and youth have access to asset building activities	Guide complete and posted on Homeless Youth website	May 2009	
	Action 1.1.4 Expand the availability of youth transition related programs statewide to reach all key regions of the state and to include a broad range of services and life skill development activities	Prevention Workgroup	At risk youth have access to necessary life skills and transition services Identified gaps in services are addressed with new or expanded life skills and transition services	Assist current programs providing transition services in utilizing best practice models to address needs Facilitate building collaborative partnerships to provide youth with transition and life skills in underserved regions of the state	June 2009 February 2010	Colorado Department of Human Services, (CDHS) Division of Child Welfare (DCW) secured Support Systems for Rural Homeless Youth grant to create local homeless youth plans for rural regions

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA ONE - PREVENTION: To prevent youth homelessness by promoting a culture of individual, familial, community, and government responsibility.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Completion Date (Estimated)	Progress to Date
	Action 1.1.5 Improve accessibility of developmentally appropriate mental health and substance abuse services to youth at risk of homelessness	Prevention Workgroup, Supportive Services Workgroup	Reduction of youth homelessness as youth have access to necessary supportive services	(See strategy 3.3)	(See strategy 3.3)	In process
Strategy 1.2 Ensure that youth have access to ID and Vital Documents upon exit from systems of care	Action 1.2.1 Develop a workgroup to discuss the easier acquisition of ID and vital documents for youth who are homeless (cosponsored by ACHY and Bridging the Gap)	ACHY Documents Workgroup and Bridging the Gap (BTG) Partnership Forum	Current policies and practices for all systems for acquisition and retention of IDs and vital documents are identified Barriers and opportunities identified	Initial list reviewed by the Prevention workgroup	January 2007	Completed
	Action 1.2.2 Research national ID and vital document acquisition and retention models as well as current state processes and practices	ACHY Documents Workgroup and BTG Partnership Forum	National models identified Colorado policies and processes identified	Initial list reviewed by the Prevention workgroup	April 2007	Completed

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA ONE - PREVENTION: To prevent youth homelessness by promoting a culture of individual, familial, community, and government responsibility.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Completion Date (Estimated)	Progress to Date
	<p>Action 1.2.3 Develop a coordinated plan to ensure youth have access to IDs and vital documents upon exit from systems of care</p>	<p>ACHY Documents Workgroup and BTG Partnership Forum, CDHS-DCW & Division of Youth Corrections (DYC)</p>	<p>All youth will exit systems of care in Colorado with access to IDs and vital documents</p>	<p>Plan developed and agreed to by the Prevention Workgroup</p> <p>Draft policy recommendations to be adopted by systems of care</p>	<p>August 2008</p> <p>August 2009</p>	<p>In process. Birth Certificate process streamlined and training CD/website created</p> <p>Social Security Card and Photo ID tasks in process</p> <p>In process</p>
	<p>Action 1.2.4 Develop a coordinated plan to ensure that youth who exited systems of care have a means to store their vital documents and records during transition to adulthood</p>	<p>ACHY Documents Workgroup and BTG Partnership Forum</p>	<p>All youth who exit systems of care in Colorado will have access to a means of vital documents storage/retention</p>	<p>Agreement from stakeholders to move forward.</p> <p>Plan developed and agreed to by the Prevention Workgroup</p> <p>Plan elements begin to be implemented</p>	<p>October 2007</p> <p>January 2009</p> <p>January 2010</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>In process. Storage options and barriers being explored</p>

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA ONE - PREVENTION: To prevent youth homelessness by promoting a culture of individual, familial, community, and government responsibility.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Completion Date (Estimated)	Progress to Date
	Action 1.2.5 Develop a curriculum model to ensure that youth in systems of care develop life skills in the area of ID and vital document acquisition process, uses, retention, and care	ACHY Documents Workgroup and BTG Partnership Forum	All youth in systems of care in Colorado will receive life skill training regarding ID and vital document acquisition, retention, uses, and care before exit	A replicable curriculum model regarding ID and vital documents is developed and available to local communities	April 2009	In process
Strategy 1.3 Improve the availability, accessibility and effectiveness of programs providing life long connections, support systems, mentoring, and life coaching to youth at-risk of homelessness.	Action 1.3.1 Identify current programs offering these activities to youth and areas needing these services statewide	Prevention Workgroup	A list of age appropriate recommendations for improving access to these services for youth at risk of homelessness statewide	A comprehensive list of current programs offering these services is developed A gap analysis is conducted statewide	September 2009 October 2009	In process
	Action 1.3.2 Develop best practice model that can be replicated at local agencies or in local communities statewide.	Prevention Workgroup	Model is replicated statewide and youth have access to supportive individuals	A comprehensive list of best practices that can be used by service organizations across the state for program planning	September 2009	
	Action 1.3.3 Develop shared system of training volunteer mentors for youth	Prevention Workgroup	Mentors are trained in a consistent manner statewide and agency overhead to run mentor programs is reduced	Statewide training protocol developed and agency agreements in place	December 2010	

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA ONE - PREVENTION: To prevent youth homelessness by promoting a culture of individual, familial, community, and government responsibility.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Completion Date (Estimated)	Progress to Date
Strategy 1.4 Strengthen Families and provide community based support and intervention	Action 1.4.1 Expansion of the Family Assistance Center Model	Prevention Workgroup	Family Assistance model which includes elements to reduce risk factors for youth and helps to stabilize and support families	Model is developed and includes specified elements Communities to implement model are identified	January 2010 April 2010	
	Action 1.4.2 Expand Respite program model for parents and youth who need a time out/break	Prevention Workgroup	Reduced incidents of child abuse as well as throwaway/runaway youth	Model is expanded Potential Partners and funding are identified	December 2009 March 2010	
	Action 1.4.3 Expand and extend aftercare and follow up services for youth returning home from respite and sheltering programs	Prevention Workgroup	Reduced incidents of repeat respite service needs Successful transitions back into home	Aftercare service funding identified Agencies providing extended aftercare services in key regions across the state	December 2010 September 2011	
	Action 1.4.4 Conduct a marketing and outreach campaign to raise awareness of prevention and family intervention resources across the state	Prevention Workgroup	Reduced incidents of child abuse as well as throwaway/runaway youth	PSAs developed and aired Partnership agreements with 211 call centers and other information outlets	October 2010 August 2010	

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA ONE - PREVENTION: To prevent youth homelessness by promoting a culture of individual, familial, community, and government responsibility.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Completion Date (Estimated)	Progress to Date
Strategy 1.5 Ensure appropriate discharge planning for youth exiting systems of care	Action 1.5.1 Identify models to support successful transition from systems of care to stable housing	Prevention Workgroup, Housing Workgroup	Successful models are identified that would best serve the youth of Colorado	Draft sample housing exit plans Identify best practice strategies and policies for housing exit planning	October 2009 December 2009	In process In process
	Action 1.5.2 Improve discharge policy and practice in systems of care	Prevention Workgroup, Colorado Community and Interagency Council on Homelessness (CCICH)	Public Policy supports youth transitioning successfully from systems of care to stability	Public policy recommendation	February 2010	
	Action 1.5.2 Conduct training for caseworkers in systems of care on housing exit planning strategies	Prevention Workgroup, Housing Workgroup	Youth successfully transition from systems of care to stable housing	Coordinate with systems of care to create training for caseworkers	December 2010	
	Action 1.5.3 Create recommended model emancipation law for Colorado	Prevention Workgroup	In rare cases, youth who are unable to return home and are ready for transition to independence are able to legally emancipate from parents/system and are able to sign contracts, leases, and permission slips.	Model emancipation public policy recommendation created	December 2009	Workgroup members attended a national conference in 6/08 to craft draft model laws. State specific modifications in process.

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

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

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

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

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

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

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

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

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

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

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

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

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

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

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

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

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

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

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

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

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

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

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

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

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FOUR – PLANNING/AWARENESS: To create awareness and establish best practices and policies based upon accurate research and data, youth engagement, and strategic planning.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
Strategy 4.1 Create a report that shows the number and characteristics of homeless youth in Colorado	Action 4.1.1 Ensure participation from youth serving agencies in homeless counts conducted by CCICH, continua of care, CDE, etc.	Planning Workgroup, CCICH	More comprehensive and accurate data is available for Colorado	All homeless youth serving entities statewide participate in annual homeless survey	January 2009 (And ongoing)	In process. Data gathered from previous homeless surveys
	Action 4.1.2 Increase HMIS participation by homeless youth serving agencies statewide	Local continua of care HMIS implementers (CDHS-SHHP, Pikes Peak United Way, Colorado Coalition for the Homeless)	Better program data is available on program and individual youth outcomes	75% of homeless youth serving entities are collecting HMIS data	June 2009	In process
	Action 4.1.3 Meet with entities gathering key data on this population in Colorado	Planning Workgroup, Prevention Leadership Council, Continua of Care, Denver's Road Home, Urban Peak	Coordination of data collection and analysis efforts for homeless/at-risk youth	Meet with key individuals	May 2009	In process
	Action 4.1.4 Facilitate the cooperation of important systemic empirical data sources to collect data relevant to youth homelessness	Planning Workgroup	Key questions added to Child Welfare, DYC, Workforce, GLBT, Public Health and other statewide systems	Recommendations crafted for data providers Questions identified/added	March 2011 December 2011	

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FOUR – PLANNING/AWARENESS: To create awareness and establish best practices and policies based upon accurate research and data, youth engagement, and strategic planning.

Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
	Action 4.1.5 Analyze data and compile reports to support statewide, community, and agency planning and increase public awareness	Planning Workgroup, BTG	Strategic planning includes data driven decision making Public Policy is informed on the state of youth homelessness in Colorado	Initial Analysis complete Annual update/analysis of data complete	June 2009 Annually (ongoing)	In process

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FOUR – PLANNING/AWARENESS: To create awareness and establish best practices and policies based upon accurate research and data, youth engagement, and strategic planning.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
Strategy 4.2 Ensure that agencies have opportunities to network and coordinate service delivery to homeless youth	Action 4.2.1 Hold CONET meetings quarterly on the same day as each ACHY meeting and market to all homeless youth serving agencies in Colorado and tie into regional and national efforts	Homeless Youth Coordinator, CONET members	Interested parties may participate in one or both meetings Homeless youth serving agencies in Colorado will participate and have increased opportunities for networking and collaboration	Meetings Scheduled and held at least quarterly Funding allocated for CONET/Region 8 participation on National Network for Youth Policy Council Representative elected and actively serving on Youth Policy Council Mountain Plains Network for Youth participating in CONET meetings	January 2007 – ongoing April 2007 February 2007 July 2007	Completed. Ongoing meetings held quarterly beginning 1/07 Completed. Funding secured Completed. Representative elected and actively participating Mountain Plains Network for Youth no longer has funding to provide technical assistance on RHY
	Action 4.2.2 Increase youth serving agency opportunities for participation in local homeless continuums of care and other local homeless planning bodies	Planning Workgroup	Homeless youth serving agencies and related issues will be more visible in local communities across Colorado	Youth serving agencies added to distribution lists for local homeless planning groups	March 2009	In process

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FOUR – PLANNING/AWARENESS: To create awareness and establish best practices and policies based upon accurate research and data, youth engagement, and strategic planning.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
	Action 4.2.3 Increase coordination between existing system and grassroots homeless strategy efforts	Planning Workgroup	Planning and recommendations related to homeless youth are conducted in a coordinated manner across Colorado	Joint strategies are created with other homeless strategy efforts Recommendations are proposed jointly by ACHY and other homeless strategy efforts	August 2009 January 2010	In process. OHYS and CDPHE co-host quarterly luncheons with state agency adolescent program coordinators. 11/07 - ongoing
	Action 4.2.4 Utilize CONET to create a speakers bureau and training/technical assistance (TA) partnership to support statewide needs/actions	Planning Workgroup, CONET	(Supports 4.2.2) Agencies receive training and TA needed to best serve homeless youth Increased public and policymaker awareness about the issues and barriers faced by youth who are homeless	Speakers bureau created and utilized for training and public awareness opportunities Training/TA partnership formed and mechanism to meet training needs statewide developed	January 2009 April 2009	Several youth identified and trained for youth speakers' bureau 11/08. Provider speakers' bureau in process.

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

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

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

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

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

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

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FIVE - OUTREACH: To identify and link vulnerable youth to appropriate housing and services.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
Strategy 5.1 Educate providers and communities statewide regarding Human Trafficking problem/issues and assistance options	Action 5.1.1 Partner with the Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking	Outreach Workgroup	Increased partnerships to address human trafficking issues/serve victims/prevent trafficking situations	ACHY has key point person linked to the Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking Individual agencies have active membership established with Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking	June 2007 Ongoing	Complete. Point person identified 6/07 In process
	Action 5.1.2 Connect Homeless Youth serving organizations to training and anti-trafficking materials/information through the Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking	Outreach Workgroup, CDE and Colorado School Districts, CONET, Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking	Staff at homeless youth serving entities and school homeless liaisons create awareness and better identify potential human trafficking victims	Staff at homeless youth serving agencies include trafficking information in school and other outreach presentations Homeless Liaisons are trained regionally to identify trafficking victims and create awareness in local schools	January 2009 January 2009	In process CDHS and CDE jointly hosted a statewide Human Trafficking training for homeless education liaisons 11/07

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

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

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FIVE - OUTREACH: To identify and link vulnerable youth to appropriate housing and services.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
	Action 5.1.4 OHYS Resource Webpage has links to key human trafficking materials, hotlines and key resource information.	Outreach Workgroup, Prax(us)	The public, service agencies, and potential victims have access to key resource information on trafficking	Materials gathered for webpage Webpage approved and updated	September 2007 October 2007	Completed 9/07 Completed 10/07
Strategy 5.2 Create statewide webpage within the OHYS website which includes links to statewide and national resource directories as well as key crisis and outreach hotlines and information.	Action 5.2.1 Identify key resource directories, crisis hotlines, frequently asked questions, and other information to be included in webpage content	Outreach Workgroup, Supportive Services Workgroup	Comprehensive information on resources and hotlines is compiled	Materials and information gathered	October 2007	Completed
	Action 5.2.2 Draft format and design of webpage	Outreach Workgroup	Relevant content is included in the webpage design	Webpage designed	November 2007	Completed
	Action 5.2.3 Submit webpage for approval and launch	Outreach Workgroup, CDHS Webmasters	Information is available to the public, service agencies, and youth	CDHS approves page and website launched Website content reviewed and amended as necessary	December 2007 Ongoing – bi-annual	Completed In process - ongoing
Strategy 5.3 Develop and compile best practice models for coordinated/collaborative outreach to homeless and at risk youth that could be replicated in rural, suburban, and urban areas.	Action 5.3.1 Complete an environmental scan of current homeless youth outreach programs and current efforts to design/improve outreach services statewide.	Outreach Workgroup, Planning Workgroup	Current services are mapped and relevant outreach gaps identified	Environmental scan complete	April 2009	In process
	Action 5.3.2 Conduct literature and research review of local and national collaborative youth outreach and other best practice models which could be replicated statewide	Outreach Workgroup	Outreach models identified to meet statewide needs	Review complete Models identified for replication	June 2009 August 2009	In process

Colorado Homeless Youth Action Plan

PRIORITY AREA FIVE - OUTREACH: To identify and link vulnerable youth to appropriate housing and services.						
Strategies	Actions	Implementer	Expected Outcomes	Benchmarks/ Deliverables	Targeted Completion Date	Progress to Date
	Action 5.3.3 Develop an outreach model and plan for replication in underserved portions of Colorado utilizing best practice models for ACHY endorsement and recommendation	Outreach Workgroup	Outreach best practice models for rural and urban settings that address the identified gaps and outlines resources necessary to implement will be incorporated in to the plan.	Model and plan complete Implementation begins	October 2009 February 2010	