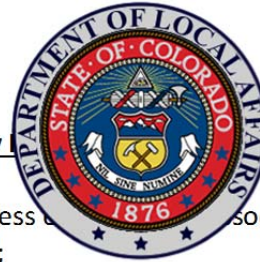




The Colorado Division of Housing  
The Office of Homeless Youth Services  
2013 Annual Report &  
2014 Action Plan



**Duties and Responsibilities of the Office of Homeless Youth Services as defined by**

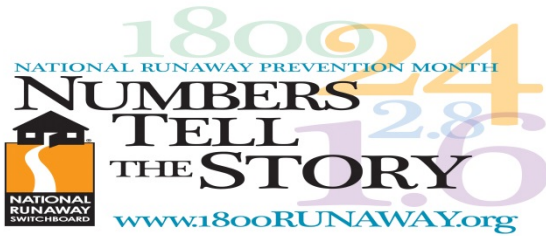
- To provide information, coordination, and technical assistance as may be necessary to reduce needless expenditures associated with the provision of overlapping services and to improve the quality of services provided to homeless youth;
- To identify both procedural and substantive obstacles to the provision of services and to make recommendations to the entities specified in this section concerning procedural, regulatory, or statutory changes necessary to remove such obstacles;
- To obtain information from service providers concerning known services available for the homeless youth population in the state of Colorado and to post such information on a web site on the internet
- To develop, maintain, and make available a listing of all rights and organizations that may be relevant to the homeless youth population in the state of Colorado, including but not limited to a listing of legal, educational, and victims' rights and organizations related thereto;
- To obtain information concerning known funding sources available for the homeless youth population in the state of Colorado; AND
- To work with entities to identify issues concerning sharing of information in providing services to homeless youth and to facilitate resolution of such information-sharing issues.
- To work with the executive directors, or their designees, of the departments specified in section 25-20.5-108 (6), C.R.S., as well as the Colorado department of public health and environment, the judicial department, private nonprofit and not-for-profit organization, appropriate federal departments and other key stakeholders in the community.

These duties successfully carried out, are intended to achieve the following

- The identification and removal of obstacles to the provision of services to homeless youth;
- Improved quality of services provided to homeless youth;
- Reduction of needless expenditures caused by the provision of overlapping services to homeless youth; and
- Identification of housing, supportive services and funding resources available to entities serving homeless youth.

"Homeless youth" means a child or youth who is at least 9 years of age but is younger than twenty-six years of age and who:

- Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; or
- Has a primary nighttime residence that is:
  - A supervised, publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations; or
  - A public or private place not designed for, nor ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.



The number of young people who experience homelessness each year is largely unknown. Often called an "invisible population," young people who are homeless tend to stay with friends, avoid adult services, and dodge authorities, making it difficult for communities to include them in their annual point-in-time counts and to engage them in services.

The most vulnerable segment of Colorado’s population, children and youth, is experiencing homelessness at an ever increasing rate (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2013). The National Runaway Safeline estimates there are over 1,500 homeless and runaway youth in Colorado at any given time. Of the total respondents to the 2013 Metro Denver Point in Time homeless survey, 921 were between the ages of 13 and 24, a 19 percent increase from the previous year. This report cautions that this age group is typically under represented and that these percentages do not distinguish between homeless young people who are part of a family and those that are unaccompanied. The Colorado Rural Collaborative for Runaway and Homeless Youth, which is composed of 13 rural counties has served 241 youth ages 16 to 21.

The 2013 Balance of the State Point in Time homeless survey, 844 between the ages of 13 to 24.

|  | Sheltered  |              |            | Unsheltered | Total      |
|--|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|------------|
|  | Emergency  | Transitional | Safe Haven |             |            |
| <i>Number of Children<br/>(under age 18)</i> | <b>168</b> | <b>281</b>   |            | <b>160</b>  | <b>609</b> |
| Number of Persons<br>(18 to 24)              | <b>77</b>  | <b>48</b>    | <b>0</b>   | <b>110</b>  | <b>235</b> |

The OHYS worked to leverage HUD’s Point-in-Time count to improve strategies for counting youth by enhancing collaborations between Continuums of Care (CoCs), Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) providers, and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and developing youth-specific counting methods. While the exact number of youth experiencing homelessness is difficult to determine given varying definitions of homelessness and the age range considered as youth, the most recent information from the Colorado Department of Education reports 1989 unaccompanied homeless youth were supported through school-based programs in 2012-2013. It is widely agreed this is a serious undercount as unaccompanied youth are often unconnected to schools, services, shelters.

**COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Overall, the number of students experiencing homelessness has increased significantly. *During the 2012-13 school year, 23,292 students experiencing homelessness were identified and served in Colorado public schools, grades PK-12.*

**The number of unaccompanied homeless youth** (youth on their own, without a parent or guardian) **identified and served in Colorado public schools increased 50% in a three year timeframe, from 1,325 in the 2009-10 school year to 1,989 in the 2012-13 school year.** More young people than ever have been left to fend for themselves during these uncertain economic times. This is troubling because these youth are perhaps the most vulnerable, as they are dealing with the crises of homelessness without a safe, supportive parent or guardian.

**Colorado Homeless Education Data Collection Grades K-12**

|                      |   |                        |                          |
|----------------------|---|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2012-2013            | 23,293                                      |                        |                          |
| 2011-2012            | 23,680                                      |                        |                          |
| 2010-2011            | 21,487                                      |                        |                          |
| 2009-2010            | 18,408                                      |                        |                          |
| 2008-2009            | 15,834                                      |                        |                          |
| 2007-08              | 12,302                                      |                        |                          |
| 2006-07              | 11,954                                      |                        |                          |
| 2005-06              | 12,689 (Hurricane Katrina/Rita School Year) |                        |                          |
| 2004-05              | 9,309                                       |                        |                          |
| 2003-04              | 7,319                                       |                        |                          |
| Sheltered<br>2012-13 | Doubled Up<br>2012-13                       | Unsheltered<br>2012-13 | Hotels/Motels<br>2012-13 |
| 3,038                | 18,036                                      | 502                    | 1,717                    |

| Grade 10 | Grade 11 | Grade 12 | Total                          |
|----------|----------|----------|--------------------------------|
| 1,345    | 1,216    | 1,939    | 4500 youth in grades 10th-12th |

Based on the aggregate students' data totals, it appears that there was a decrease in homeless student numbers from the 2011-2012 school year to the 2012-2013 school year. However, during state level monitoring by CDE, it was discovered that two districts in the state had inadvertently over reported numbers in the 2011-12 collection due to recent changes in the way their centralized district data systems aggregated McKinney-Vento student data. While the federal data submission cannot be changed for 2011-12, the information was reported to the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Office and corrective action was taken to correct the data reporting issues for the 2012-13 federal report. Taking into account the student number difference caused by the data system issue, the number of homeless students actually increased over 600 students from 2011-12 to 2012-13.

| OFFICE OF HOMELESS YOUTH SERVICES<br>STRATEGIC PLAN 2014   |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| Objectives   |  |  |   |
| <p><i>The key Objectives of the OHYS strategic plan include components that are in alignment with the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness's Opening Doors, the federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, Pathways Home Colorado, the Colorado state plan to address homelessness and the Colorado Division of Housing's, Homeless Programs Team goals.</i></p> | <p><b>1. Increase capacity, knowledge, leadership, and collaboration between State Government, non-profits, for-profits, and regional strategic planning committees.</b></p> | <p><b>2. Increase access to housing units through the continuum of supportive housing including acquisition of mainstream benefits, health care and behavioral health care services.</b></p> | <p><b>3. Increase access to economic security through sustainable employment and &amp; educational opportunities.</b></p> |

## Services Provider Update

| Agency              | Population            |  |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Attention Homes     | 12-25 yrs. Old        | Boulder, Broomfield, Gilpin, Larimer, Weld, Statewide                                |
| Comitis             | LGBTQ, 12-17 yrs. Old | Denver Metro - Arapahoe, Adams, Jefferson  |
| Family Tree         | 11-17 yrs. Old        | Denver Metro - Adams, Boulder, Jefferson   |
| Karis, Inc          | 11-17 yrs. Old        | Mesa County  |
| Rural Collaborative | Rural 11-21 yrs. Old  | Alamosa & San Luis Valley, Garfield, Huerfano/Las Animas, Moffat and Morgan Counties |
| Shiloh House        | 11-17                 | Denver Metro   |
| Urban Peak          | 15-25 yrs. Old        | Denver Metro, Colorado Springs, Statewide  |
| VOA                 | 18-25 yrs. Old        | Denver Metro   |

### Attention Homes Runaway and Homeless Youth program has

- Engaged 535 unduplicated youth through their drop in center
- Sheltered 91 unduplicated youth in their emergency shelter
- Moved 83% of minors served from our shelter to safe and stable housing
- Made 2,683 contacts from through street outreach
- Provided 1,296 transportation, vocational, housing, mental health, legal, and medical referral
- Provided 5,947 meals through shelter and drop in services
- Facilitated 453 hours of life skills training

Comitis was awarded a new grant to start our 180 street outreach program as of October 1<sup>st</sup>.

- Sheltered 152 youth in their runaway youth shelter with 83% returning to safe stable environments.
- Sheltered 1,895 families experiencing homelessness with children.

Devereux opened an independent living program that provides youth with a stable housing environment through individual apartments. Each youth is provided with their own apartment, utilities, household necessities, and additional support and life skills coaching as they prepare for transition. Each youth is partnered with a Transition Specialist to facilitate resource identification and enrollment in community support programs and educational and employment opportunities.

**The Family Unification Program (FUP)** vouchers are administered through a partnership between the Colorado Department of Local Affairs/Division of Housing (DOH) and Bridging the Gap (BTG) at Mile High United Way (MHUW) and supported by an expanding network of collaborating partner agencies. The vouchers provide 18 months of subsidized housing to eligible former foster youth providing them with the safety net and security they need to begin working on personal goals. Unfortunately, the recent government sequestration (March 2013) resulted in the vouchers being restricted, during which time no vouchers were distributed through the program. The waitlist for a voucher grew to 76 former foster youth who were homeless and in need of housing assistance. Fortunately, In December 2013, 30 sequestered vouchers were available again for Bridging the Gap to begin issuing as well as the ability to re-issue vouchers when youth complete their 18 months of housing. In just the last few weeks, we have approved 21 youth, voucher ready to start searching for a place to live. In addition, there are currently 98 youth in safe and stable housing utilizing a FUP voucher.

### ***Bridging The Gap***

- Approximately 54% of the BTG youth are parenting youth
- 59 youth have completed resumes
- 23 youth have participated in the Harrison Assessment /job suitability assessment
- 23 youth have participated in practice interviews
- 56 youth are currently employed
- Four youth are currently working at Mile High United Way, in the 211 department, marketing department and with the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative and there is apposition open at the Colorado Division of Housing
- 11 youth received scholarships
- Currently 62 Individual Development accounts are open for BTG and FUP youth; in 2013 IDA funds went towards education, healthcare, housing, investments, and transportation
- 

### **Gemini, Family Tree** in the Family Reunification Program (Shelter Beds 17 and under) served 143 youth

- 136 or 95% were reunified with their guardian or went into a safe and stable living arrangement (other family, Job Corps, Independent Living)
- All of the youth and their families were offered After-Care (6 months of in home Case Management Services)
- 7 of the youth ran within the first couple of days at Gemini
- Through Street Outreach, Resource Fairs and other Face to Face Contacts provided resources and or services to 3,115 youth, parents and other service providers/community members
- Family Tree Gemini is a 24/7 facility and have a crisis hotline that takes a very wide variety of crisis calls from youth and individuals.
- Staff answered 3,972 calls
- On the Prevention side, through the School and Community Presentations there were a total of 115 presentations that reached to a total of 2,529 youth and adults.

**The House, Grand Junction** provided 56 unduplicated teens with 2,285 bed nights, 6,832 meals, and over 3,800 hours of case management. The median teen spends 19 nights at The House. While staying at The House, teens saw a 157% increase in employment and 83% of teens made progress on their educational goals. Six months after exiting The House, teens saw a 300% increase in employment compared to when they entered the program. In the six months after teens exited The House, 82% made progress on their educational goals. Educational accomplishments in the past year include: four teens that earned their GEDs, three teens that earned their high school diplomas and three teens that were enrolled in college. While staying at The House, teens, on average, saw a 41% decrease in exposure and participation in harmful activities, a 52% decrease in depression, and a 53% decrease in anxiety (all at statistically significant levels). Teens also saw a 18% increase in their perceived social support. These results were reflected in six-month data where teens, on average, reported a 50% decrease in exposure and participation in harmful activities, a 61% decrease in depression, and a 44% decrease in anxiety. Teens also reported a 17% increase in their perceived social support (again, all statistics were statistically significant). Of the 56 teens that exited The House 47 teens (84%) were successfully placed into stable housing arrangements. Of the teens that The House made contact with six and 12 months after they left the program, 77% and 80% remained in stable housing arrangements, respectively.

## **Success Story**

**Nurse Family Partnership (NFP)** provides services for pregnant and parenting mothers who are enrolled in Mile High Untied Ways' Bridging the Gap program. An in home visiting nurse provides medical advice and support to young parents during pregnancy and during the first two years of their baby's life. Many young people were placed in foster care because of abuse and neglect. The hope is that they will learn to provide positive experience and healthy parenting strategies for their children.

In September of 2012, JoAnna was living doubled-up with her baby's father's family. Joanna, the father and they baby were all staying in one basement bedroom. JoAnna was depressed and relationships in the home were stressed. She was desperate for a home of their own, where they could be a family and raise their son. Immediately upon moving out on their own with the help of the voucher, JoAnna was transformed. She is an engaged, joyful mother. Her anger and depression lifted and her relationships with the father's family were repaired. She has created a beautiful, warm, and welcoming home. It is baby-proofed and spacious enough for her emerging toddler to do the work of toddlerhood. JoAnna and the baby's father are both working full time and they have secured quality childcare arrangements. They are swiftly moving toward self-sufficiency and managing the reality and stresses of independent living. It is difficult to predict where they might be today without the voucher, but it is safe to say that, for JoAnna, it was a bridge from dependence and depression to independence and happiness.



**Praxus** this past year fostered 7 young people's professional development. They hired one youth organizer as part of the staff, house one youth intern and contract youth outreach workers that help provide resources and referrals to people most affected by domestic human trafficking. Praxus is a part of several strong collaborative networks of organizations where they can refer young people needing shelter, housing, mental health and substance abuse assistance and help getting identification documents. Additionally, they receive referrals from agencies who encounter someone who has been exploited and is in need of assistance. Praxus provides training on exploitation to service providers and organizations within the local collaborative. They run weekly drop in hours called "Monday Nights is Righteous". This space aims to be a conscious, youth facilitated space. Since they started out sourcing the drop in house to a church downtown, 285 youth have joined. HartCore is the youth, survivor and constituent led community organizing program. In 2013, HartCore has been working on a media campaign that raises awareness of the harms and injustices created by Denver's Urban Camping ban.

**Posada ,Pueblo** Youth Drop in Center opened its doors in October 2013 and has served 117 homeless youth. These youth were enrolled in the homeless youth outreach project for full services including assessment, case management, basic needs, and personal care needs. When needed they were given referrals to: food resources, the medical clinic, mental health counseling, substance abuse counseling, plus education and employment services. In emergencies they were given shelter through hotel vouchers. Beginning in August they started a new outreach program and re-opened our low barrier drop-in center on September 1. Since August we have gone from 54 currently enrolled youth to over 100 youth in our program.

- 200+ visits to the new drop-in center in October and another 200+ in November
  - Engaged 5 youth in GED tutoring at our center with at least two taking the test this month.
  - Assisted 2 youth in applying for financial aid for college
  - Helped one youth apply to Ft. Lyons
  - Returned 4 youth to safe haven with family.
  - Assisted one youth to emergency shelter and a transitional housing opportunity in California
  - 2 youth have been housed in the TBRA program, 4 more are applying this month.
  - Assisted 2 youth in obtaining employment and housing without subsidy
  - Provided 25 nights of emergency shelter to youth through hotel vouchers.
  - Provided 150+ hot meals at the youth center
  - Provided 200+ packaged meals for unsheltered youth
  - Provided hygiene supplies to all youth in our program in need
  - Provided tents, sleeping bags, blankets, warm clothes, hats, gloves, shoes to all youth in our program in need.
  - Provided 100+ showers for youth in our program
  - Provided 50+ laundry voucher

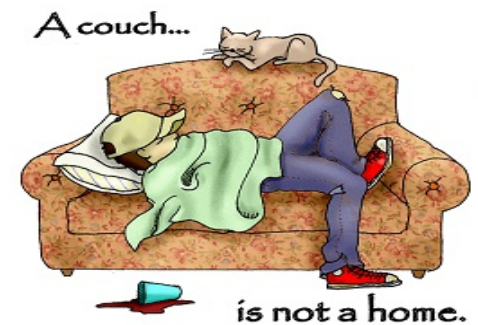
**Sarah's Home** in Colorado Springs is currently licensed as a foster home, can accept up to 4 girls, aged 12-17. They are specifically a home for girls that have been rescued out of commercial sex trafficking. As a foster home they can only accept girls that are referred to us through a county social worker. They offer a safe family environment and provide education, therapy, mentorship, and life skills.

**The Career Building Academy Lathrop (TCBA) Walsenburg campus** started with the renovation of the former youth detention camp during the summer of 2013. Nine youth from Huerfano County worked during the summer to bring this 10-year vacant campus back to life. Two grants from Daniels Fund and El Pomar provided the necessary funding to bring this 4.5 million dollar facility back to life. In August 2013, school started for local youth and youth from Colorado Springs. High school programming and career training are offered at this site for students who need a non-traditional model of education. In January, the first graduate will earn their diploma and begin work. The TCBA Lathrop campus is the second site opened that serves at-risk youth. Currently, they serve 21 youth at this site and in January enrollment will increase to 30 students.

**Urban Peak:** Served 2,331 youth experiencing homelessness

- Engaged 1,925 youth through our low barrier Drop-in Center and Street Outreach teams
- Sheltered 387 youth, with 48% moving on to safe and stable living environments
- Housed 167 youth, with 76% moving on to safe and stable living environments
- Helped 153 youth obtain employment
- Assisted 58 youth in completing their GED

| Colorado Rural Collaborative for Homeless Youth<br>Alamosa, Garfield, Huerfano, Moffat, and Montrose |           |        |       |      |
|--|-----------|--------|-------|------|
| Year 1: FYSB-designated planning year with no services delivery authorized.                          |           |        |       |      |
| Year 2   | Projected | Served | Under | Over |
| Total  | 28        | 81     |       | 53   |
| Year 3   |           |        |       |      |
| Total  | 50        | 57     |       | 7    |
| Year 4   |           |        |       |      |
| Total  | 50        | 60     |       | 10   |
| Year 5   |           |        |       |      |
| Total  | 50        | 57     |       | 7    |
|  |           |        |       | +10  |



**The Colorado Rural Collaborative and the OHYS hosted a Youth Summit** for both youth and adults, and offered training on trauma informed care, the family Unification Program for youth, positive youth development and the Colorado homeless and runaway awareness month.

**Praxus and the OHYS provided Human Trafficking 101** training for 80 participants from County and State Department of Human Services, and youth providers.

**DOH is creating and implementing a new project in Colorado supporting Rural Host Homes for homeless and runaway youth.** In 2013, DOH initiated the host family home demonstration project with the Garfield Department of Human Services, to expand shelter and support services to runaway and homeless youth who live in rural areas not served by shelter facilities. The host family home will function as a safe place, where youths' needs can be met while staff works to reunite them with their families or find suitable alternatives. Garfield County was funded to "recruit, screen, train, and provide ongoing support to host families. The flexibility of the host home model allows it to be adapted to a community's particular needs and assets. Host family homes will be utilized as a community engaging strategy to create housing when the use of shelters or scattered site apartment models is not available as an option.

**Structure of Colorado 9to25 - CO9to25** has roots in years of hard work from state and local agencies and community organizations. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Advisory Council on Adolescent Health and Colorado Youth Development Team (CYDT) joined forces in 2010 to take action and create a single, unified youth system-building effort, CO9to25. This effort was informed by 14 community conversations (half of which were youth participants) held around the state where youth and adults shared their vision, dreams and needs for youth in Colorado. Overwhelmingly, this vision included a state where young people, youth-serving professionals and parents work in partnership to develop a statewide, unified system in Colorado where positive youth development strategies are integrated into all programs, policies and practices that affect youth. The Colorado 9to25 Leadership Team (in development) will consist of 36 members (18 youth and 18 adults) who will meet quarterly to guide the work and make decisions. Action Teams will focus on achieving the comprehensive goals and objectives. While some Action Teams have been created specifically to meet the goals, others have come together organically to focus on work that contributes to the overall mission of Colorado 9to25.

**CO9to25 Colorado Youth Summit** is an example of an Action Team that came together because members saw the need for a statewide youth leadership summit that integrated Positive Youth Development (PYD). Eleven government and community-based organizations organized the event and worked with Colorado 9to25 to be the platform for marketing, recruiting and registering. PYD is not a specific program but an approach to structuring services, systems and support so that young people can develop the skills and competencies they need to thrive as adults. Youth sat in the driver's seat in the planning of the Colorado Youth Summit while adults offered guidance and support. The goals of the day, the content, theme, speakers were all decided by youth and youth presented or co-presented with adults.

The first Colorado Youth Summit 2013 was deemed a success as it included interactive and interesting sessions led by youth and adults, a viewing of award-winning videos by youth councils from across the state that documented the change they led around health issues in their community, and a performance by the Flobots . Over 100 youth attended and Kaiser Permanente granted youth councils over \$17,000 for their impressive community improvement projects.

**Colorado Positive Youth Development Plan**, this past legislative session, HB-1239 passed requiring the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) to develop a statewide youth development plan. Since the CO9to25 action plan has a focus on many of the mandates outlined by the legislation, CDHS has requested to work within the CO9to25 action plan to fulfill its requirements.

**Colorado's Trauma Informed system of care** is a multiyear initiative that supports the implementation of the state and local system of care in local communities to develop an integrative and sustainable system of care at the state and local levels to better meet the needs of children, youth, and families with mental health challenges.

One of the goals is to expand the array of trauma informed, culturally and linguistically responsive community based services and supports for youth. By leveraging the existing trainings and technical assistance of this effort housed within the Division of Behavioral Health we will be able to increase our ability to integrate a trauma informed model with system and agency partners of this project. Currently 16 communities encompassing 19 counties are involved in this effort allowing us not only to build a strong network for this project but also reach out to communities in rural Colorado.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families awarded the **Colorado Department of Human Services, Office of Children and Youth and Families, Division of Child Welfare Services**, a two year planning grant to develop a Colorado-specific Model Youth Plan (MY Plan) called Pathways to Success.

Pathways to Success will build upon Colorado's cross-systems efforts to create a youth development system and address the risk of homelessness for youth when they age out of the foster care system without adequate intervention and transitional support at three engagement points: youth ages 14-17 who came into foster care, youth and young adults, ages 17-21, who are aging out of foster care, and youth and young adults who emancipated.

Using a framework developed through the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, the project will plan, test and ultimately implement a comprehensive statewide assessment and intervention framework aimed at producing five positive core outcomes: permanent connections, social and emotional well-being, safe housing and productive education and employment for youth self-sufficiency.

Key deliverables in Phase I of the project include: building the partnerships needed to prepare and implement the plan; refining the target populations; creating an outreach, screening, assessment and referral process to identify those most at risk; designing robust service intervention packages for communities across the state; conducting a comprehensive readiness assessment of state, county and local agencies.

The first of its kind, **State Coordinator for Educational Rights of Youth in Foster Care** works directly with the Colorado Department of Education. The position identifies and communicates the education needs across the state as they relate to foster care youth and in turn inform public schools about best practices and connection to resources for foster youth. The goal is to keep students stable in school system and to remove barriers to participation in education. A new website was launched to connect Child Welfare Education Liaisons at each school in Colorado with best practices and information on legislation to support foster care children in education.

**The Office of Behavioral Health** has contracted with AboveTheData, Inc to conduct an analysis project on transition aged youth and young adults (TAY), to compile quantitative and qualitative data to describe Colorado's current services for TAY, and their impact on youth outcomes as well as create data driven recommendations for system improvement. Symposium will be held in May 2104 to present the research findings.

**The Colorado Behavioral Health Transformation Council - Under 26 Transitions Work Group** is a sub-committee of the Continuum of Care-Colorado Behavioral Health Transformation Council . This dynamically productive group is the result of the merger of two separate groups in 2010 ( Youth and Young Adult Transitions Group, est. 2003 (YYAT) and The Colorado Behavioral Health Transformation Council ( CBHTC) Under 26 Transitions Work Group, est.2009 )that focused on the need for the development of a system of care for the Transition Age Youth and Young Adults, Age 14-25 .

There are Colorado youth with behavioral health needs aging out of public services (foster care, residential treatment, and youth corrections) that are transitioned into homelessness, poverty, and unemployment, among other issues related to becoming part of a disenfranchised population. The consequences are serious for both the individual and society, as these young people are more likely to not only fail to meet their personal potential, but also cost the state dollars in unemployment, expenditures on social services, and health care, crime/incarceration, as well as long-term lost earnings.

263 individuals participated in three Webinars in 2013, plus groups of people in 21 settings:

- Domains of Life: A Framework for Effective Service Deliver for Transition Age Youth / Young Adult- 65 attendees
- Disability Benefits Planning 144 attendees
- It's Your Move: Introducing The Transitions Age Guidebook 54 attendees

**The Colorado Taskforce on Higher Education for Unaccompanied Youth** is in support of a comparable in-state tuition classification which allows unaccompanied (not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian) homeless youth under the age of 22 who have resided in Colorado for one year to receive in-state tuition classification, as youth under 22 who are with parents/guardians currently do.



November has officially been recognized by the Governor as Colorado Runaway & Homeless Youth Awareness Month to increase awareness, advocacy, and action on behalf of homeless youth in Colorado. The ACHY hosted a kickoff event in partnership with the Denver Art Society.

A special film screening of Sugar was held at VOA, as part of Homeless and Runaway Youth Awareness. Based on true events, the film “Sugar” is the story of a young girl with a troubled past trying to survive on the streets of Venice Beach. She and her group of outcast friends live on the streets of Venice Beach, trying to find their own place in the world. Like so many homeless youth, Sugar is running from the pain of her past and will do anything to escape it. Sugar's new world starts to crumble when forced to confront the demons she's run from for the last two years. Sugar is an all too common story of a troubled youth learning how to stop hiding, and to start healing

The Colorado Department of Vocational Rehabilitation School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP) sites participated in the Homeless Youth and Runaway Prevention month. It was so impressive to see how many of the sites saw this as an opportunity to stay connected with community partners and education staff. Many people said they forged new friendships and reconnected with colleagues, to enhance future SWAP endeavors.

Jeffco and Adams 14 SWAP both organized very impressive Resource/Employment Fairs where hundreds of youth, family members and community partners attended the events. Both of these events were a great success!

Centennial BOCES organized a “clean-a- thon” where the staff and SWAP clients assisted with the maintenance of a Catholic Charities building. The youth learned on- the- job-training skills as well learned the importance of community engagement.

Mesa County sold green socks to the Career Center staff, local DVR office, and the Grand Valley Coalition for the Homeless. SWAP donated the proceeds of the sock sales to The House- the local teen shelter. Everyone who purchases the socks received a raffle ticket. The grand prize of the raffle was a \$50.00 gift certificate donated by a local restaurant.

San Luis Valley BOCES SWAP worked with Trinidad State Junior College for the month of November to educate students on Youth Runaway and Homeless Awareness.

Denver and Englewood SWAP participated in a Resource Fair organized by Project Homeless Connect 13.

Adams 50 SWAP conducted a coat and hat drive to support homeless and runaway youth in their community.

“Delta SWAP currently sits on the Abraham Connection Advisory Board which is a collaborative effort by the Delta community to provide to the homeless a warm shelter and meals. Social Services, the Delta Police Dept., the Sheriff Department, churches, Probation officer, Delta Housing Authority, City of Delta, Chamber of Commerce, Delta County School District Homeless Liaison, Havenhouse Homeless shelter, and the judicial system are on the board. The board meets monthly. Delta SWAP has contributed significantly to this board which has enabled Delta SWAP to further collaborate with the community,” Delta SWAP.

Due to the flood conditions in Longmont and Boulder during the fall, Boulder Valley SWAP will be holding their Employment/ Resource Fair in March, 2014.



## **OFFICE OF HOMELESS YOUTH SERVICES 2014 ACTION PLAN**

The key Objectives of the OHYS strategic plan include components that are in alignment with the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness's Opening Doors, the federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness, Pathways Home Colorado, the Colorado state plan to address homelessness and the Colorado Division of Housing's, Homeless Programs Team goals.

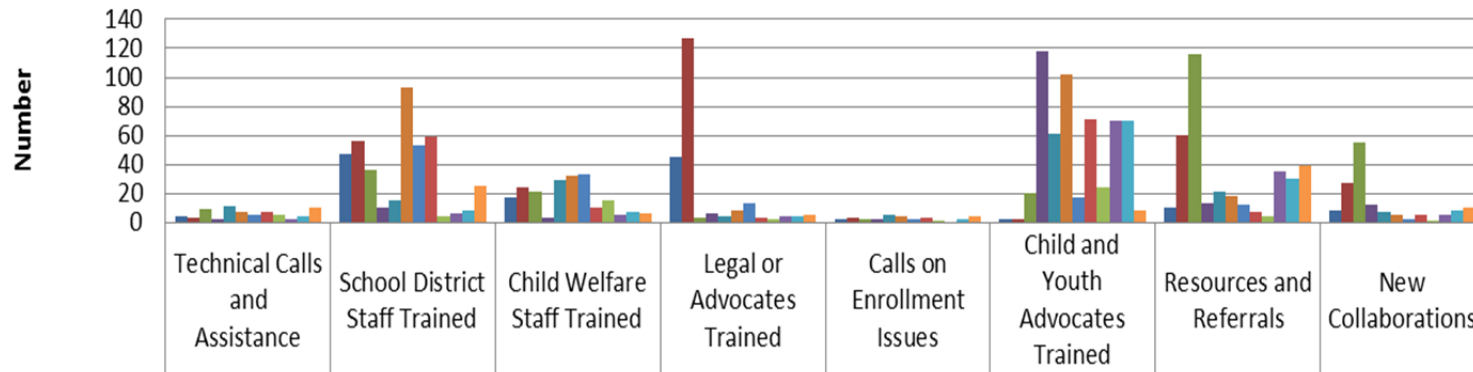
| <b>Objective #1:<br/>Increase capacity, knowledge, leadership, and collaboration between State Government, non-profits, for-profits, and regional strategic planning committees</b>  | <b>Lead Agencies</b>               | <b>Estimated Completion Date</b> |
|--|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <p>1.1. Convene youth serving agencies to revisit the intent of the Office of Homeless Youth Services legislation and explore funding opportunities that will support the OHYS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify existing and potentially new funding sources for “youth experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness;”</li> <li>b. Produce a list of 3 strategies that will increase funding for “youth experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness;”</li> <li>c. Increase coordination among agencies that receive and or apply for youth specific funding by creating a formalized funding agreement that outlines resource collaboration and strategic planning.</li> </ul>   | <p>ACHY<br/>ACHY<br/>ACHY</p>      |                                  |
| <p>1.2. Provide leadership, guidance that will ensure homeless and runaway youth issues are elevated where there are key intersections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop and implement a process for ACHY members to participate on cross system committees to enhance partnerships, promote coordinated and aligned strategies, and improve youth outcomes;</li> <li>b. Collectively determine “youth experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness” successful strategies and tactics;</li> <li>c. Make recommendation about “youth experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness” issues that should be referenced and aligned in the following state plans: Colorado 9 to 25, Statewide Positive Youth Development, System of Care, Collaborative Management, Child Welfare “Pathways to Success” grant and Workforce.</li> </ul> | <p>ACHY<br/><br/>ACHY<br/>ACHY</p> |                                  |



| <b>Objective #2:</b><br><b><i>Increase access to housing units through the continuum of supportive housing including acquisition of mainstream benefits, healthcare, and behavioral health care services</i></b>  | <b><i>Lead Agencies</i></b>                     | <b><i>Estimated Completion Date</i></b> |
|---|---|---|
| <p>2.1 Create a methodology that supports the type and number of youth housing needed in the next 7 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Complete an environmental scan of the existing inventory of housing resources, that will encourage the inclusion of youth vulnerability factors in making decisions around housing;</li> <li>b. Meet with each Continuum of Care (CoCs) as well as youth serving agencies and offer technical assistance to include youth in the Point in Time that will improve the integration of homeless youth in the PIT by increasing the number of counties that participate in the 2014 count;</li> <li>c. Capture existing data including the PIT, Vulnerability Index and the Colorado Department of Education’s McKinney Vento homeless youth K-12 numbers to increase the awareness around the need for supportive housing options.</li> </ul> | <p>ACHY<br/>ACHY<br/><br/>ACHY</p>              |   |
| <p>2.2 Provide oversight and technical assistance to the Rural Collaborative Host Family Home Demonstration Project funded by Homeless Prevention Activities Fund and create materials that will allow other communities to replicate the model.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Host monthly meetings to identify sustainable strategies that serve “youth experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness;” in rural Colorado including the Host Family Home model;</li> <li>a. Serve 5 youth in Garfield County to ensure that rural communities have the capacity to address youth homelessness by increasing access to safe, stable housing options for youth</li> <li>b. Develop a Host Family Home learning collaborative;</li> <li>c. Produce marketing and recruitment materials, user’s manual and policy guide.</li> </ul>                               | <p>RC<br/>RC, Garfield<br/><br/>RC<br/>ACHY</p> |   |

| <b>Objective #3</b><br><b><i>Increased access to economic security through sustainable employment and educational opportunities.</i></b>   | <b><i>Lead Agencies</i></b> | <b><i>Estimated Completion Date</i></b> |
|--|-----------------------------|---|
| 3.1. Work with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment to network with local workforce centers, attend job fairs, and cross train organizations around workforce development and homeless and runaway youth systems. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Capture existing works force models;</li> <li>b. Make recommendations of best practices;</li> <li>c. Engage business leaders to increased sustainable employment and opportunities to improve economic outcomes for youth.</li> </ul> | ACHY<br>ACHY<br>ACHY        |   |
| 3.2. Work with Child Welfare, CDE State Foster Care Liaison and Mile High United Way to discuss the best way to retool the Foster Care Educational Training Voucher Program. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Make 5 recommendations that will optimize the program for young people who have experienced placement in foster care 2014-2015 school years;</li> <li>b. Increase utilization of the Educational Training Vouchers.</li> </ul>  | ACHY<br>ACHY                |   |

**State Coordinator of Foster Care Education  
Monthly Data Collection 2012-2013**



|             | Technical Calls and Assistance | School District Staff Trained | Child Welfare Staff Trained | Legal or Advocates Trained | Calls on Enrollment Issues | Child and Youth Advocates Trained | Resources and Referrals | New Collaborations |
|-------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| ■ September | 4                              | 47                            | 17                          | 45                         | 2                          | 2                                 | 10                      | 8                  |
| ■ October   | 3                              | 56                            | 24                          | 127                        | 3                          | 2                                 | 60                      | 27                 |
| ■ November  | 9                              | 36                            | 21                          | 3                          | 2                          | 20                                | 116                     | 55                 |
| ■ December  | 2                              | 10                            | 3                           | 6                          | 2                          | 118                               | 13                      | 12                 |
| ■ January   | 11                             | 15                            | 29                          | 4                          | 5                          | 61                                | 21                      | 7                  |
| ■ February  | 7                              | 93                            | 32                          | 8                          | 4                          | 102                               | 18                      | 5                  |
| ■ March     | 5                              | 53                            | 33                          | 13                         | 2                          | 17                                | 12                      | 2                  |
| ■ April     | 7                              | 59                            | 10                          | 3                          | 3                          | 71                                | 7                       | 5                  |
| ■ May       | 5                              | 4                             | 15                          | 2                          | 1                          | 24                                | 4                       | 1                  |
| ■ June      | 2                              | 6                             | 5                           | 4                          | 0                          | 70                                | 35                      | 5                  |
| ■ July      | 4                              | 8                             | 7                           | 4                          | 2                          | 70                                | 30                      | 8                  |
| ■ August    | 10                             | 25                            | 6                           | 5                          | 4                          | 8                                 | 39                      | 10                 |

## Pathways to Success Grant

### (Colorado 9-25 Statewide Youth Development Plan (HB13-1239) **Grant Matrix**)

**Goal:** Through relational connections...provide youth-driven “Pathways to Success” to reduce the risk of homelessness.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| <p><b>YOUTH SYSTEM GOALS</b></p> <p><u>ALL</u> COLORADO YOUTH ARE:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SAFE.</li> <li>2. PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY HEALTHY.</li> <li>3. RECEIVE A QUALITY EDUCATION (CSTAT).</li> <li>4. CONNECTED TO CARING ADULTS, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITIES (CSTAT).</li> <li>5. CONTRIBUTING TO THEIR COMMUNITY (E.G. VOLUNTEERING, WORKING).</li> </ol> <p><b>MY PLAN GRANT POPULATIONS*</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> | <p><b>THE MIDWEST STUDY (CHAPIN HALL):</b></p>  | <p><b>FOSTER AND CHAFEE ALUMNI – NEED CHARACTERISTICS**</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Accelerated Adults (36.3%)**: A third were homeless; on food stamps; and report having PTSD</li> <li>2. Struggling Parents (25.2%)**: Unlikely to finish high school or attend college; and are on food stamps</li> <li>3. Emerging Adults (21.1%)**: Live in places that are not their own; 50/50 male/female gender</li> <li>4. Troubled and Troubling (17.5%)**: Likely to be homeless; uneducated; unemployed; and/or incarcerated</li> </ol> |   |   |   |  |
|   | <p><b>Work Groups:</b></p>  | Permanency Council and Task Group   | Under 26 Work Group Systems of Care   | Advisory Committee for Homeless Youth   | Education Opportunities Work Group  | State Youth Council (Work Force)   |
|   | <p><b>Plans:</b></p>  | IV-E Waiver Rollout Plan  | Youth in Transition Plan  | OHYS Strategic Plan   | Education Opportunities Plan  | State WIA Plan   |
|   | <p><b>Outcomes (Shared)</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">→</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Evidence-Based Assessments</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> | <p><b>Permanency (CSTAT)</b></p> <p>*Connected to <u>Safe</u> Relationships; Friends, family, and a community***</p>  | <p><b>Well-being</b></p> <p>*Comprehensive Health; Social, emotional, sexual, physical and dental</p> | <p><b>Housing</b></p> <p>*A Home; A safe, affordable and stable place to live</p> | <p><b>Education (CSTAT)</b></p> <p>*A Diploma with Work Skills; GED, High School, CTE, and/or College</p> | <p><b>Employment</b></p> <p>*A Career-Oriented Job; Paid or unpaid experiences</p> |
|   | <p>↓</p>  |   |   |   |   |  |
| <p>Youth, ages 14-17, who enter foster care*</p>  |   |   |   |   |   |  |
| <p>Youth, ages 17-21, in foster or extended foster care who are aging out*</p>  |   |   |   |   |   |  |
| <p>Youth, ages 18-21, who are no longer in care and experiencing or at-risk of homelessness*</p>  |   |   |   |   |   |  |

\*Source: Intervention Model developed by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (Colorado adaptation [http://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset\\_library/USICH\\_OD\\_Amendment\\_WEB\\_091112v2.pdf](http://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/USICH_OD_Amendment_WEB_091112v2.pdf))

\*\*Source: Midwest Study- Distinct Subgroups of Former Foster Youth in Young Adulthood, Chapin Hall, University of Chicago.

\*\*\*Friends, Family and Community; As defined by the youth or young adult.

## Creating a Housing Continuum

| Housing Option     | Definition  | How it supports the continuum   | Appropriate Support Services   |
|--------------------|---|---|--|
| Shelters           | Short term emergency housing  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helpful during transition</li> <li>• Creates connections to multiple resources</li> <li>• Provides links to other housing options</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food, clothing, medical care, or other services that youth need</li> <li>• Individual, group and family counseling</li> <li>• Outreach targeting both youth who many need assistance and other public or private agencies that work with youth and families</li> <li>• Aftercare services for youth after they leave shelter</li> </ul>                     |
| Subsidized Housing | Provide youth with a stipend/resources for rent, food, personal supplies/support with the offered care/case management while youth meets and follows established guidelines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates a beginning base of support</li> <li>• Good match for youth entering the workforce in school or the need that limit the ability to build income</li> <li>• Helpful in building transition to living independently</li> <li>• Linked to like skill and development and additional support services</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe, stable living accommodations</li> <li>• Basic life skills building</li> <li>• Interpersonal skill building</li> <li>• Educational opportunities</li> <li>• Assistance in job preparation and attainment</li> <li>• Care/case management</li> <li>• Physical and mental health support</li> <li>• Links to community resources and services</li> </ul> |
| Community Living   | Individual living arrangements made with private landlord or specialized housing programs that incorporate care/case management and link to community resources             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth learn by doing</li> <li>• Youth gain good housing skills though informal resources</li> <li>• Youth have many responsibilities</li> <li>• Blend into independent living with great ease</li> <li>• flexible location</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe, stable living accommodations</li> <li>• Basic life skills building</li> <li>• Interpersonal skill building</li> <li>• Educational opportunities</li> <li>• Assistance in job preparation and attainment</li> <li>• Care/case management</li> <li>• Physical and mental health support</li> <li>• Link to Community resources and services</li> </ul>  |

## Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth

| Accelerated Adults (36.3%)   | Struggling Parents (25.2%)  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most are female (63%)</li> <li>• Most likely to live on their own in fairly stable situation</li> <li>• Almost (98%) have high school degree or more; 52% have some college</li> <li>• Most likely to be currently employed</li> <li>• Nearly half (46%) has resident children</li> <li>• Relatively low rate of conviction (14%)</li> <li>• Group does not stand out on other indicators of functioning (social support, health, mental health and economic hardships)</li> <li>• This group is most likely to have made key transitions relatively early in adulthood (84% are connected)</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most are female (74%)</li> <li>• Nearly all (91%) have resident children and relatively few (8%) have a non-resident child; they parent 55% of all resident children</li> <li>• About equal numbers have their own place (46%) or live with relatives/friends (44%)</li> <li>• Most likely not have a high school degree (44%) and on 3% have any college</li> <li>• Only one quarter currently employed</li> <li>• Lower than average rate of conviction (14%)</li> <li>• Also least likely group to be currently in school, most likely to be married or cohabitating, second lowest reported social support and most likely to experience economic hardship</li> <li>• This group's experience is dominated by their parenting, under difficult circumstances 38% are connected</li> </ul>  |
| Emerging Adults (21.1%)  | Troubled and Troubling (17.5%)  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slightly over half are male (55%)</li> <li>• All are living with friends, relatives, or in other settings that are not their own</li> <li>• Vast majority (91%) has finished high school and they have second highest rate of having at least some college (46%)</li> <li>• They have the second highest rate of current employment (63%)</li> <li>• They are least likely to have children (27%) and over two thirds of those with children have non-resident children</li> <li>• Lowest rate of conviction (6%)</li> <li>• Also, they are least likely to have ever been married to have ever dropped out of high school, and to have ever been homeless</li> <li>• This group most resembles Arnett's emerging adults in that they are delaying some transition markers (living on their own, finishing school, having children while generally avoiding hardship (68% are connected)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vast majority is male (83%)</li> <li>• Are most likely to be incarcerated, otherwise institutionalized, homeless, and or to have experienced high residential mobility (72%)</li> <li>• Two fifths have not finished high school or GED and only 11% have any college</li> <li>• Least likely to be currently employed (10%)</li> <li>• 48% have non-resident children and on have resident children, they account for 41% of all nonresident children</li> <li>• 82% report a criminal conviction since age 18</li> <li>• Also, least likely to have felt prepared to be on their own at exit from care, most likely to have felt prepared to be on their health and or substance use problems, lowest reported levels of social support, highest rate of victimization, four times higher rate of nonviolent crime and doubled rate of violent crime compared to other groups</li> <li>• This group experiences a wide range of psychosocial problems and poses challenges to the community (30% are connected)</li> </ul> |

### **Homeless and Runaway Youth: Federal Policy**

- The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA), administered by the Family and Youth Services Bureau, part of the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Children and Families, was first enacted in 1974 and is the only federal law that focuses on unaccompanied, homeless youth. The RHYA, as currently amended, authorizes federal funding for three programs —the Basic Center Program, Transitional Living Program, and Street Outreach Program— to assist runaway and homeless youth.
- The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 was the first major federal legislative response to homelessness. Title VII of the Act includes provisions to ensure the enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youth in school. Under the Act schools must work to eliminate any barriers, such as transportation, that may prohibit students from attending school, and are required to appoint a liaison to work with homeless students and their families.
- The Chaffee Foster Care Independence Program provides states with funding to support and provide services to youth who are expected to age out of foster care as well as former foster care youth ages 18 to 21. Funds from the program can be used for housing, educational services and independent living services.
- The Fostering Connections Act of 2008 increased federal funds available to states to extend assistance to foster youth up until age 21 as long as the youth is in school, working or has a medical condition that prevents them from participating in those activities. Services can include housing assistance, vocational and college help, and counseling.

### **Homeless and Runaway Youth: State Policy**

- *Early Intervention and Prevention Programs:* Many youth become homeless as a result of family problems and financial difficulties. As a result, young people often lack the necessary supports to help them find jobs, obtain an education and reunite with their families. Implement a homelessness prevention program that includes counseling, family reunification services, and rent assistance.
- *Intervene with Already-Homeless Youth:* Homeless youth need access to services that will help them regain stability in their lives, such as obtaining a job and affordable housing. Provide homeless youth with access to educational outreach programs, job training and employment programs, transitional living programs, and services for mental health and life skills trainings
- *Independent Housing Options:* Expanding long-term housing options and providing supportive services —such as food, clothing and counseling— are examples of ways to help homeless youth. Create housing programs that respond to the diverse needs of homeless youth. Youth housing programs include group homes, residential treatment, host homes, shared homes, youth shelters, community-based transitional living programs and scattered site independently living. It is important to note that youth housing programs are more cost-effective than alternative out-of-home placements such as juvenile corrections facilities, treatment centers or jail. Funding is needed to implement transitional living programs and provide outreach services to keep youth in transition off the streets.
- *Enhance Services Provided by Juvenile Corrections and Foster Care Programs:* Each year, roughly 24,000 youth age out of foster care with little or no financial and housing resources. In addition, there is little attention paid to the housing needs of youth leaving juvenile correction facilities.