



COLORADO
Department of Local Affairs
Division of Housing

Office of Homeless Youth Services 2017 Annual Report



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Executive Summary

The Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Division of Housing (DOH) is pleased to present the 2017 Annual Report for the Office of Homeless Youth Services (OHYS).

The State believes ending homelessness for youth in Colorado will have a great impact on the futures of each youth served, as well as improving the status of homelessness in Colorado more broadly. In alignment with Colorado statute (§C.R.S. 24-32-723), OHYS has worked with other government and community-based providers towards the goal to end youth homelessness through the following efforts:

1. **“Identify and remove obstacles to the provision of services.”** OHYS has been focused on increasing access to housing for youth experiencing homelessness through the Family Unification Program (FUP) Housing Choice Vouchers, the Homeless Solutions Program (HSP) and the use of Project Based Vouchers (PBV). Two improvements to the FUP program this year include access to a security deposit fund for voucher holders and a centralized waiting list to reduce the barrier of location to accessing housing. The HSP funds have enabled youth-serving providers to receive funds for youth housing projects that otherwise would not have been able to secure funding. The PBVs reduce the barrier of securing housing for youth who have behavioral health conditions, criminal backgrounds, limited or no rental history, employment or credit history.
2. **“Improve the quality of services provided to homeless youth.”** OHYS used data collected during the 2017 Point in Time (PIT) and the first Youth Supplemental Survey conducted in Colorado to make recommendations to program implementation and delivery to improve access to and quality of services and housing for youth experiencing homelessness. Also along these lines, OHYS and DOH provided technical assistance across multiple agencies serving youth experiencing homelessness.
3. **“Reduce needless expenditures caused by the provision of overlapping services.”** OHYS provides the backbone support to the statewide Advisory Council for Homeless Youth (ACHY). The statewide council enables agencies an opportunity to come together, share information on resources, and coordinate efforts. This increased knowledge of resources allows agencies to make more effective referrals to youth seeking services and housing.
4. **“Identify funding sources available to entities serving homeless youth by sharing resources as they become available.”** The OHYS is uniquely located within the DOH. As such, OHYS and DOH have been able to advise youth-serving agencies on best practices and funding opportunities.

Through these efforts, the State continues to strive to make youth homelessness rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

Sincerely,

Alison George, Director of Division of Housing



Definitions

The following are definitions used throughout this report:

Youth Experiencing Homelessness: a child or youth who is at least eleven years of age, but is less than twenty-five years of age, who is not accompanied by a parent or guardian, and lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

Chronically Homeless a homeless child or youth who has experienced homelessness for at least a year (either continuously or with repeated episodes equaling a year within three years) and has a disabling condition.¹

Continuum of Care (CoC): a regional or local planning body that coordinates housing and services funding for families and individuals experiencing homelessness.² There are three CoCs in Colorado:³

Balance of State (BOS): 56 Counties

Metro Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI): 7 Counties

Pikes Peak (PP): 1 County

¹ <https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-chronic-homelessness/>

² <https://endhomelessness.org/resource/what-is-a-continuum-of-care/>

³ See the Maps section for map of Colorado CoCs



Background

OHYS was established in 2002 through a bill aimed at reducing youth homelessness in Colorado. The intent of the statute has remained the same, but has evolved through the years. The history and progression of the legislation is listed below. As a note, Colorado is one of only three states to have an office dedicated to youth homelessness.

2002-HB 02-1159 (25-20.5-111 AND 24-1-119) AN ACT Concerning the Creation of the Office of Homeless Youth Services and Making an Appropriation in Connection Therewith.

- OHYS started at Colorado Department for Public Health and Environment (CDPHE)

2004- HB 04-1107 (26-5.9-101-105 AND 24-1-119-120(5)) AN ACT Concerning the Transfer of the Office of Homeless Youth Services to the Department of Human Services and Making an Appropriation in Connection Therewith.

- From CDPHE to Colorado Department of Human Services (DHS)

2011- HB 11-1079 (26-5.7-102 AND 26-5.9-103) AN ACT Concerning Methods to Reduce the Number of Homeless Youth.

- The first section changes the lower age of a homeless youth from 15 to 11 and extends the upper age from 18-21.
- The second section adds a new subsection to the OHYS statute to include a report to legislation

2011- HB 11-1230 (24-32-723) AN ACT Concerning the Consolidation of State Programs that Distribute Federal Moneys to Persons Needing Assistance in Obtaining Housing into the Division of Housing Within the Department of Local Affairs Making an Appropriation in Connection Therewith

- Moved from DHS to Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA)
- Made it an article vs. a section

2012- HB 12-158 (24-32-705) AN ACT Concerning the Consolidation of Two Public Housing Agencies within the Division of Housing in the Department of Local Affairs

- There were at one time two state housing agencies, Division of Supportive Housing and Homeless Programs (SHHP) and DOH. This merged both into DOH. Making it the sole state housing authority.
- Only impacts OHYS in the sense that this office is located within what was SHHP.

2017- HB17-1047 (24-32-723) AN ACT Concerning the Scheduled Repeal of Reports by the Department of Local Affairs to the General Assembly

- Removed the section created in 2011 which required a report to legislators



Need/Resources⁴

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the data available on youth experiencing homelessness. However, even with the multiple data sources on youth homelessness, it is challenging to compile a comprehensive understanding of youth in Colorado without stable housing. For instance, the national 2017 PIT data reported 763 homeless youth (HY) in Colorado, while the McKinney Vento Act (McKV) reported 2,058 HY in the 2015-16 school year in Colorado. The differences are generally the result of different definitions of homelessness, count methodology, and relationship to youth experiencing homelessness.

The high numbers indicated by the above counts are likely a significant under count of the actual youth experiencing homelessness. Many reasons contribute to the suspected undercount including stigma, lack of resources, and emerging best practices on how to improve counts. However, even with the under represented number, there are not enough available housing resources in Colorado for youth experiencing homelessness.

PIT/YSS
763

- There are more HY than dedicated beds for youth experiencing homelessness⁵
- There are chronically HY in every CoC in Colorado, indicating youth homelessness is an urban and rural issue
- When compared to their adult peers, youth are less likely to be in a shelter and more likely to experience homelessness on the streets⁶
- Of the HY who reported not currently attending school, the majority have completed high school or received a GED

McKV
2,058

- 37% of counties in Colorado did not report any youth experiencing unaccompanied homelessness in their schools
- Nine counties represent 81% of all unaccompanied homeless youth counted in school districts⁷
- Unaccompanied HY represent approximately 7.7% of all identified HY in schools

Shelter
664

- There are four emergency homeless shelters for youth in Colorado
- The four shelters serve nine counties⁸ in Colorado (14% of the state)
- In a twelve-month period, a total of 664 of youth were served by these agencies
- HY shelters provide outreach to their assigned catchment areas, which often results in additional services being provided to youth

⁴ Each set of data set has limitations but is an attempt at gathering information and may not represent the full scope of the issue

⁵ See the Data section for more information about how this compares with other similar states

⁶ See the Data section for more detailed figures about unsheltered v sheltered youth homelessness

⁷ See the Maps Section for map of counties who have youth homelessness identified through McKV

⁸ See the Maps Section for map of counties served by youth homeless shelters



Housing Resources 639

- Per the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Housing Inventory Count, Colorado has the highest percentage of Permanent Supportive Housing options for youth (when compared to other similar states)⁹
- There are 639 dedicated housing options for youth throughout Colorado (housing options include: Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing, Permanent Supportive Housing, and Rapid Re-Housing)

⁹ <https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/coc-housing-inventory-count-reports/>



Accomplishments in 2017

PIT and Youth Supplemental Survey Report¹⁰

OHYS, ACHY, and the three CoC's worked together to add supplemental youth questions to the required PIT Count. For the first year ever, the collected data was used to create a report communities can use to track youth homelessness. This supplemental survey collected 731 youth responses from 21 counties.

Increased Housing Resources

In 2017, at least 94 dedicated youth housing units were created through four projects adding to the total number of youth housing units.¹¹ Of these new housing resources, DOH provided at least partial funding and/or vouchers. The resources developed this year focus on providing longer term housing than shelter stays. The entire list of known youth housing resources was compiled by the ACHY Housing Work Group.¹²

Decreased Barriers to Housing

- In working with the FUP community-based partners, DOH realized a barrier to youth accessing housing was security deposit payments. To respond to this need, DOH created a FUP Youth Security Deposit fund of \$50,000 for youth with these vouchers.
- The ACHY Housing Work Group also created informational materials to educate landlords on the benefits of renting to a voucher holder and to reduce the concerns of renting to youth.
- These two efforts combined moved the overall FUP Youth utilization rate from 64% in December 2016 to 77% in December 2017.

State and National Runaway and Homeless Youth Awareness Month (RHYAM)

- OHYS created an easy to use calendar of events and social media posts with content from the National Network for Youth's guidebook for RHYAM.¹³
- Governor John Hickenlooper and DOLA Executive Director Irv Halter recorded a reading of Governor Hickenlooper's Colorado Proclamation declaring November 2017 Runaway and Homeless Youth Awareness Month.

Funding Awareness

- In 2017, MDHI and BOS CoC's applied for HUD's Homeless Youth Demonstration Project. While ultimately not funded, the application process led to new relationships and better collaborations. OHYS supported each application and was involved in the coordination of stakeholders.

¹⁰ See Appendix 1 for the complete 2017 Point in Time Youth Supplemental Survey Report

¹¹ Pathways to Success, Nancy's Harbor, Bonnie's House, Attention Homes, PP Bonus Youth Project

¹² See Appendix 2 for the complete list of known housing resources for youth

¹³ See Appendix 3 for the calendar of events to raise awareness of youth homelessness during RHYAM



Goals for 2018

OHYS Goals:

1. Youth Voice:

During this year, OHYS will be working on multiple efforts to increase the voice and perspective of youth who have lived experience regarding homelessness for DOH and ACHY efforts.

2. Increased collaboration with other state agencies to provide for better access to housing:

Increased communication strategies to ensure collaboration between state agencies that work within systems often associated with youth in general, homelessness more broadly, and youth homelessness specifically.

3. Provide in depth technical assistance to at least one community in Colorado on best practices to end youth homelessness:

By focusing on ending youth homelessness in at least one community, OHYS will learn additional best practices and be better able to advise and provide technical assistance to other communities.

4. Advise and work with communities to increase housing opportunities for youth:

Continue to announce funding or technical assistance opportunities as they become available, and work with applicants to coordinate and submit competitive applications when appropriate.

ACHY Goals:

1. Increase statewide presence of representatives on ACHY:

To increase collaboration and knowledge of existing efforts to serve and house youth experiencing homelessness, ACHY will increase participation from various stakeholders outside of the youth homelessness realm and increase geographic representation as well.

2. Develop ACHY work groups based on priorities established by ACHY stakeholders:

Host a Call to Action meeting where stakeholders for youth homelessness can share ideas and creative solutions on potential long term strategies for Colorado. Use the strategies identified at the Call to Action meeting to create a strategic plan for OHYS.

3. Increase the communities involved with the PIT and Youth Supplemental Survey:

In 2017, ACHY increased the number of counties involved in the PIT and Youth Supplemental Survey from eight to 21 counties. This year, the OHYS aims to increase the number of counties involved to 40.

4. Create tangible outcomes from two work groups dedicated to housing topics:

Recognizing the housing strengths and expertise of the ACHY members, the work groups will use the Call to Action to create two housing specific work groups to address housing issues related to youth experiencing homelessness.



Maps, Data, and Appendix

Maps

1. Colorado CoC
2. McKinney Vento Locations
3. Youth Homeless Shelters
 - a. Note, shelters do not have residency requirements to receive services
 - b. Youth over 18 can access other adult shelters, fa;lkdjfkalgja;klga'lgkja'gk

Data

1. Colorado Comparison to Similar States
2. Sheltered vs. Unsheltered for Youth Compared to Adults

Appendix List

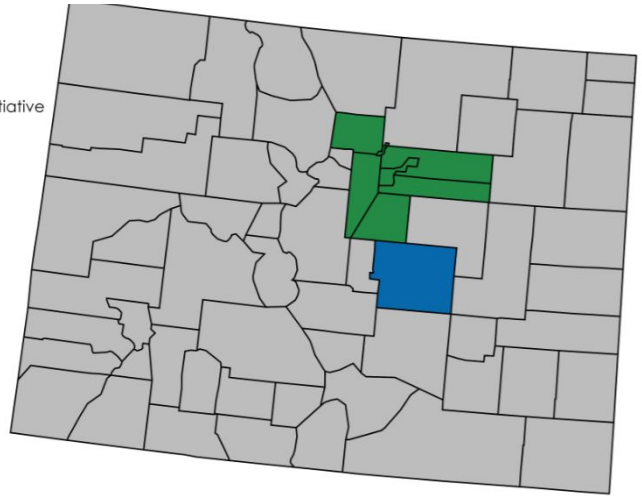
1. 2017 Point in Time and Youth Supplemental Survey Report
2. List of Known Housing Resources for Youth
 - a. This includes any age specific beds or any program with specific youth staff
3. RHYAM Calendar



Maps

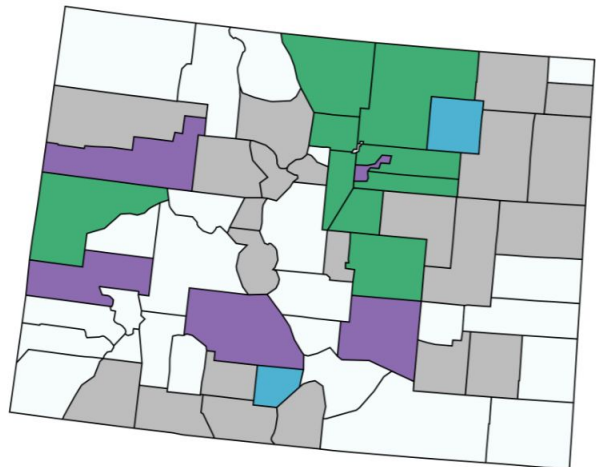
1. CoCs in Colorado

- Balance of the State
- Metro Denver Homeless Initiative
- Pikes Peak

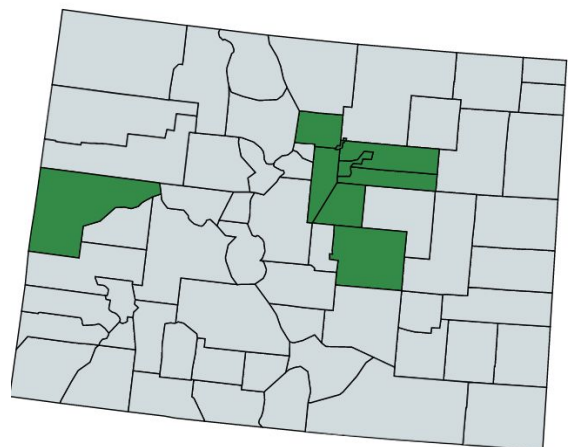


2. Counties that have school districts that have identified unaccompanied homeless youth in the 2015-2016 school year

- Number of S**
- 101+
 - 31-100
 - 11-30
 - 1-10
 - 0



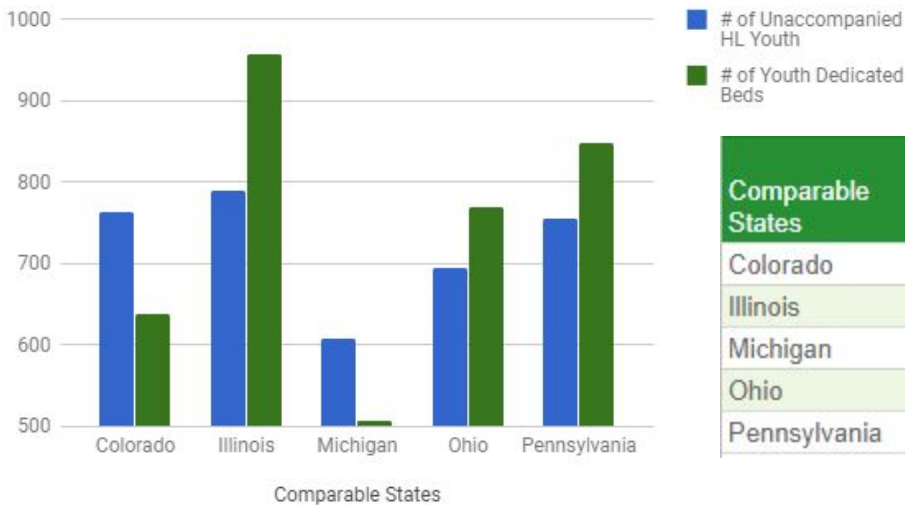
3. Counties covered by a youth homeless shelter





Data

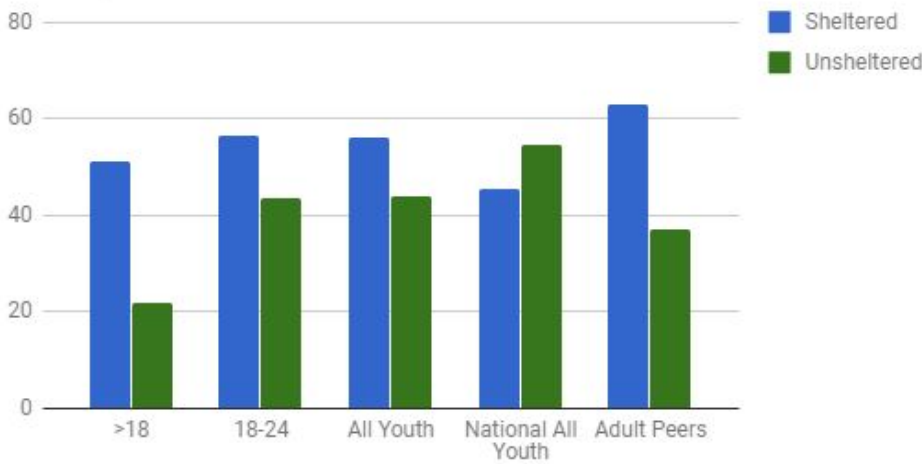
of Unaccompanied HL Youth and # of Youth Dedicated Beds



Comparable States	# of Unaccompanied HL Youth	# of Youth Dedicated Beds	Difference
Colorado	763	639	-124
Illinois	790	958	168
Michigan	608	507	-101
Ohio	695	770	75
Pennsylvania	756	848	92

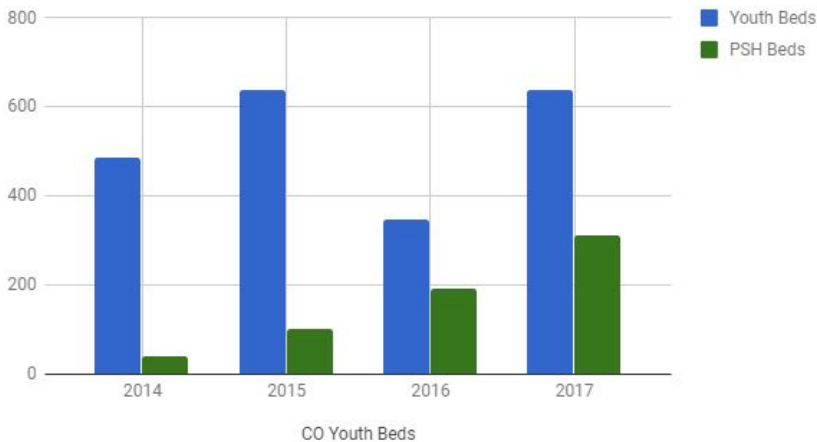
Colorado Sheltered and Unsheltered

Percentages



	Sheltered	Unsheltered
>18	51.1	22
18-24	56.4	43.6
All Youth	56	44
National All Youth	45.4	54.6
Adult Peers	63	37

Youth Beds and PSH Beds



CO Youth Beds	Youth Beds	PSH Beds
2012*	117	0
2013*	312	0
2014	486	41
2015	639	102
2016	347	191
2017	639	313