

# Report of the New York City Youth Homelessness Taskforce

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## **I. Acknowledgements**

This report and the work of the Youth Homelessness Taskforce (YHT) could not have been successful without the support of Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation (DBAF). Through a grant, DBAF supported New York City to inform next steps for preventing and ending youth homelessness. For the first time in New York City's history, under the supervision of the Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, Dr. Herminia Palacio and with the help of Maryanne Schretzman, the Executive Director of the Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence (CIDI), the Office of the Mayor was able to create the role of Senior Consultant for Youth Homelessness. This position was tasked with coordinating a cross-sector stakeholder community to address the needs of young people experiencing homelessness.

The cross-sector stakeholder community is the reason that this *Report of the NYC Youth Homelessness Taskforce* has been created and without each member of the YHT, this document would not exist. Embedding providers, advocates and youth with lived experience of homelessness into a strategic planning process hosted by local government allowed for robust discussions and inclusivity. CIDI, with the support of Corporation for Supportive Housing, was instrumental in assisting with data collection for this report and for the many presentations of data that were provided on youth homelessness for government officials and for the public. And most importantly, the YHT could not have been successful without the ongoing participation of the NYC Youth Action Board, a self-governing body of ten youth with lived experiences of homelessness. The NYC Youth Action Board (YAB) was created out of the NYC Coalition on the Continuum of Care (NYCCoC) in 2016 and has provided invaluable input into the system of services targeted towards youth experiencing homelessness in NYC.

## **II. Endorsements**

On November 27, 2019, this report was endorsed by all committees of the Youth Homelessness Taskforce. A full list of individual participants can be found in the appendix. Committees include:

1. YHT Steering Committee
2. Data, Research and Outcome Measures
3. Education & Employment
4. Housing options, permanency and exits (HOPE)
5. Pathways to Prevention
6. Support Services
7. Systems, Policies, Interagency Coordination/Coordinated Entry (SPICE)

### III. Executive Summary

The Youth Homelessness Taskforce (YHT) created the following *Report of the NYC Youth Homelessness Taskforce* for submission to the City of New York. The Youth Homelessness Taskforce (YHT) launched on June 14, 2018 under the leadership of the Deputy Mayor for Health & Human Services, Dr. Herminia Palacio.<sup>1</sup> The YHT is led by the Senior Consultant for Youth Homelessness, a new position within city government funded through a grant by Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation. The position was tasked with establishing a shared vision regarding the City's approach to youth homelessness, establishing a mutual understanding of the problem, and defining a joint approach to solving the problem.

The YHT consisted of one Steering Committee and six sub-committees which met from June to December. Representatives from all sectors were included in each committee. There were a total of eighty-two individuals representing forty-one groups. The committees created and ranked the recommendations included in this report. This *Report of the NYC Youth Homelessness Taskforce* has been endorsed by the committees of the YHT for submission to the City of New York.

For the purposes of this report, a young person experiencing homelessness is defined as someone between 16 and 24 years old who is both unaccompanied by a parent or guardian and lacking a stable fixed living situation.<sup>2</sup> Youth Homelessness started receiving a new level of attention across the United States in 2010 under President Obama and locally under Mayor Bill de Blasio in 2014. With increasing awareness and more resources put in place to address the issue, the scope has become clearer and NYC's local system has been asked to respond. As part of these efforts, the Office of the Mayor created a new position to focus on youth homelessness in early 2018. The position coordinated a cross-sector Youth Homelessness Taskforce to partner with local government on some immediate next steps towards preventing and ending youth homelessness in the city of New York. The following report details what is known about youth homelessness in the local context and provides a thorough description of the fourteen recommendations put forth by the Youth Homelessness Taskforce.

The following chart includes the recommendations – they are explained in detail beginning on Page 18.

<b>Recommendations from the Youth Homelessness Taskforce</b>		
<b>#</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1</b>	Connect young people with supportive services designed to prevent homelessness through <b>technology</b> most relevant to them.	19
<b>2</b>	Include <b>Housing Specialists</b> in DYCD contracts for homeless youth.	20
<b>3</b>	Launch new <b>initiative to increase support for unaccompanied youth to finish high school</b> and complete postsecondary education or training.	21
<b>4</b>	Create a <b>Peer Navigator</b> program through DYCD.	22
<b>5</b>	<b>Establish a NYC Youth Homelessness Advisory Committee (NYHAC)</b> through the Mayor's Office.	22
<b>6</b>	<b>Target workforce programs</b> for youth experiencing homelessness including wraparound services like transportation, childcare, financial counseling and mentoring.	22
<b>7</b>	<b>Provide access to</b> existing city services within DYCD-funded drop-in centers.	23
<b>8</b>	<b>Increase permanent exit options</b> through rental assistance and other affordable housing resources.	23
<b>9</b>	Develop and <b>expand youth specific transitional and emergency</b> shelter options.	24
<b>10</b>	Improve <b>data collection and integration</b> across systems for operational, outcomes and research purposes.	24
<b>11</b>	Increase availability and accessibility of <b>supportive housing</b> for homeless youth and at-risk young adults.	25
<b>12</b>	Create an innovative youth homelessness <b>prevention approach</b> .	26
<b>13</b>	Create <b>multi-media public awareness and strategic outreach campaign</b> to help youth engage with services and broaden community's understanding of youth homelessness.	27
<b>14</b>	<b>Institutionalize NYC CCoC Youth Action Board.</b>	27

#### **IV. Introduction**

Building on the investments to combat youth homelessness by the Administration of Mayor Bill de Blasio, the New York City Youth Homelessness Taskforce (YHT) launched on June 14, 2018 under the leadership of the Deputy Mayor for Health & Human Services, Dr. Herminia Palacio.<sup>3</sup> The YHT is led by the Senior Consultant for Youth Homelessness, a new position within city government funded through a grant by Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation. The role was designed to lead the process of coordinating the YHT and to collect, organize and analyze information and data from relevant stakeholders. The position is tasked with establishing a shared vision regarding the City's approach to youth homelessness, establishing a mutual understanding of the problem, and defining a joint approach to solving the problem.

Unaccompanied homeless youth and young adults are defined as those between the ages of 16 and 24 (until their 25<sup>th</sup> birthdays) who are not living in a fixed and/or stable home and who are unaccompanied by a parent or guardian.

This Administration has made significant investments towards youth experiencing homelessness including but not limited to:

- The commitment of 500 additional beds for 16-20 year olds through the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) Runaway and Homeless Youth programs, increasing the total from 253 to 753 beds by 2019;
- In partnership with the NYC Unity Project and DYCD, an investment for 60 shelter beds for homeless young adults ages 21-24, Drop-in Center enhancements to support LGBTQ youth, and the drop-in expansion at 3 sites ensuring 24 hour access to youth drop-in centers across all five boroughs;
- ThriveNYC funding for mental health resources at all Runaway and Homeless Youth program sites;
- The creation of Marsha's House, the first ever Department of Homeless Services (DHS) shelter for LGBTQ young adults located in the Bronx; and
- The commitment to allocate roughly 1,700 supportive housing units for youth through the NYC 15/15 plan<sup>4</sup>.

These commitments were determined based on what is known about youth homelessness in the community. Between 2015 and 2018, there has been a 16% overall increase of homeless youth identified in NYC through the Point-in-Time count.<sup>5</sup> In 2018, there were more than 10,000 young people ages 16-24 in both DHS shelters and DYCD residential programs during a one year period.<sup>6</sup> Youth of color represent nearly 90% of all homeless youth in NYC<sup>7</sup> while LGBTQ youth represent roughly 40% of all homeless youth in NYC.<sup>8</sup> As with many crises, youth homelessness deserves immediate and ongoing attention. The following report aims to illustrate the scope of homelessness experienced by youth and young adults and set forth a series of recommendations to reduce and ultimately prevent and end youth homelessness in NYC.

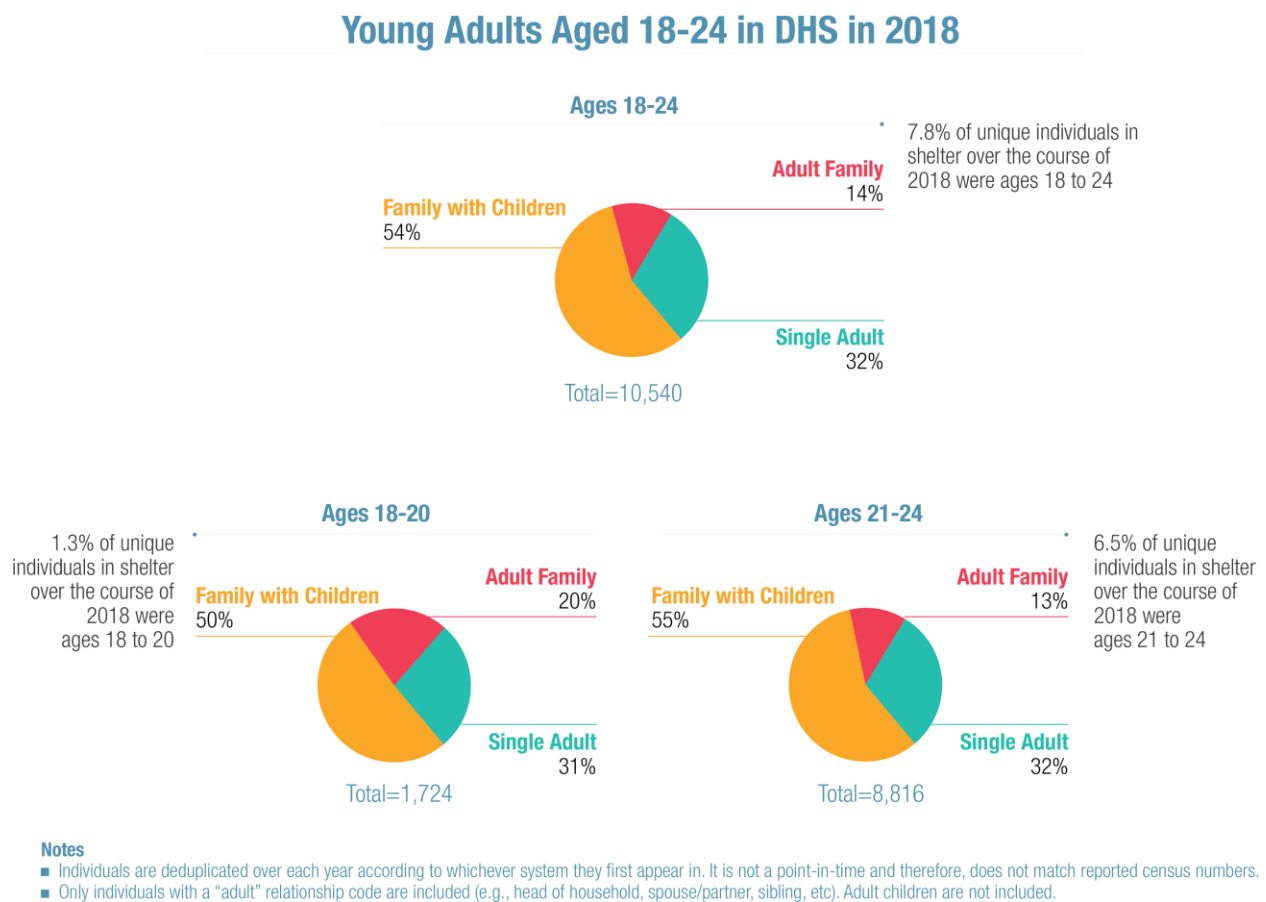
## V. Current Context of Youth Homelessness in NYC

### A. The numbers

NYC operates a unique single adult (18 years +) city shelter system with a right to shelter<sup>9</sup> through DHS. Families with and without minor children are also provided shelter if they meet eligibility requirements. According to the DHS Daily Report, as of 1/1/2019, there were 60,570 people living in DHS operated shelters.<sup>10</sup>

As demonstrated in Table 1 below, young adults ages 18-24 represented about 8% (10,540) of the DHS shelter system across single and family settings over the course of 2018. The majority of these youth were between the ages of 21-24, nearly 7% of the total DHS population. Those in the Family with Children system were parents or heads of a household with children.

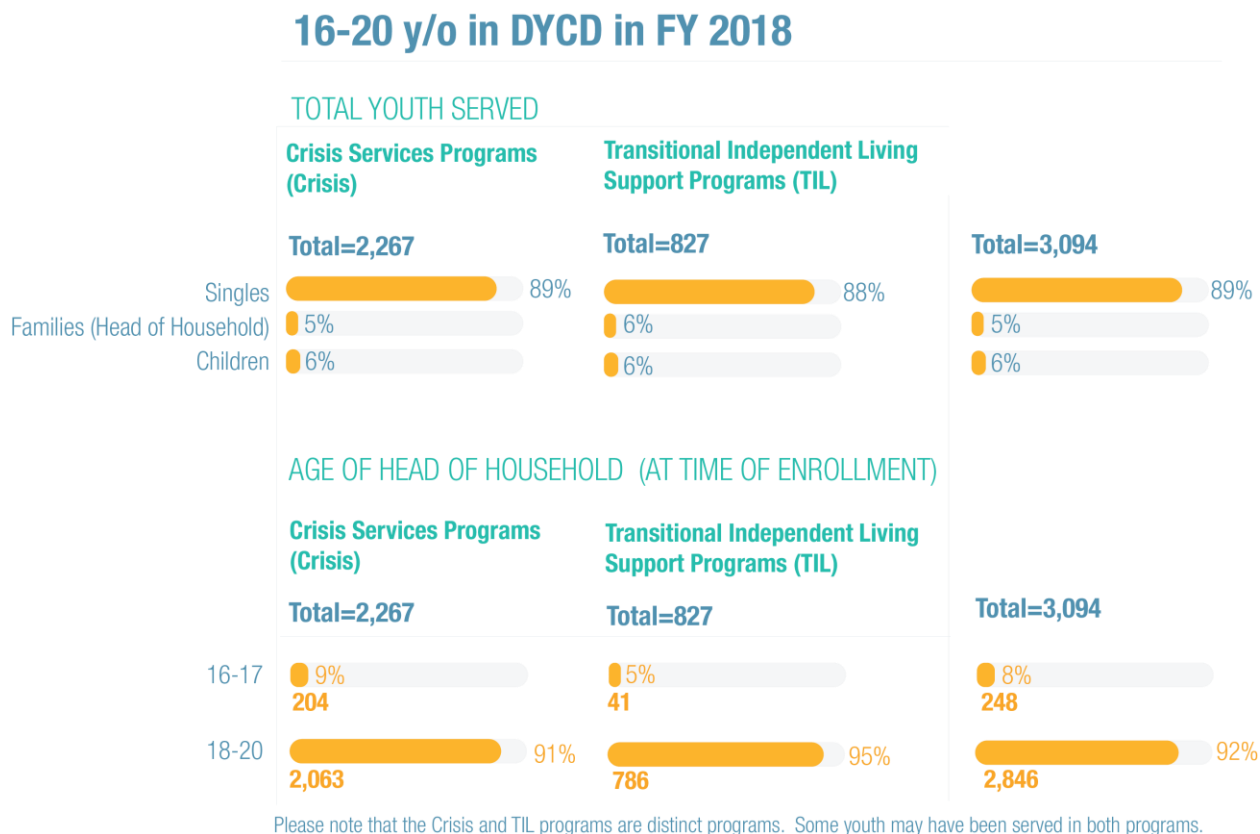
**Table 1**



NYC also operates a Runaway and Homeless Youth system through the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD). Beginning in 1981, NY State enacted the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act authorizing municipalities to serve Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) in residential settings for youth ages 16-20. The State, through the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) authorizes local Youth Bureaus, in this case DYCD, to operate these programs. As stated before, the capacity of DYCD programs has grown threefold throughout the time of the de Blasio Administration.

As demonstrated in Table 2 below, DYCD served 2,920 youth ages 16 to 20 years old in FY2018.<sup>11</sup> These data are not unduplicated; therefore, some young people may have been served in both crisis and residential programs or more than once in DYCD.

**Table 2**



In 2019, the DYCD system will expand to serve 21-24 year olds through the new investment of sixty beds for older youth. Until that time, DYCD serves only 16-20 year olds in residential programs. Because of the age limitation within DYCD programs, some of these young people move into DHS after they turn 21.

An increasing bed capacity within DYCD is accompanied by an increase in the total numbers of youth exits from Crisis Services and Transitional Independent Living (TIL) programs. Despite this increase in capacity, however, the city documents a continual decline in the percentage of residents exiting from DYCD residential programs into DHS shelters within one year, as demonstrated in Table 3 below. Most young people entering DHS after leaving DYCD are female (the data does not collect gender outside of male or female) and most of these young people are entering Adult Family or Family w/Children shelters as opposed to the Single Adult shelter system, as demonstrated in Table 4 below.

Table 3

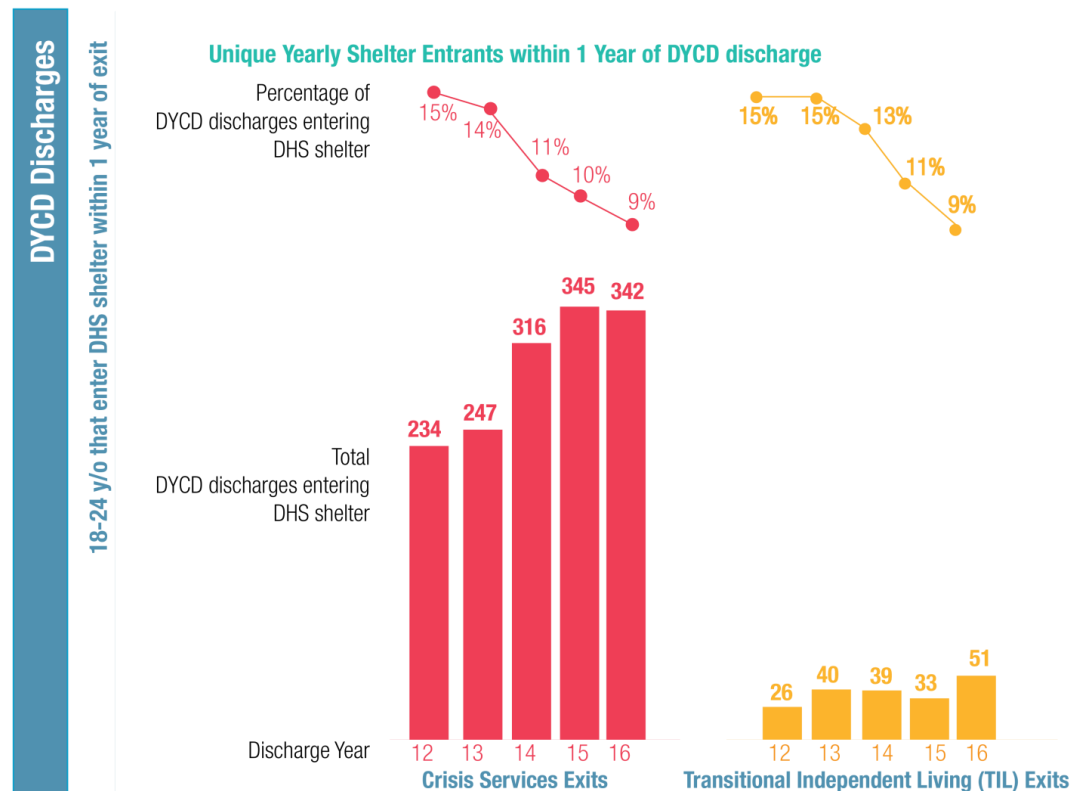
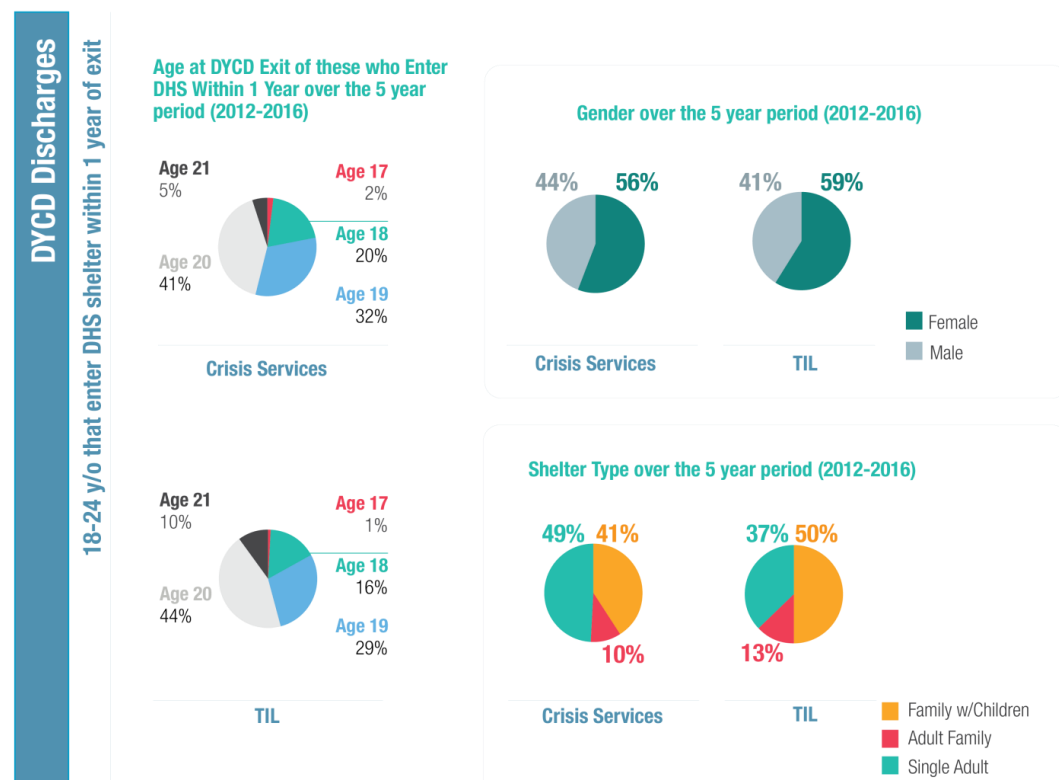


Table 4



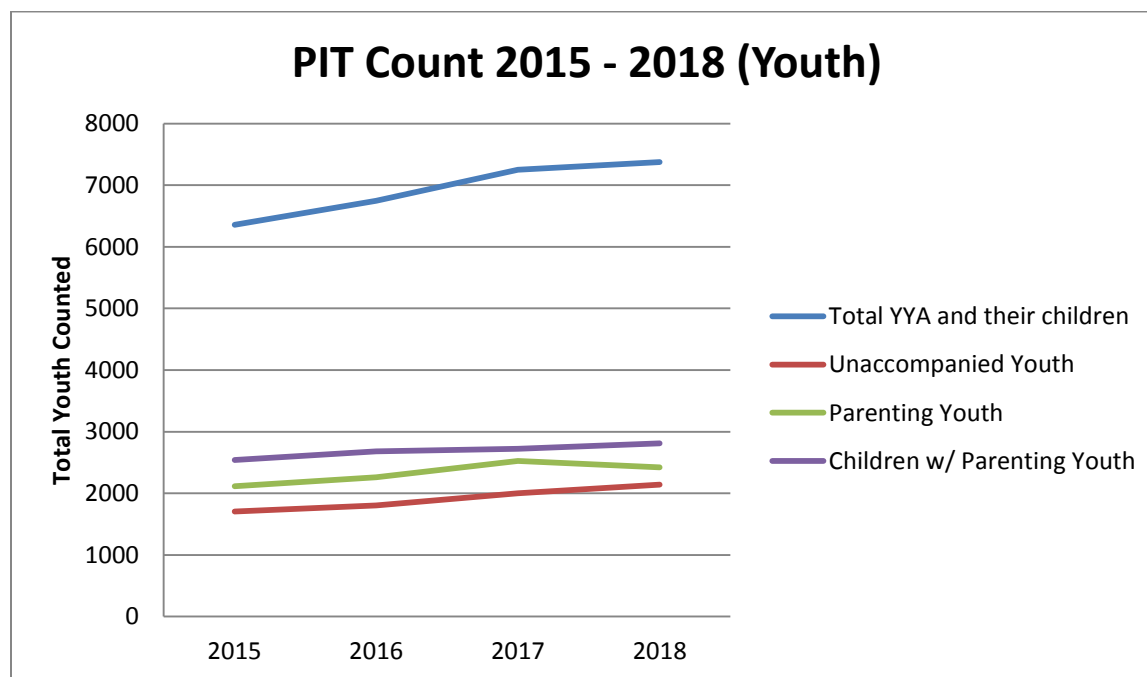


In addition to looking at annual census data, the YHT reviewed the NYC point-in-time (PIT) count conducted each year following the requirements put forward by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The PIT is a count of unsheltered and sheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night during the year and includes DHS, DYCD, HRA Domestic Violence, HRA HASA shelters and HPD disaster shelters. Beginning in 2015, after recognizing the traditional unsheltered PIT count is centered around the experiences of adult homelessness, such as sleeping outside on the streets, city agencies, RHY providers and advocates came together to improve upon the traditional PIT methodology for counting unsheltered young people experiencing homelessness. This process called “The Youth Count” is meant to enhance the findings of young people experiencing unsheltered homelessness. Surveys are conducted for four additional days at spaces where youth congregate to capture their place of sleep for the original night of the PIT count. The tables below include youth included in the PIT count and in the Youth Count since 2015. As shown below in Table 5 and 6, the count of youth identified as experiencing homelessness increased 16% since 2015. This includes youth ages 16-24, except “Children with Parenting Youth,” which are the children of young adults experiencing homelessness.

**Table 5**

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018<sup>12</sup></b>	<b>Change between 2015 and 2018</b>
<b>Unaccompanied Youth (all system, youth and young adults without children)</b>	<b>1,706</b>	<b>1,805</b>	<b>2,003</b>	<b>2,142</b>	<b>26%</b>
Sheltered	1,518	1,653	1,738	1,922	27%
Unsheltered	188	152	265	220	17%
<b>Parenting Youth (all system, youth and young adults with children)</b>	<b>2,114</b>	<b>2,261</b>	<b>2,525</b>	<b>2,422</b>	<b>15%</b>
Sheltered	2,114	2,261	2,525	2,422	15%
Unsheltered	0	0	0	0	N/A
<b>Children with Parenting Youth (all system, children of youth and young adults)</b>	<b>2,539</b>	<b>2,681</b>	<b>2,723</b>	<b>2,810</b>	<b>11%</b>
Sheltered	2,539	2,681	2,723	2,810	11%
Unsheltered	0	0	0	0	N/A
<b>Total Youth/Young Adults and their children</b>	<b>6,359</b>	<b>6,747</b>	<b>7,251</b>	<b>7,374</b>	<b>16%</b>
Sheltered	6,171	6,595	6,986	7,154	16%
Unsheltered	188	152	265	220	17%

**Table 6**



### **B. Disproportionality and the drivers of homelessness**

Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago conducted the most recent estimate of unaccompanied youth homelessness nationally in their report titled, *Voices of Youth Count* (VoYC). This study found that 1 in 10 young adults aged 18-25 experienced a form of homelessness over a 12-month period, or 3.5 million young adults across the country in a given year. The study also found that 1 in 30 youth ages 13-17 experienced a form of homelessness over a 12-month period, or 700,000 youth across the country in a given year.<sup>13</sup>

There are many ways in which a young person may experience homelessness. In many cases, young people who become homeless after they turn 18 also experienced homelessness as a child with their family.<sup>14</sup> The VoYC found that over 1/3 of young people experiencing homelessness lost a parent or caregiver during childhood.<sup>15</sup> Many youth experiencing homelessness are parents themselves. Across the United States it is estimated that nearly two thirds of youth experiencing homelessness are pregnant or parenting.<sup>16</sup> VoYC also found that nearly 1/3 of young people experiencing homelessness had been in foster care and nearly half had been in juvenile detention, jail or prison.<sup>17</sup>

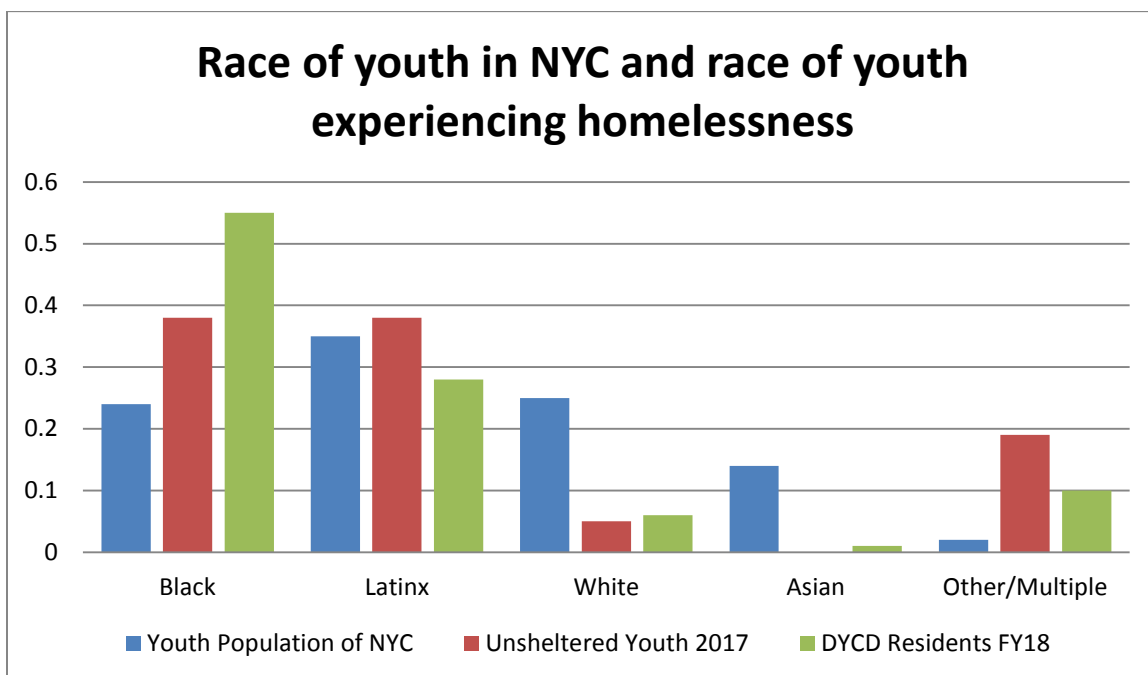
#### **Racism, Inequity and Poverty**

Historical and systemically racist policies influence the ways in which Blacks and African Americans experience inequity and homelessness. VoYC found that Black or African American youth had an 83% higher risk of reporting homelessness and Hispanic/Latinx youth had a 33% higher risk of reporting homelessness. They also found that young people reporting annual household income of less than \$24,000 had a 162% higher risk of reporting homelessness.<sup>18</sup>

In a study aimed at understanding and responding to racial inequities in homelessness across the United States, the Center for Social Innovation launched SPARC (Supporting Partnerships for Anti-Racist Communities). Through this work they highlight the following: while Blacks and African Americans make up roughly 13% of the entire United States population, they represent 24% of those living in deep poverty and 49% of those experiencing homelessness.<sup>19</sup> After separating the sample by age, they found that 18-24 year olds had the highest over representation of people of color: 89% of 18-24 year olds,<sup>20</sup> matching similar trends seen in NYC.

In NYC, youth of color represent about 75% of the total youth population ages 14 to 24 years old in NYC<sup>21</sup>, but closer to 90% of those experiencing homelessness. When examining deeper into specific racial categories, such as Black or African American, of which 24% of youth in NYC identify as, they experience extreme disproportionality in the homelessness data, comprising nearly 40% of the total unsheltered population and 55% of those living in DYCD programs.<sup>22</sup> This is illustrated in the table below.

**Table 7**



### Family Conflict & Family Rejection

Family conflict acts as another primary reason cited by young people as to why they experience homelessness. Specifically, long-standing conflict within the familial unit such as relationships, pregnancy, sexual orientation, issues at school, and alcohol or drug use account for experiences of youth homelessness.<sup>23</sup> In addition to family conflict, youth who become homeless may have also experienced child abuse or neglect, a driver for why a young person ends up leaving their home.<sup>24</sup> Family conflict over a young person's sexual orientation or gender identity has also been found to be a significant factor leading to homelessness.<sup>25</sup>

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) youth have a 120% higher risk of reporting homelessness.<sup>26</sup> LGBTQ youth have been estimated to represent between 20-40% of

the population experiencing youth homelessness across the country.<sup>27</sup> This number increases for black LGBTQ youth.<sup>28</sup> In the only national study of transgender people, one third reported experiencing homelessness at some point in their lives and more than a quarter of respondents who were homeless in the past year avoided staying in homeless shelters because they feared they would be mistreated as a transgender person. One in eight experienced homelessness because of being transgender.<sup>29</sup>

NYC has not effectively captured the sexual orientation or gender identities of young people receiving social services broadly. However, as of July 2018, DYCD started collecting the gender identity of clients served by their contracted providers beyond male and female categories. This data collection occurs at intake, which necessitates that LGBTQ youth are willing to disclose their identities upon initial contact and openly identify in their identity at that time. In a report submitted to the NYC Council for the period of January 1, 2018 to June 30, 2018, DYCD identified roughly 26% of their residents as LGBT, as shown below.<sup>30</sup>

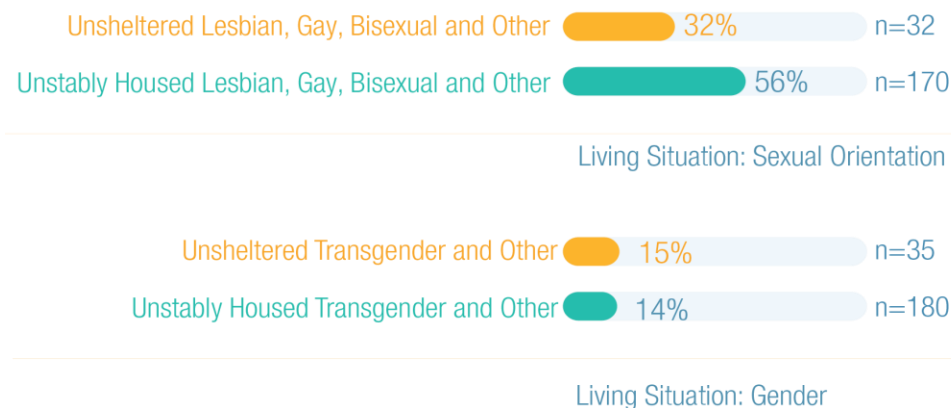
**Table 8**

Sexual Identity and Orientation				
	Crisis Services		TIL	
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual	513	23%	161	19%
Transgender	58	3%	52	6%
<b>LGBT</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>26%</b>

As shown below, the 2017 Youth Count found high numbers of youth who identify as LGBT.

**Table 9**

### LGBT Youth - 2017 Youth Count



## Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) and Survival Sex

Though a definitive causal relationship cannot be determined, there are multiple studies documenting homelessness as one of the most common drivers of youth engagement in survival sex.<sup>31</sup>

In NY State under the *Safe Harbour for Exploited Children Act of 2008*<sup>32</sup>, OCFS implements Safe Harbour, a program within child welfare and other youth-serving systems such as Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs, Probation, Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS), Youth Bureaus, and others. In NYC, the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) with the support of DYCD, implements Safe Harbour. According to OCFS, "this approach leverages existing system strengths to create a more effective and efficient response to youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation or trafficking, or who are vulnerable to it."<sup>33</sup> Of the youth identified through OCFS, nearly two thirds (68%) received assistance with finding short-term housing/shelter both at intake and during the program year – the majority being referred or placed into shelters within their communities.<sup>34</sup>

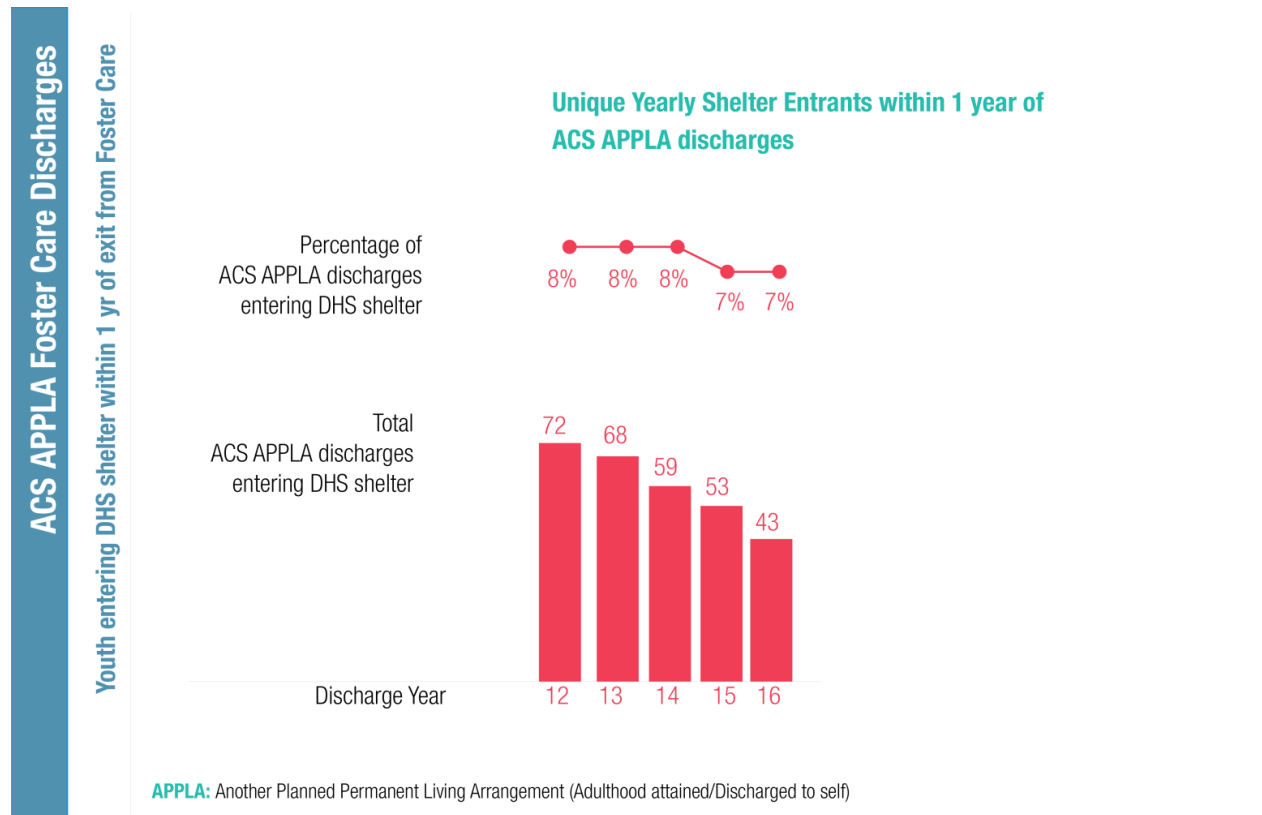
A study published by the Urban Institute called *Surviving the Streets*<sup>35</sup> found that 48% of the youth they interviewed were living in a shelter, while 10% were living on the street. Only 32% reported living in their current residence for one year or longer. Similar to many of the findings already described, many youth reported being kicked out of their homes because they identified as LGBTQ while others reported running away from abusive home environments.<sup>36</sup>

A local study from 2013 by Covenant House New York<sup>37</sup> found that 1 in 4 of their clients had either been a victim of trafficking or had engaged in survival sex prior to arriving at Covenant House. The number one commodity traded in return for a sexual activity was shelter. Nearly half of the respondents reported they exchanged sex because they did not have a place to stay.<sup>38</sup>

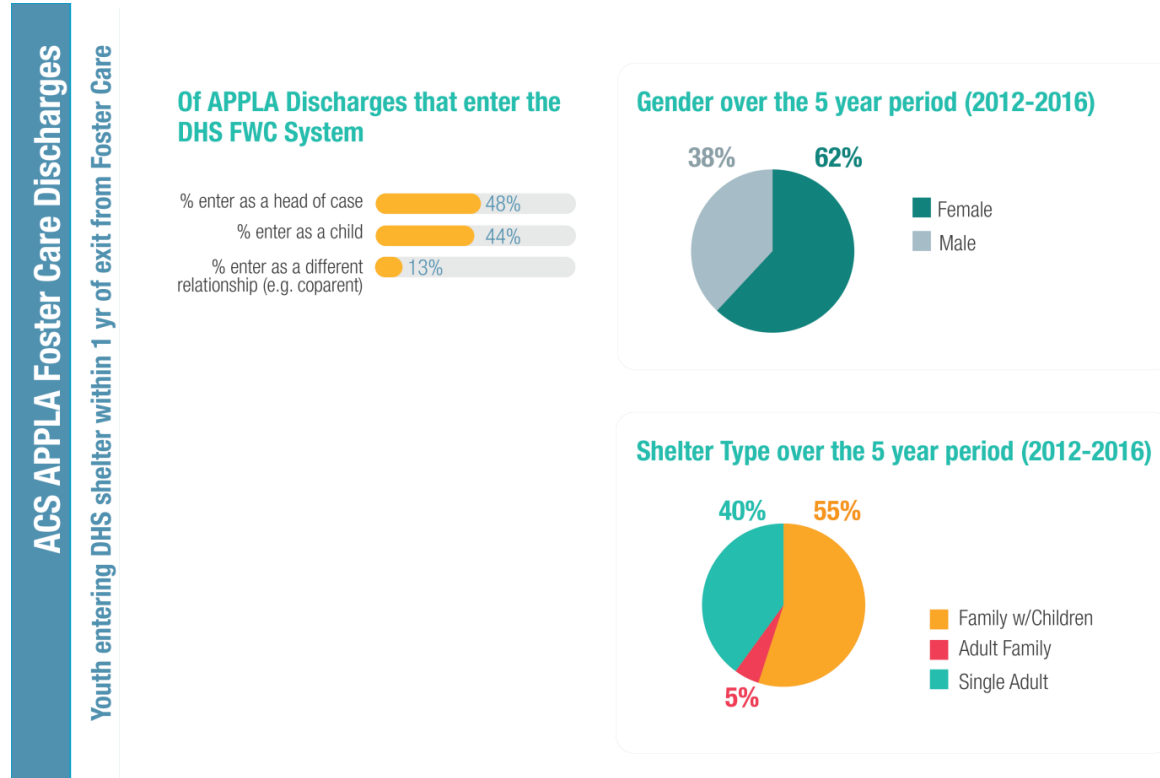
## Foster Care, Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Experience

National findings indicate that after reaching the age of 18, 20% of children who age out of foster care will become homeless.<sup>39</sup> Since 2012, the NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) decreased the entry of youth into foster care overall therefore, the number of youth exiting care also decreased. As demonstrated in the table below, the percentage of youth entering DHS within one year of leaving foster care has remained constant around 7-8%. In 2016, 43 of those youth, or 7% of those who exited foster care, entered the DHS shelter system within one year of discharge from foster care. Half of those were parents with children. Similar to DYCD exits into DHS, young people from ACS are also majority female and entering Family with Children shelter as head of case, as demonstrated in Table 11.

**Table 10**



**Table 11**



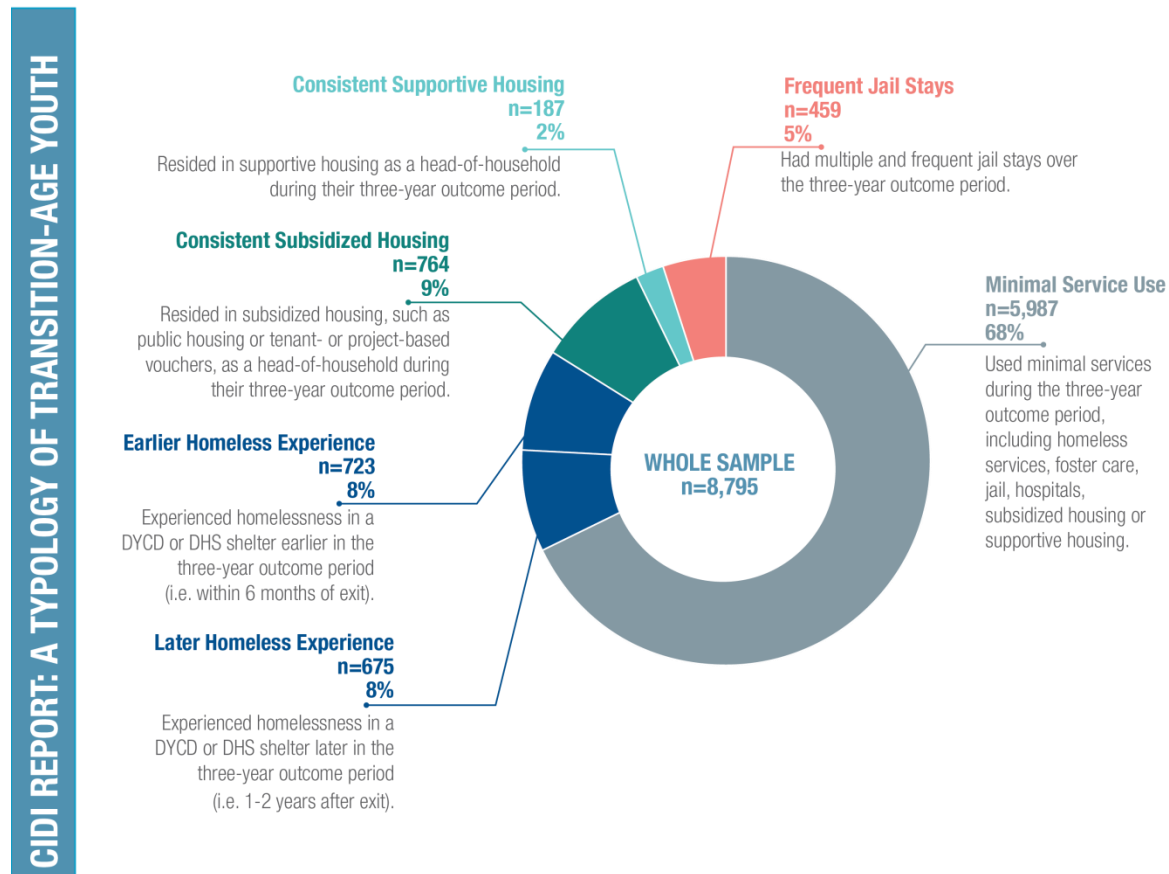
There are many other young people who have experiences in foster care or with the child welfare system who do not age out of foster care. In a study conducted in 2013 of young people experiencing homelessness in NYC, 42% of those surveyed reported having been placed in foster care or a group home.<sup>40</sup> A study by CIDI titled *Young Adult Outcomes of Foster Care, Justice, and Dually Involved Youth in New York City* found that over 20% of youth who exited foster care between the ages of 13 and 18 entered either a Single Adult DHS or Family w/Children DHS shelter within 6 years of their exit.<sup>41</sup> 53% of respondents said they stayed overnight in jail or a juvenile detention facility<sup>42</sup> while 10% of youth with justice involvement between 13 and 18 years old entered a DHS shelter within six years of their exit from the justice system.<sup>43</sup> These findings point to a strong connection between experiences of child welfare and youth homelessness.

### **C. The current system and where youth end up**

NYC currently operates an extensive system of care for youth experiencing homelessness. As demonstrated in the Youth System Map (in the Appendix and [online](#)) there are a number of ways a young person might enter the system and a number of pathways a young person may take to receive services while they experience homelessness. In March of 2017, CIDI published a study titled *Housing Trajectories of Transition-Age Youth*. This study looked at the administrative data of 19,963 youth between the ages of 18 and 21 who exited from Foster Care, a RHY program, and/or a DHS shelter between 2008 and 2013. The study found that within two years of exit, 63% did not return to homelessness or jail. If young people had prior service use, for example, a young person in a DHS shelter who had experience in the child welfare system as a child, they were more likely to return to another system later. Subsidized housing exits reduced the likelihood of returning to homelessness by 66%.

In the second phase of the study, CIDI published *A Typology of Transition-Age Youth* in July 2018. This study further examined not only the trajectories of youth by system exit but the categories that young people fit into, creating descriptive profiles and predictive models. The report found six outcome groups as demonstrated in the chart below.

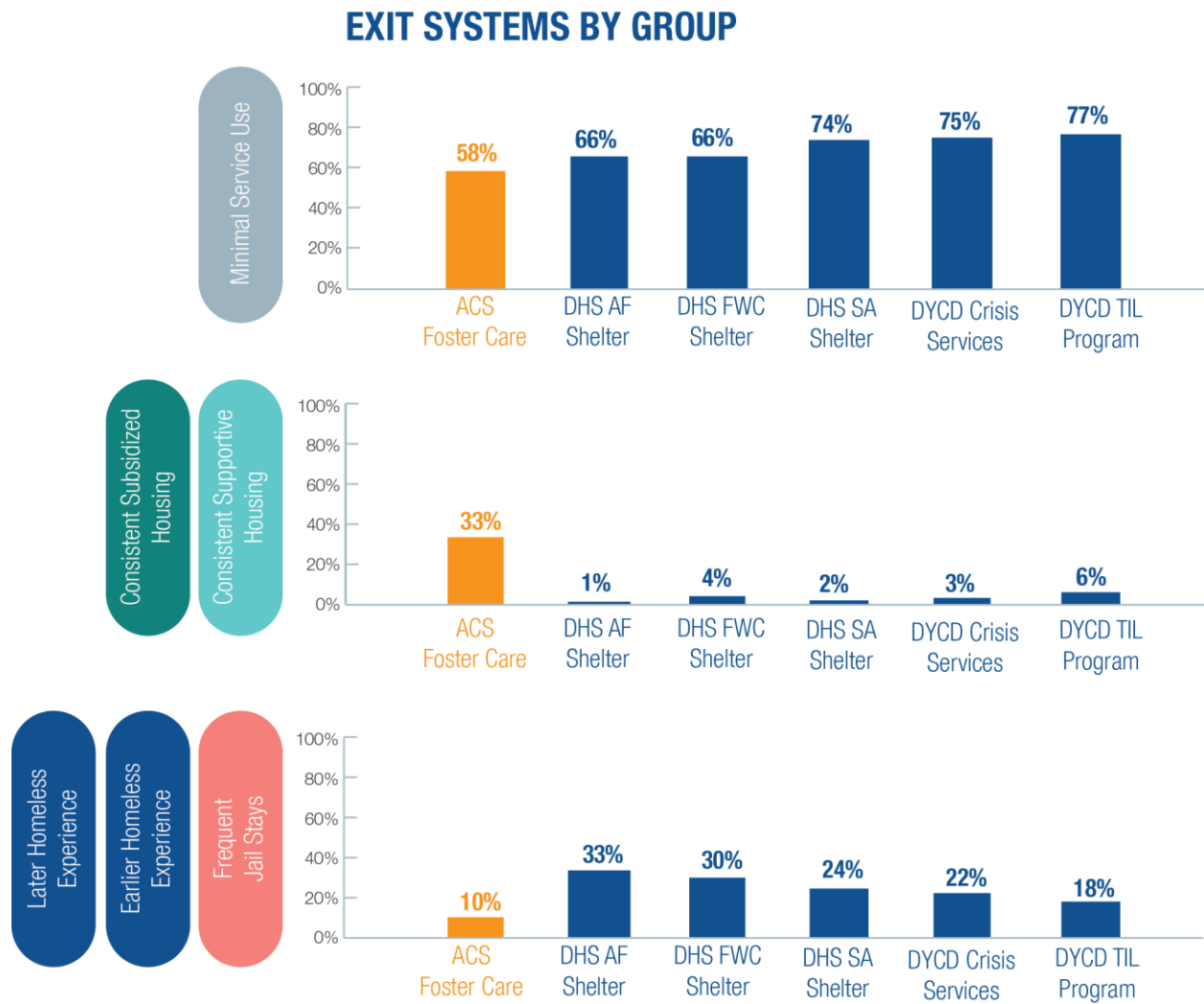
**Table 12**



The report highlights key factors in determining pathways youth follow based on their system of exit. It shows the ways in which youth are able to access various permanent exit options based on which system they exit from, clearly identifying some areas for improved policy implementation. As the chart below highlights, youth exiting from foster care (indicated by orange color) were able to obtain subsidized or supportive housing at higher rates than youth leaving shelter or RHY programs and that youth exiting foster care were less likely to experience homelessness or jail after leaving care.<sup>44</sup>



**Table 13**



## **VI. Youth Homelessness Taskforce Recommendations**

Based on the aforementioned statistics, findings and research, the YHT agreed upon the following recommendations. Below the accompanying chart is a description of each recommendation and some key potential strategies for the community to implement. The following recommendations are the culmination of the work of the YHT. From the period of June to December 2018, the six working committees co-created these recommendations, focusing on the specific content of each committee type. Those committees included: Data, Research and Outcome Measures; Education & Employment; Housing options, permanency and exits (HOPE); Pathways to Prevention; Support Services; and Systems, Policies, Interagency Coordination/Coordinated Entry (SPICE). The committees were comprised of city representatives, nonprofit providers, advocates and youth with lived experiences of homelessness. Each member played a different role in the committee work. For example, city partners often provided data and legal parameters of policy ideas; nonprofit providers often provided ground-level perspective on the needs of the population; and youth with lived experience described what it was like to move through the youth homelessness system and recommend solutions based on their lived experience.

Of the eighteen original recommendations, the YHT consolidated them into fourteen total recommendations and ranked them in order of importance as outlined below. The Steering Committee finalized the language of the recommendations and the possible strategies for implementation for the review of the City. These recommendations in the *Report of the NYC Youth Homelessness Taskforce* have been endorsed by the committees of the YHT for submission to the City of New York.

<b>Recommendations from the Youth Homelessness Taskforce</b>		
<b>#</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Page</b>
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<b>3</b>	Launch new <b>initiative to increase support for unaccompanied youth to finish high school</b> and complete postsecondary education or training.	21
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<b>6</b>	<b>Target workforce programs</b> for youth experiencing homelessness including wraparound services like transportation, childcare, financial counseling and mentoring.	22
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<b>12</b>	Create an innovative youth homelessness <b>prevention approach</b> .	26
<b>13</b>	Create <b>multi-media public awareness and strategic outreach campaign</b> to help youth engage with services and broaden community's understanding of youth homelessness.	27
<b>14</b>	<b>Institutionalize NYC CCoC Youth Action Board.</b>	27

**Recommendation #1: Connect young people with supportive services designed to prevent homelessness through technology most relevant to them.**

**Projected Outcomes:** Every day a young person waits for housing increases the likelihood they return to homelessness by 2%.<sup>45</sup> This mobile platform will improve accessibility of services as a secondary prevention tool – a virtual single point of access acting as an early intervention for high-risk groups. Instead of a resource guide, this virtual application fills the role of a digital case manager. By connecting individuals to services or prevention hubs at an early stage, fewer youth will experience street homelessness. Youth will have 24-hour access to information about available resources, and real-time support in obtaining access to services they qualify for. Streamlining communications with all stakeholders around available programs and services will increase referrals and enrollments in education, training and employment programs.

### **Recommended strategies for implementation:**

- A. Bridge existing city-created mobile platforms providing information on city services into one youth-centered mobile site, such as Generation NYC. Provide ample click-through options for young people to find information related to housing, education, workforce, benefits, etc. This platform would organize all workforce and educational/training programs that exist for youth under 25 years old who are in or out of school. This would improve accessibility of resources regardless of where youth started their online search and have up-to-date information on enrollment periods, start dates, documentation needed, etc.
- B. Create a new platform through human centered design approach, a framework that uses participatory action research by involving those affected by a design and/or research, to help solve problems. This platform would provide a single point of digital access for youth experiencing homelessness in real time. This phase of the recommendation would deepen the utility of strategy A. It would have real-time vacancy lists for open crisis beds, act as a digital case manager with real-time information and have an updated list of supportive housing units accepting direct referrals for youth and young adults. For regular updates and maintenance, a dedicated staff person would be needed to manage this platform.

### **Recommendation #2: Include Housing Specialists in DYCD contracts for homeless youth.**

**Projected Outcomes:** According to the CIDI *Housing Typology* report, youth exiting DYCD programs access subsidized housing and/or supportive housing at much lower rates than youth exiting foster care, 9% as compared to 33%, respectively.<sup>46</sup> The young people who exit from DYCD program also experience more homelessness and/or justice involvement than youth exiting foster care, 40% as compared to 10%, respectively.<sup>47</sup> With additional support for housing placements, through a dedicated role within each DYCD program focusing on exit strategies and placement into permanent housing, the returns of young people into shelter and/or jail should diminish. Housing Specialists could augment the case management roles within DYCD programs by creating trusting relationships with neighborhood property managers, brokers, and real estate agents. They can also coach and support youth during their housing searches by finding and placing youth into more affordable housing opportunities, utilizing Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8 tenant based) and assisting with the housing search and move in process. This new position would also assist with Rapid rehousing opportunities, applying for Permanent Supportive Housing/2010e applications, and independent free market housing. They will utilize a number of evidence based practices including trauma-informed care, positive youth development, and social-emotional learning to help achieve positive outcomes for youth. With Housing Specialists at DYCD programs and centralized support from DYCD Runaway and Homeless Youth Services Unit, it is anticipated that RHY's housing trajectories will improve.

### **Recommended strategies for implementation:**

Develop an initiative for DYCD providers to hire Housing Specialists in order to offer centralized information about housing resources through DYCD, HRA, HPD and NYC Public Engagement Unit.

**Recommendation #3: Launch new initiative to increase support for unaccompanied youth to finish high school and complete postsecondary education or training.**

**Projected Outcomes:** According to the NYC Department of Education, 6,331 unaccompanied youth lived in temporary housing during the 2017-2018 school year<sup>48</sup>, 1,892 of those youth were between the ages of 16 and 21. The chart shows that while many young people are living in shelter (660) the remaining youth, roughly 1,200, should be targeted for prevention efforts so that they do not enter the shelter system.

SY 17-18   STH- Identified at any point during the school year (no charter schools)				
NYC Unaccompanied Youth - Age 16 to 21				
	Doubled Up	Shelter	Hotel/Motel or Other Temp Housing	Grand Total
Grand Total	744	660	471	1,892

The number one risk factor for young adult homelessness is not having completed high school – increasing the risk of someone experiencing homelessness by 346%.<sup>49</sup> The percent of students who graduated from NYC DOE high school class of 2016 citywide was 72.6% -- however, only 55% of homeless students graduated compared to 73% of low-income housed students and 84% of housed students who were not low income.<sup>50</sup> Given these statistics, NYC must increase the number of youth obtaining their high school diploma or HSE to decrease the flow of young people into shelter. The following strategies would support an increased rate of high school graduation among unaccompanied homeless youth. This initiative would also provide support for increasing the number of unaccompanied youth who enter college and complete post-secondary training/education.

**Recommended strategies for implementation:**

- A. Increase HSE age for Pathways to Graduation from 21 to 24.
- B. Create an electronic flagging system for youth enrolled in DOE at risk of not completing HS and/or summer melt. Explore whether New Visions platform could be expanded for this purpose.
- C. Expand existing peer mentoring programs for unaccompanied youth in school to support high school graduation and access to postsecondary opportunities (DOE's Alumni Initiatives, Student Success Centers, All Sister Evolving Together, Safe In My Brother's Arms, PSA-Public School Alumni, etc.)
- D. Use texting platforms or other electronic communication systems (UpNext, Nudging for Success) to increase access to financial aid and completion of necessary paperwork to access postsecondary opportunities with particular focus on unique needs of unaccompanied youth.
- E. Expand the Dorm-Project to ensure housing to include RHY unaccompanied youth who pursue education at CUNY.

#### **Recommendation #4: Create a Peer Navigator program through DYCD for RHY.**

**Projected Outcomes:** Using the concept of a “Credible Messenger,” a person who can mentor their peers because of their shared lived experience, RHY will be trained to guide peers through their time experiencing homelessness. This opportunity will consider those with lived experience of homelessness as experts, and provide opportunities for first time jobs within nonprofits where their experiences are central to the mission. RHY will be able to gain work experience within a youth-centered nonprofit on existing social services, particularly housing, across NYC. This opportunity will act as a pathway to further workforce opportunities, including training to become future Housing Specialists.

#### **Recommended strategies for implementation:**

Develop an initiative for DYCD providers to create peer models in their programs with a standard set of expectations for navigators. The program model would include staff to supervise peers and to develop and implement training curriculum. Youth would be provided a series of trainings such as: mandated reporting; group facilitation; confidentiality; and mental health first aid, while helping others connect to existing support services and housing. Peer Navigators could help to improve grievance processes within organizations to increase youth voice in programming.

#### **Recommendation #5: Establish a NYC Youth Homelessness Advisory Committee (NYHAC) through the Mayor's Office.**

**Projected Outcomes:** The NYHAC would be comprised of cross sector stakeholders to oversee a forthcoming community plan, work with city agencies to identify, strengthen and create policies to alleviate barriers identified by youth. This group would advocate from within and outside the city to ensure policies move forward to improve the lives of youth experiencing homelessness. The Senior Consultant would coordinate and lead these efforts.

#### **Recommended strategies for implementation:**

Sustain position of Senior Consultant for Youth Homelessness or create Mayor’s Office of Transition Age Youth to convene, facilitate and oversee NYHAC’s activities.

#### **Recommendation #6: Target workforce programs for youth experiencing homelessness including wraparound services like transportation, childcare, financial counseling and mentoring.**

**Projected Outcomes:** Designed with and for young people to complete work-readiness and vocational training. This would increase youth job placements, retention and career-advancement – contributing to future ability to remain out of homelessness, increased sense of self-worth, and productivity.

#### **Recommended strategies for implementation:**

- A. Expand and strengthen effective youth workforce programs such as the Out of School Youth (OSY), Vulnerable Youth Summer Youth Employment Program (VYSYEP),

Youth Pathways, and potentially the Work Progress Program (WPP) model to include wraparound services.

- B. Create training-to-job pipelines with employers, trades, unions, etc. Include Incentives such as general participation stipend, savings match, training hours, certification, and/or retention bonuses.
- C. Rebrand existing city programs to attract more youth (use youth to inform this.)
- D. Building on Small Business Services (SBS) and NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC) existing partnerships, create additional partnerships based on labor market analysis and youth preference.
- E. Implement Evidence Based Interventions (EBI) to support job retention, career advancement and support services for program participants.

**Recommendation #7: Provide access to existing city services within DYCD-funded drop-in centers.**

**Projected Outcomes:** This would help move the network of DYCD RHY drop-in centers towards a one-stop design concept; a center in which a person can go and receive nearly everything they need to begin to stabilize. There will be a decreased need for youth to travel around NYC in order to gain access to critical services. There will be increased insurance enrollment, increased enrollment for SNAP, Cash Assistance, and other eligible entitlements. Youth will experience an increase in rapport with providers and maximize service utilization. Youth will experience an increased sense of community in environments that are centered in the evidence based model of Positive Youth Development. The improved access to services may even impact the use of the Emergency Room which has been found to be high among youth experiencing homelessness according to the *Typology* report published by CIDI.<sup>51</sup>

**Recommended strategies for implementation:**

Providing access to existing city services may include collocation of services, but does not always entail physical collocation. Staff at DYCD drop-in centers can be equipped to enroll eligible young people into SNAP benefits through training and technical support by HRA for the Access NYC portal. Providers can assist young people in obtaining access to health insurance, such as Medicaid through the NY State of Health online portal. Local RHY providers can be provided with training by city agencies to be able to connect their clients to eligible services such as Homebase, Thrive Social Workers, H&H clinics, etc. Geographically-near organizations may have ongoing Memorandums of Understanding and/or linkages with one another to increase the likelihood that youth can receive culturally competent services, especially considering the needs of LGBTQ youth and youth of color. This will create stronger networks for youth in communities where they live or access services. Ensure that DOHMH Mobile Crisis Teams are known to RHY providers so that NYC Well can connect them as needed.

**Recommendation #8: Increase permanent exit options through rental assistance, affordable housing resources and other housing opportunities.**

**Projected Outcomes:** Using existing resources, more young people will be able to utilize rental assistance, access subsidies and access other affordable units. According to CIDI's *Housing Trajectories* report, access to subsidized exits reduces the likelihood of a young adult returning to homelessness by 66%.<sup>52</sup> There are many successful models in existence that the youth serving

system and the adult serving system need to better coordinate through the expertise of housing specialists.

**Recommended strategies for implementation:**

- A. Determine and implement the eligibility and community referral process for homeless youth residing in DYCD programs to access CityFHEPS.
- B. Allow DYCD residents to be considered for homeless set-aside units in affordable housing developments.
- C. NYC CCoC to explore using and promoting Rapid Rehousing model for youth across the city to ensure more providers apply for funding and more units can become available for youth.
- D. Create a guarantor program for youth without adults of privilege to act as guarantors to obtain free-market housing.

**Recommendation #9: Develop and expand youth specific transitional and emergency shelter options.**

**Projected Outcomes:** This will improve upon the existing safety net outside of traditional shelters, in many cases modeled for adults, to provide young people with youth-specific and service-tailored environments. Transitional Housing will provide stability needed for young adults while housing placements are being coordinated and to provide more long-term transitional housing when appropriate and/or desired by the young adult. Expanded outreach teams with a better understanding of the youth serving system will be better able to place young people in appropriate settings. (See also Recommendation #1.) This would provide alternative housing options to address the diversity of needs of the young adult population. All providers should be trained in undoing racism, implicit bias and LGBTQ cultural competency.

**Recommended strategies for implementation:**

- A. Develop transitional housing model/program for youth with significant mental health needs through a partnership between DYCD and DOHMH or H+H.
- B. Develop low-barrier Housing First shelters or TIL programs for unsheltered young people who are in need of lower-threshold programming.
- C. Develop process by which DYCD drop-in centers could refer youth into DHS shelters so and bypass DHS intake centers.
- D. DYCD to provide training to DHS & DHS contracted outreach workers on options for youth.
- E. Create a Host Home program model for young people 18-24 focusing on chosen family and kinship care.

**Recommendation #10: Improve data collection and integration across systems for operational, outcomes and research purposes.**

**Projected Outcomes:** Youth serving programs will enter data into a system compatible with HMIS. There will be a mechanism for programs to feed data into HMIS that may not require them to individually purchase HMIS vendors. The youth count will be more accurate and have a dedicated team every year to focus on it. It will allow us as a community working to prevent and



end youth homelessness to collate counts and data into a shared knowledge document, one source that we collectively agree reflects the population. A youth specific focus would be included on any integrated evaluation process or planning document. The city and community would have a wider yet more specific understanding of the unique needs and achievements of runaway and homeless youth, the services that are effective and the ways in which our system needs to adapt and change based on where gaps are identified. These would allow us to have a constant evaluation loop and contribute to national and/or urban research where homelessness is pervasive and in need of further comprehension and innovation. All collection and integration would be in compliance with the state Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.

**Recommended strategies for implementation:**

- A. Make DYCD's new database compatible with HMIS and require participation in monthly uploads into the HMIS Data Warehouse. Provide support to DYCD funded programs through these changes.
- B. Develop shared performance measurement framework and common metrics to monitor progress towards preventing and ending youth homelessness. Establish ongoing workgroup to refine and review indicators and establish targets.
- C. Explore enhancement of Youth Count as part of PIT to augment findings from the HOPE count specific to the youth population.
- D. Leverage infrastructure of CIDI and external research partners to drive innovation and advance a data-informed youth homelessness system.
- E. Create data entry collaborative to help support youth providers with data collection, entry, and outcome tracking.
- F. Collate data into public interfacing data dashboard for sourcing known data and tracking outcome measures.
- G. Standardize data collection across agencies and points of entry. A set of data elements would exist that every provider enters for system wide analysis. Track outcomes collectively.

**Recommendation #11: Increase availability and accessibility of supportive housing for homeless youth and at-risk young adults.**

**Projected Outcomes:** Young adults who are eligible for supportive housing will be identified, approved and placed more quickly. The supply of supportive housing units will increase and/or become more readily available as people move in and out at faster rates. DHS data through HomeStat<sup>53</sup> shows a very low percentage of young people being contacted on the street by both DHS staff and DHS contracted outreach providers, yet DYCD drop-in centers report that many of their clients are not stably housed. Young people are often in locations that are not discoverable by street outreach teams. Because the number of contacts an outreach worker has with someone on the street impacts their a homeless individual's ability to move into permanent housing, DYCD drop-in centers believe that if given the ability for them to verify youth's street homelessness, they would be better able to move youth into permanent housing.

**Recommended strategies for implementation:**

- A. HRA should finalize Standardized Vulnerability Assessment (SVA) in collaboration with RHY providers and youth with lived experience.

- B. HRA and DYCD to train providers to complete 2010e supportive housing applications through the Coordinated Assessment Placement System (CAPS). All DYCD programs will be required to submit applications for clients who are eligible for Supportive Housing.
- C. Allow RHY providers to verify homelessness for entry to programs that require homelessness verification.
- D. Expand the City's Moving-On program. The current Moving-On pilot provides residents who no longer need support services from a congregate Supportive Housing to move into independent housing. The program provides assistance in finding housing and often includes a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher provided by HPD. The existing pilot of Moving-On through HPD has five participating nonprofits. The YHT would like to see this program expanded further to youth supportive housing congregate sites.
- E. Expand outreach and training by all city agencies to recruit more youth-serving agencies to open or partner with developers for PSH, or train existing PSH providers in youth-specific needs and service models.
- F. Expand DYCD drop-in center contracts to provide additional support for older youth, increase hours of operation for psychiatric evaluations for supportive housing, and provide all other critical services.

**Recommendation # 12: Create an innovative youth homelessness prevention approach combining best practices from existing initiatives.**

**Projected Outcomes:** This serves as a tertiary prevention strategy – targeting youth who are identified as needing housing supports in specific locations where they already receive services or education while incorporating a mobile resource model that travels to youth. This prevents some youth from entering shelter while supporting their pathways to independence. This enables youth in high school who are doubled-up to complete high school. This empowers youth to determine the resources best designed for them.

**Recommended strategies for implementation:**

- A. Promote Homebase services through high schools with high levels of students in temporary housing that have Homebase providers in their communities.
- B. As it has been found that nearly 1/3 of youth experiencing homelessness experienced the death of a parent as a child, the opportunity to provide increased level of support through mental health services, financial aid, or connection to kin should be explored.
- C. Develop strategies to prevent shelter entry by youth formerly in foster care through ACS's Office of Older Youth Services. Increase the services from this office that can support older youth who have history of foster care or child welfare experience.
- D. Explore cash transfer or rental subsidies to families hosting doubled up students to help them achieve educational goals and prevent entry into shelter.
- E. Pilot cash transfers for youth with one time financial needs.
- F. Pilot targeted universal basic income to youth experiencing homelessness.
- G. Pilot distribution of baby bonds to babies born to youth in shelter to decrease chance of becoming homeless as adults.
- H. Ensure youth exiting Riker's or other correctional facilities are not placed into homelessness by starting the discharge planning process upon immediate placement into correctional services.

- I. Reduce recidivism by providing job placements to vulnerable youth exiting from Riker's or other correctional facilities.

**Recommendation #13: Create multi-media public awareness and strategic outreach campaign to help youth engage with services and broaden community's understanding of youth homelessness.**

**Projected Outcomes:** This serves as a primary prevention tool targeted to the broader population in hopes to capture those who have not yet become homeless or those who are newly homeless while increasing awareness by the public about the issue of youth homelessness.

**Recommended strategies for implementation:**

Similar to other city awareness campaigns conducted by DOHMH, DSS or most recently, the Unity Project – hire a creative team and convene a body of young people and experts to inform the design of the public awareness campaign. Link newly designed mobile platform from Recommendation #1 to all advertisements so that young people can be connected to services as needed.

**Recommendation #14: Institutionalize NYC CCoC Youth Action Board.**

**Projected Outcomes:** Young people with lived experience will be included as part of the fabric of solutions and strategies towards preventing and ending youth homelessness. A system and a process to ensure quality assurance by youth who receive services through the city will be implemented. The role of the YAB will be formalized through consistent contracts, ensuring a connection with service delivery, monitoring and program evaluation.

**Recommended strategies for implementation:**

- A. NYCCoC to setup a mechanism for ongoing payment.
- B. Create positions for youth to co-chair the YAB and fully lead the activities of the YAB.

## **VII. Equity Impact**

The City of New York, under Mayor Bill de Blasio, has made equity central to everything it does. In the City's strategic long-term plan, *One New York: The Plan for a Strong and Just City* (OneNYC), the Administration said that governing with equity in mind demands that we ensure fairness in "access to assets, services, resources and opportunities so that all New Yorkers can reach their full potential."<sup>54</sup> It has done this within its own agencies, making equity a focus of the annual Mayor's Management Report (MMR), which gives agencies "an opportunity to articulate how they are working to promote fair delivery and quality of services among and across groups of people and places in support of the goals of equity, equality and opportunity for all New York City residents."<sup>55</sup> The City has also launched sweeping reforms in public systems, including Equity in Excellence<sup>56</sup> for public schools, the plan to close Rikers Island<sup>57</sup>, building or preserving 300,000 units of affordable housing<sup>58</sup>, the creation of ThriveNYC: A Mental Health Roadmap for All<sup>59</sup> and the Paid Safe and Sick Leave Law<sup>60</sup>, all of which work to increase equity across the city.

The United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has set out a national vision that homelessness should be rare, brief, and non-recurring.<sup>61</sup> The Youth Homelessness Taskforce wants these recommendations to bring homeless youth closer to a life full of opportunity, longevity and equity. A system that encourages choice and self-determination is one that can best meet the individual needs of young people experiencing homelessness.

Through the leadership and inclusion of the Youth Action Board at every stage of this process, the YHT aimed to counter the assumption that adults are more knowledgeable or more capable than young people. This attitude, known as *adultism*, influences many interactions that adults, including professional and service providers, have with youth. In this view, which mimics parenting techniques, adults often think they know what is best for young people without considering what the young person believes is best. Through these recommendations, youth with lived experience have become co-creators and designers of a system meant to serve them. With their inclusion in future advisory councils and the institutionalization of the Youth Action Board, they will continue to play a role in oversight and ongoing feedback about needed improvements.

Many of these recommendations incorporate the concept of human-centered design, which is a framework that uses participatory action research, or the involvement of those affected by a design and/or research, to help solve problems. This is another way that the YHT promotes equity for youth experiencing homelessness.

As highlighted throughout this document, most of the young people experiencing homelessness in New York City are youth of color. It is incumbent on public-serving systems to identify and address racism and implicit bias so youth of color can fairly access services, be treated with dignity while receiving those services, and ultimately move beyond the experience of homelessness. Many of these recommendations point to equity around permanent housing, access to benefits, earned income, educational attainment, and long-term physical and mental health.

The development of a shared performance measurement framework and common metrics to monitor progress towards preventing and ending youth homelessness will include specific considerations for youth of color and LGBTQ youth. For example, given that identifying as either transgender or black increases the probability of being a frequent jail stayer within three years of exiting youth homelessness systems,<sup>62</sup> we must facilitate the collection of data that can be used to track outcomes rooted in equity for permanent exits and long-term health outcomes of the most marginalized populations.

Finally, as this document shows, homelessness exposes young people to a wide range of additional vulnerabilities, including commercial sex trafficking, survival economies, mental health issues, and drug use. These vulnerabilities can most sensitively be addressed through a system that provides “no wrong door” entry points while supporting a young person through the issues they present with. For young parents, a youth-centered framework would not presume that having a child immediately changes the developmental needs of that young parent. For those who have experienced sex trafficking, programs that provide tailored services would better enable young people to renew and self-determine their futures. Equity in a public service system means that fairness, opportunity and intentionality are not lessened or diminished by one’s marginalized identities or experiences. A youth homelessness system must be responsive to historical oppression and structural racism and be able to reinforce the notion that young people

are resilient individuals able to determine the course of their own lives to achieve their best outcomes. The YHT believes these recommendations will make the system better able to achieve equity for young people experiencing homelessness.

## **VIII. Conclusion**

The recommendations laid out in this report provide multiple opportunities, albeit not exhaustive opportunities, for system improvement on behalf of young people experiencing homelessness in NYC. The Youth Homelessness Taskforce endorses each of these recommendations, having carefully created them with expertise in service delivery, public policy and lived experiences of homelessness. The disparities faced by youth of color and LGBTQ youth; the increase in youth identified as experiencing homelessness since 2015; and utilization of homeless services by youth previously served by child welfare, juvenile justice or Runaway and Homeless youth programs, demonstrate an immediate need for deeper and ongoing investment towards preventing and ending youth homelessness in NYC.

## **IX. Appendices**

### **A. Definitions**

Key definitions of homeless youth and their experiences are formed by the federal and state government, specifically the following:

- Runaway and Homeless Youth Act defines a “homeless youth” as someone who is between 16 and 21 (unless otherwise defined by an applicable State or local law) and who cannot stay with a relative in a safe environment or who has no living arrangement. A “runaway” youth is someone who is under 18 years old who has fled their home without parental consent.<sup>63</sup>
- U.S. Department of Education defines a homeless youth as someone who “lacks a fixed, regular, and nighttime residence” or a youth who lives in a shelter or transitional housing or in a place not meant for human beings to sleep in. It includes young people who are unaccompanied by family and those who are homeless with their families. It includes young people who are sharing the housing of other people due to economic hardship.<sup>64</sup>
- Another key piece of federal legislation impacting the lives of youth experiencing homelessness is the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Passed in 1987, part of this act focused on ensuring that homeless children could succeed in school. The McKinney-Vento Act requires that every Local Education Agency (LEA) has a LEA liaison. NYC has liaisons across each borough through the NYC Department of Education office of Students in Temporary Housing. These staff assist young people in ensuring they receive the education and services they are guaranteed by law through the McKinney-Vento Act.
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has four categories of homelessness including:
  1. Those who lack a regular, fixed and adequate nighttime residence;
  2. Those who will imminently lose their primary residence;
  3. Unaccompanied youth and families with children and youth who are defined as homeless under other federal statutes;

4. Individuals and families fleeing forms of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or other life-threatening scenarios.<sup>65</sup>
- New York State has the *Safe Harbour for Exploited Children Act of 2008* which aims to protect youth and provide them with trauma-informed services when they experience human trafficking. Child sex trafficking, in accordance with the federal definition from the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) is defined as, “any child under age 18 who is induced to perform a commercial sex act is considered a sex trafficking victim regardless of whether force, fraud, or coercion is present.”<sup>66</sup>

## B. List of Youth Homelessness Taskforce Members

Committee Abbreviation	Full Name of Committee
Steering	Steering Committee
Data	Data, Research and Outcome Measures
Edu/Emp	Education & Employment
HOPE	Housing options, permanency and exits (HOPE)
Prevention	Pathways to Prevention
SPICE	Systems, Policies, Interagency Coordination/Coordinated Entry
Support	Support Services

Youth Homelessness Taskforce Members		
Name	Representing	Committee(s)
Cole Giannone*	Office of Deputy Mayor for Health & Human Services	Lead & all
Adriana Rodriguez	Jericho Project	Data
Amy Wilkerson	Sheltering Arms	Steering
Ana Rolon	Domestic Violence Coalition	SPICE
Andrew Luong	Children's Village	Support
Anna Bessendorf	Mayor's Office of Food Policy	Support
Anne-Marie Flatley	NYC Housing Authority	HOPE
Barbara Andrews	ACF - HHS	Data
Carol Sainthilaire	Corporation for Supportive Housing	Data
Carolyn Strudwick	Safe Horizon, Streetwork Project	Support
Catherine Trapani	Homeless Services United	SPICE
Djibril Kaba	Young Invincibles	Edu/Emp
Doreen Straka	Jericho Project	Edu/Emp
Eileen Johns*	Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence	Steering & Data
Elizabeth Garcia	Good Shepherd Services	Steering & Prevention
Emily Kramer	Advocates for Children	Edu/Emp
Erica Dean	Department of Health and Mental Hygiene	Support

Esceta McGee	ACF - HHS	HOPE
Gary Pollack	Department of Social Services	Prevention
Giselle Routhier	Coalition for the Homeless	SPICE
Hannah Pennington	Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence	SPICE
Heather Dailey	Diaspora Community Services	Prevention
Iris Gersten	Department of Education, Office of Safety & Youth Development, Students in Temporary Housing	Edu/Emp
Jacquelyn Simone	Coalition for the Homeless	HOPE, SPICE
Jamie Powlovich	Coalition for Homeless Youth	Steering & HOPE
Janette Viera	West End Residences	HOPE
Jennifer MitchellMayer	Department of Education, Community Schools	Edu/Emp
Jennifer Pringle	Advocates for Children	Edu/Emp
Jerry Bruno*	Department of Homeless Services	Steering & HOPE
Jessica Raithel*	Department of Youth and Community Development	Steering & Data
Jha'asryel-Akquil Bishop	Youth Action Board	Steering, Data, Prevention
Jin Kim	Mayor's Office for Economic Opportunity	Data
Joey Lopez	Ali Forney Center	Steering
Kailey Burger	Administration for Children's Services	Prevention
Katherine Marshall Polite	Department of Education, Office of Safety & Youth Development, Students in Temporary Housing	Steering & Edu/Emp
Kathy Parker	Human Resources Administration	Support
Kay Jackson	Youth Action Board	HOPE
Kelly O'Sullivan	Jericho Project	HOPE
Kenia Maldonado	Human Resources Administration	Data, SPICE
Kristen Mitchell*	Department of Social Services	Steering & SPICE
Latifah Blades	Youth Action Board	Steering
Laura Mascuch	Supportive Housing Network of New York & Co-Chair of NYC Coalition on Continuum of Care	Steering
Leah Hebert	Center for Youth Employment	Edu/Emp
Lee Strock	Urban Justice Center	Support
Love Johnson	Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence	Edu/Emp
Lyndon Hernandez	Youth Action Board	Support

Lyndsey Richardson	Human Resources Administration	Edu/Emp
Marissa Martin	Young Invincibles	Edu/Emp
Markus Kessler	Administration for Children's Services	Prevention
Martha Kenton	Department of Social Services	Data
Maryanne Schretzman	Center for Innovation through Data Intelligence	Prevention
Matt Morton	Chapin Hall University of Chicago	Data
Melanie Kruvelis	Young Invincibles	Edu/Emp
Michelle Edmonds	Department of Health and Mental Hygiene	Support
Nancy Downing	Covenant House	Steering & Prevention
Nathifa Forde	Center for Youth Employment	Edu/Emp
Nivea Jackson	Department of Health and Mental Hygiene	Support
Pascale Larosiliere	Good Shepherd Services	Edu/Emp
Paul Williams	Administration for Children's Services	Steering & Data
Pilar Barreyro	Point Source Youth	HOPE
Robert Malone	Youth Action Board	Edu/Emp
Robin Pagliuco	Human Resources Administration	Data
Sabine Chery*	Administration for Children's Services	Steering & Prevention
Sam Miller	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	SPICE
Sara Tempel*	Department of Housing Preservation and Development	Steering & HOPE
Sarah Meckler	The Door	Steering & HOPE
Shirley de Pena	City University of New York	Steering & Edu/Emp
Skye Adrian	Youth Action Board	Steering & HOPE
Sophie Cadle	Youth Action Board	Support
Stacey Oliger	Department of Education, District 79	Edu/Emp
Sugeni Perez-Sadler	Department of Education, Post-Secondary Office	Edu/Emp
Sydney Kopp-Richardson	Supportive Housing Network of New York	Prevention
Theo Czerevko	Hetrick-Martin Institute	SPICE
Theresa Moser	Legal Aid Society	Support
Tischelle George	NYC Housing Authority	HOPE
Tommy Shi	Human Resources Administration	Edu/Emp
Tracey Downing	Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence	Support
Tracey Thorne*	Department of Youth and Community	Steering &



	Development	SPICE
Tricia Dawson	Human Resources Administration	HOPE
Vanessa Fuentes	Department of Social Services	Support, HOPE
Winnie Tjioe	Department of Education, Office of Safety & Youth Development, Students in Temporary Housing	Data

\*Represent members of the NYC Interagency Homelessness Accountability Council Youth and Young Adult Working group

### C. Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles of YHT

The YHT developed the following vision, mission and guiding principles in order to steer their work:

**Vision:** Building a NYC where every young person is safe, stable and housed.

**Mission:** Cultivating systemic change through a collaborative effort to prevent and end youth homelessness.

#### **Guiding Principles:**

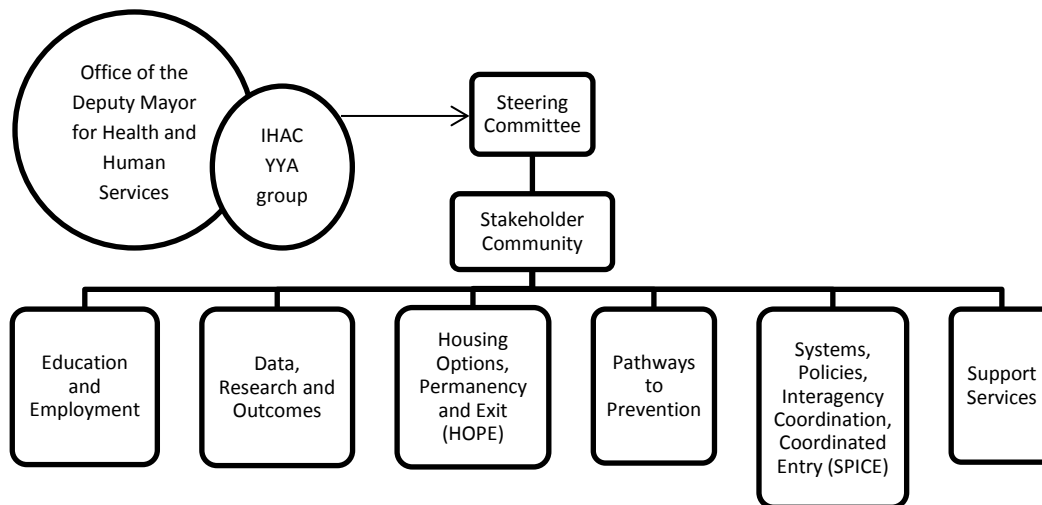
1. Housing First
  - A framework that enables folks experiencing homelessness to access permanent or supportive housing without any prerequisites such as sobriety or treatment. In the case of the YHT – we’d like to think of creating a system that is low-threshold at every level, allowing young people to obtain housing swiftly and providing them with services they need once they are placed.
2. Harm Reduction
  - A set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use (or other potentially harmful things.) It is a non-judgmental approach to helping communities engage in safer behavior while not ignoring real potential harm or danger. Harm Reduction Coalition says, “It meets clients where they are at, but it doesn’t leave them there.” Self-determination is a key tenant of harm-reduction practices.
3. Positive Youth Development/Strengths-Based Approach
  - This is practice by providers, government and adults which provides opportunities to young people to enhance their individual agency in their own lives. Focusing on the ability, capacity and potential of a young person vs. the risk, challenges or adversity they may face to promote positive outcomes. It often avoids using “punishment” as a way to “fix” young people and instead encourages positive decision-making through recognition and rewards. The YHT will aim to promote empowerment, resilience, and self-efficacy, focusing on the strengths of young people instead of their perceived deficits.
4. Anti-Oppression & Anti-Racism/Social Justice & Equity

- The YHT will center the experiences of the oppressed in our society, recognizing various races, identities and bodies that experience discrimination and marginalization more often. We will work towards eliminating oppression towards those groups such as Blacks & People of Color, Immigrants, Transgender, Queer, and Disabled, etc. In any recommended model of service delivery we will promote non-oppressive practices, remembering that equality does not necessarily translate into equity. We must create systems that center the most marginalized so that they are appropriate for all.
- 5. Authentic Youth Collaboration
  - Young people will be seen as experts with equally valued input and opportunity for participation. The Youth Action Board will be the main body of participants but any young person with experience of homelessness is welcome to participate.
- 6. Proactive Prevention
  - The YHT will prioritize preventive measures in all recommendations – whether prior to entering homelessness or once placed in permanent housing such that the cyclical nature of homelessness is stopped. This requires thoughtful planning around available resources and services to those who are inside and outside the system of care.
- 7. Think S.M.A.R.T.
  - When we are working in our committees, we must make sure we are thinking SMART. That in writing our goals, objectives and recommendations that they are Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic/Relevant and Time-bound.
- 8. Trauma-Informed Care and Healing Centered Engagement
  - Trauma-Informed Care is a framework for understanding, recognizing and responding to the effects of trauma. It moves us to see certain behaviors in connection with past experiences, and begets us to ask the question, “What happened to you?” instead of “What’s wrong with you?” When we include the notion of healing, we move beyond the question of, “What happened to you?” to “What’s right with you?” This notion helps to view “those exposed to trauma as agents in the creation of their own well-being rather than victims of traumatic events. The healing centered approach comes from the idea that people are not harmed in a vacuum, and well-being comes from participating in transforming the root causes of harm within institutions.” – Shawn Ginwright

#### **D. YHT Governance and Activities**

On June 14, 2018 the Mayor of New York City announced a new taskforce to prevent and end youth homelessness. The Youth Homelessness Taskforce (YHT) included 16 city agencies/offices, 22 nonprofits, 2 federal partners, 1 research entity and the NYC CCoC Youth Action Board through the involvement of 82 individuals. The Steering Committee which represented the broader stakeholder community and the NYC CCoC was selected through invitation by the Senior Consultant for Youth Homelessness. Steering Committee members were tasked with playing a lead role within their subcommittees – being the link between the Senior Consultant and the broader community. The Steering Committee included city agencies that are part of the Youth and Young Adult (YYA) workgroup out of the Interagency Homelessness Accountability Council (IHAC). There were twenty-one people representing nine City Agencies, two Coalitions, five Providers and one Youth Action Board.

The Stakeholder Committee represented the entire community working towards the creation of the *Report of the Youth Homelessness Taskforce*. The Committees were comprised of members from the Stakeholder Community and the Steering Committee. These committees were selected and voted on by the members of the community during the YHT launch event in June of 2018 based on the content areas seen as necessary towards the creation of a robust set of recommendations. These committees created the recommendations as included in this document and were voted on by the larger YHT to be included as key priority areas. Representatives from all sectors were included in each committee. The following chart illustrates the governance structure of the YHT:

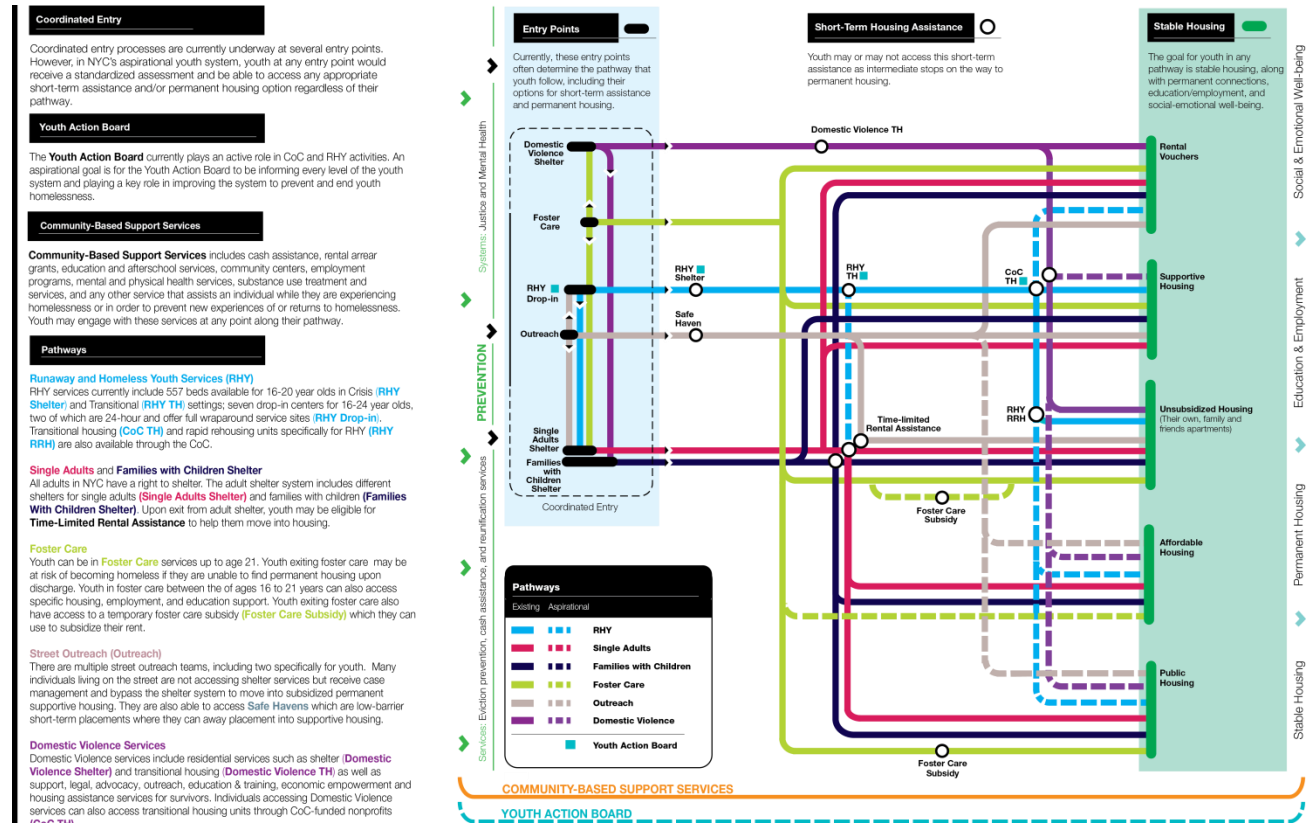


Each committee was given the authority to select the cadence of their meetings, assign roles to individuals within the committee and facilitate their own meetings. Committees were given guidance and worksheets created by Senior Consultant to help facilitate conversation and keep the momentum going with concrete deadlines and due dates. A “Master Committee List” was maintained and shared throughout the six months to ensure all were included on communication.

Steering Committee members were tasked with playing a lead role within their subcommittees – being the link between the Senior Consultant and the broader community. Before the second YHT convening, the Steering Committee helped to plan the agenda and following the selection of recommendations, participated in the 2.5 month-long drafting process for the report out of the taskforce activities. The Steering Committee was responsible for obtaining feedback and approval from each committee on the written plan prior to submission to city officials to determine feasibility.

The Senior Consultant for Youth Homelessness, acting as lead throughout the entire process, was responsible for planning and facilitating all of the larger YHT convenings; facilitating the Steering committee meetings; managing the writing and drafting process; planning presentations to two of the IHAC Quarterly Commissioner meetings; and facilitating the Youth and Young Adult working group of the IHAC.

## E. Youth System Map



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- <sup>2</sup> There are many definitions of “youth” and “young adults” as listed in the appendix. When the term “young person” or “youth” or “young adult” is used in this report, it is referencing the whole community of 16 – 24 year olds who may be experiencing homelessness.
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