<u>Introduction</u>

This document establishes key priorities for the Cape Cod and the Islands Regional Network on Homelessness (Network) regarding Youth and Young Adult (YYA) homelessness. It includes 16 First Tier Actions and 10 Second Tier Actions under six objectives. We believe these priorities will make a meaningful impact in our community and respond directly to the findings of our most recent needs assessment and the voices of YYA and the YYA providers who serve them.

In September 2019, Barnstable County Department of Human Services (BCDHS), in partnership with Matthew Aronson Consulting, published *Youth and Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness on Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket: A Community Needs Assessment (See Appendix A).* One of the key findings stated: "The Cape and Islands do not have a system designed to prevent and end Youth and Young Adult homelessness."

In response, the Network and its partners committed to building a system that effectively responds to the needs of YYA to make their housing instability rare, brief, and one-time. At the March 28, 2022 annual meeting of the Network's Policy Board, its governance body, the following goal was adopted for 2022-2023:

"The Regional Network on Homelessness Youth and Young Adult (YYA)

Homelessness Committee will endeavor to complete and implement a strategic plan to address YYA housing instability by March 2023."

In the Spring of 2022, the YYA Homelessness Committee (YYA Committee) held two strategic planning sessions. Participants discussed current services and resources available to YYA, identified gaps and barriers to successfully engaging with YYA, and brainstormed initiatives that would best meet our community needs. Together with the Youth Action Board (YAB)¹, they reviewed an initial list objectives and actions to identify and focus on those projects that were most meaningful and could reasonably be accomplished within a year.

Given the nature and speed of our planning process, we understand that many included actions are aspirational. Nevertheless, they serve as important light posts on our path to ending YYA homelessness, and we commit to making meaningful progress to the greatest extent possible.

Participating Organizations

The YAB
BCDHS
BCDHS
Housing Assistance Corporation
Falmouth's Human Services
Department

Duffy Health Center
Housing Assistance Corporation
Champ Homes
Martha's Vineyard Community
Service

¹ The YAB is a group of young people (16-24) with lived experience of homelessness or housing instability who partner with the Network on policies and initiatives to prevent and end YYA homelessness on the Cape and Islands

Priority Objectives and Actions

The YYA Committee and YAB initially reviewed 12 objectives and 31 actions. Each group met independently to review the list and provide comments before using an online survey to select their top five actions (See Appendix B for survey results). Survey results were reviewed all together and by stakeholder group to ensure that we included all YAB priorities. 17 older adult allies and 7 YAB members completed the survey.

First-Tier Priorities

The first list below includes only those actions that received 5% or more of the total vote, 5% or more of the YAB vote, or that the CoC already selected as core YYA priorities before the strategic planning process. 16 prioritized actions are separated into six objectives.

Objective 1. Improve overall system coordination and capacity to implement an effective coordinated community response to prevent and end YYA homelessness

Action 1.1. Apply to YHDP and develop a Coordinated Community Plan (Key Priority)

Action 1.2. Develop a series of aspirational innovative strategies (Key Priority)

Action 1.3. Launch a Youth Action Board as the representative voice for YYA with lived experience in the CoC (Key Priority)

- i. Ensure that they are a decision-making body within the CoC and have roles on CoC committees that impact the system of which they are a part
- ii. Ensure they are fully supported in their work

Action 1.4. Conduct an annual Community Needs Assessment update and publish it on the Barnstable County website (Key Priority)

Action 1.5. Improve coordinated entry to better meet the needs of YYA and YYA-serving programs (<u>Key</u> Priority)

- i. Conduct an analysis of the current coordinated entry process and develop a series of recommendations to meet the needs of YYA
- ii. Consider prioritizing YYA so that they can compete for beds with older adults
- iii. Engage alternative front door and community referral partners to expand the reach of coordinated entry and maximize the resources of each smaller community

Action 1.6. Add capacity to each school district such that there is a dedicated staff person with the capacity to support YYA experiencing homelessness in each middle and high school.

Action 1.7. Develop a funding strategy with local business that includes workforce development and employment pipelines

Objective 2. Increase the capacity of the system to meet the needs of YYA who have high level needs

Action 2.1. Fund additional case managers, including those who specialize in YYA who have high level needs, to reduce caseloads so that any case manager can better support their YYA who have high level needs

Action 2.2. Provide additional training for all YYA case managers to better support their YYA who have high level needs

Action 2.3. Partner with one or more community organizations to provide behavioral health supports where YYA are located (e.g., at YYA homelessness organizations, drop-in locations, etc.)

- i. Include medical person (nurse) who can prescribe
- ii. Consider a mobile clinic to provide urgent care and other medical care services to YYA in the community

Objective 3. Add low barrier, safe, and affirming housing and shelter that comprehensively meets the needs of YYA with lived experience

Action 3.1. Conduct a feasibility analysis for a low barrier communal housing HUB (e.g., no curfew or sobriety requirements) on the Cape that includes the following:

- i. College campus one-stop-shop model
- ii. Childcare
- iii. Food access resources including Community Kitchen (with tupperware!)
- iv. Onsite supports, including behavioral health supports
- v. "Urgent Care" or mobile medical services
- vi. Employment and workforce development supports (including relationships with local businesses)
- vii. Consider: Use the community college land
- viii. Consider: Pat Cawley developed a similar model in Miami

Action 3.2. Develop a YYA-specific crisis residential project where YYA can find a safe and comfortable bed to sleep in, meet their immediate basic needs, and connect to navigation and case management to help them either return home or find alternative long term safe housing

Objective 4. Improve the ability of YYA experiencing homelessness to access resources across the CoC

Action 4.1. Develop a region-wide transportation strategy that meet a broad range of need

Action 4.2. Implement a YYA-homelessness taxi or rideshare program, like PT1, but for a broad range of needs

i. Uber-like set up for YYA

ii. They did something similar last year where you can buy tokens from BTA and hand to Uber drivers

Objective 5. Increase community awareness to reduce stigma, engender greater understanding and support, and increase identification and resource access.

Action 5.1. Host a weekly community meal by and for YYA with referrals and a YAB Rep

Objective 6. Reduce the prevalence and impact of food insecurity among YYA experiencing homelessness and housing instability

Action 6.1. Launch an initiative that partners with restaurants to regularly provide meals to YYA and offers other opportunities that may include kitchen skills training, apprenticeships, employment, etc.

Second-Tier Priorities

The following list includes actions that received at least one vote but less than 5% of the total vote. These represent actions for which there is some strong support, and we will pursue them when they are complimentary to a First-Tier action, a similar First-Tier action is not feasible, or there is excess capacity to complete them. There are 10 actions under four of the six total objectives in the Second Tier.

Objective 1. Improve overall system coordination and capacity to implement an effective coordinated community response to prevent and end YYA homelessness

Objective 1.8. Conduct a survey of providers to identify the database elements and functionality that would most enhance their service provision

Objective 2. Increase the capacity of the system to meet the needs of YYA who have high level needs

Action 2.4. Implement a program for near-peer support and coaching, staffed by 21-30 year olds with lived experience who have navigated the intersection of homelessness and behavioral health

Action 2.5. Provide training in behavioral health for all YYA case-managers and other front line staff, grounded in harm reduction, to better help support the behavioral health needs of YYA

Objective 5. Increase community awareness to reduce stigma, engender greater understanding and support, and increase identification and resource access.

Action 5.2. Add prevention building skills and information about homelessness resources into the curriculum at schools

i. Designed to reduce stigma and educate students about how to help peers

Action 5.3. Host community meetings with YYA-relevant stakeholders to discuss YYA homelessness resources, how to use them, and the opportunities that they present for both YYA and the organizations that support them

Action 5.4. Develop a community engagement strategy to connect YYA experiencing homelessness and housing stability to their peers in each region of the CoC

Action 5.5. Develop a community dashboard for up to date and transparent public awareness and to inform policy making

Objective 6. Reduce the prevalence and impact of food insecurity among YYA experiencing homelessness and housing instability

Action 6.2. Launch a pilot food education program that includes cooking skills, recipe sharing, shopping and cooking money saving strategies, etc.

Action 6.3. Conduct an analysis of current food insecurity programs operating in the region, convene stakeholders from each effort to discuss coordination, create a centralized database and communication strategy

Action 6.4. Work together with the County food and nutrition specialist

Implementation Strategy

The Network will work over the next year to complete as many of the priority actions as possible in pursuit of our goals to ensure that homelessness among YYA is rare and, when it occurs, brief and one time. The effort will be carried out by the following partners:

BCDHS YYA Homelessness Lead (Lead). Will oversee the day-to-day management of the YYA homelessness strategy. The lead will track progress for each objective and action, develop project management plans for each action, identify project leads among the community partners, coordinate among stakeholders, and present regularly to the YYA Committee and Network Board regarding the progress towards our goal.

YYA Committee. Will act as a steering committee for the Lead, meeting monthly to review progress and make preliminary decisions. The YYA Committee will be responsible for vetting documents and reports, providing insight and feedback, and making decisions regarding strategy modifications. At least two YAB members must be present or submit their votes offline before any YYA Committee decision regarding a significant plan change can be finalized.

YAB. The YAB will provide oversight regarding the plan. YAB members will participate on the YYA Committee and Network Board and review all plan reports independently. They have the authority recommend changes to the strategy and to call a vote at the YYA committee.

Network Board. The Network Board will review semiannual reports and offer guidance and support regarding the broader homelessness system, including HMIS, Coordinated Entry, the CoC Competition, and other areas of expertise. They will remove barriers to strategy implementation to the greatest extent possible and promote the strategy among their constituencies. They will designate most decision-making authority to the YYA Committee and YAB, however they will be a co-decision-maker with those parties whenever decisions directly impact the work of other CoC Committees or directly conflict with existing CoC policy.

To ensure continuous improvement, the YYA Committee will regularly solicit feedback regarding the plan from young people, providers, and other community stakeholders. This will include an annual survey of partners, focus groups with YYA, and an annual strategy update with recommendations for improvement. YAB members will be included in the design of all feedback materials and in the analysis of related data.

Preliminary Project Management Plan

The following plan addresses three of the high priority first tied items. They can be considered examples for how we need to begin planning for each of our actions and providing both support and oversight.

1. Develop a YYA-specific crisis residential project where YYA can find a safe and comfortable bed to sleep in, meet their immediate basic needs, and connect to navigation and case management to help them either return home or find alternative long term safe housing.

Milestones:

- Identify a service provider to operate a year-round Emergency Response program for Youth and Young Adults by September 30, 2022.
- Conduct program design analysis to include staffing, site, program maintenance and other related costs by October 30, 2022.
- Conduct site search and secure location by December 31, 2022.
- Complete staffing onboarding by February 28, 2023.
- Open program to accept referrals for YYA by March 31, 2023.
- Conduct program analysis for modifications and improvements in FY23 by June 30, 2023.
- Develop a region-wide transportation strategy, similar to MassHealth PT-1, that meets a broad range of needs including employment opportunities, YAB related events, community integration, advocacy and other travel locations.

Milestones:

- Conduct a cost/benefit analysis of available transportation options including the Regional Transit Authority, local taxi companies and rideshare by August 31, 2022.
- Review cost/benefit analysis with YAB and to determine transportation option that best meets the need of YYA by September 30, 2022.
- Finalize transportation provider choice and disseminate contact information to all YYA partners by October 31, 2022.
- Review year to date spending on transportation program to assess need for funding changes by January 31, 2023.
- Conduct program analysis for modifications and improvements in FY23 by June 30, 2023.

- 3. Conduct a feasibility analysis for a low barrier communal housing HUB (e.g., no curfew or sobriety requirements) on the Cape that includes onsite supports, childcare, food access, medical and behavioral health resources and employment services.

 Milestones:
 - Conduct a cost assessment for a consultant to complete a feasibility analysis and have funding approved by September 30, 2022.
 - Release a Request for Response (RFR) for consultant services to undergo the feasibility analysis by October 31, 2022.
 - Award the successful bidder and finalize Scope of Services and Contract by November 30, 2022.
 - Finalize project plan and launch analysis by December 31, 2022.
 - Conduct 3-month review on project progress by March 31, 2023.
 - Finalize Feasibility Analysis Report for review by the Regional Network on Homelessness Policy Board by June 30, 2023.

Appendix A: Survey Results

All Votes by Action (n=24). Each participant had five votes.

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11b. Conduct regular trainings on authentic YYA partnership and adultism for all CoC stakeholders 4 39				
	10a.	long term safe housing	15	13%
12b. Develop a community dashboard for up to date and transparent public awareness and to inform policy making	11b.	Conduct regular trainings on authentic YYA partnership and adultism for all CoC stakeholders	4	3%
	12b.	Develop a community dashboard for up to date and transparent public awareness and to inform policy making	1	1%

YAB Votes by Action (n=7). Each participant had five votes.

	Action	Votes	%
2a.	Fund additional case managers who specialize in YYA who have high level needs	2	6%
	Fund additional case managers to reduce caseloads so that any case manager can better support their YYA who have high		
2b.	level needs	6	17%
2c.	Provide additional training for all YYA case managers to better support their YYA who have high level needs	2	6%
	Conduct a feasibility analysis for a low barrier communal housing HUB (e.g., no curfew or drug restrictions) on the Cape that		0,0
	includes the following: i) college campus one-stop shop model; ii) Childcare; iii) Food access resources including a Community		
	Kitchen; iv) Onsite supports including behavioral health; v) Urgent care or mobile medical services; vi) Employment and		
3a.	workforce development supports; vii) consider using community college land	2	6%
	Develop a region-wide transportation strategy that meet a broad range of need	1	3%
ти.	Implement a YYA-homelessness taxi or rideshare program, like PT1, but for a broad range of needs i) Uber-like set up for YYA;	_	3/0
4b.	ii) They did something similar last year where you can buy tokens from BTA and hand to Uber drivers	1	3%
70.	Add prevention building skills and information about homelessness resources into the curriculum at schools; i) Designed to	_	3/0
5a.	reduce stigma and educate students about how to help peers	0	0%
Ju.	Add capacity to each school district such that there is a dedicated staff person with the capacity to support YYA experiencing		070
5b.	homelessness in each middle and high school.	1	3%
55.	Host community meetings with YYA-relevant stakeholders to discuss YYA homelessness resources, how to use them, and the		
5c.	opportunities that they present for both YYA and the organizations that support them	0	0%
5d.	Host a weekly community meal by and for YYA with referrals and a YAB Rep	2	6%
г.	Develop a community engagement strategy to connect YYA experiencing homelessness and housing stability to their peers in	0	00/
5e.	each region of the CoC Implement a program for near-peer support and coaching, staffed by 21-30 year olds with lived experience who have	0	0%
60	navigated the intersection of homelessness and behavioral health	1	3%
6a.	Partner with one or more community organizations to provide behavioral health supports where YYA are located (e.g., at YYA	1	370
	homelessness organizations, drop-in locations, etc.); i) Include medical person (nurse) who can prescribe; ii) Consider a mobile		
6b.	clinic to provide urgent care and other medical care services to YYA in the community	3	9%
OD.	Provide training in behavioral health for all YYA case-managers and other front line staff, grounded in harm reduction, to	,	370
6c.	better help support the behavioral health needs of YYA	0	0%
00.	Conduct a survey of providers to identify the database elements and functionality that would most enhance their service		
7a.	provision	0	0%
7 (3.1	Improve or supplement HMIS, as needed, to incorporate provider recommendations, including robust service history, such		
7b.	that the system outputs are responsive the realities of service delivery as well as measuring system performance	0	0%
7c.	Conduct training for YYA providers on how to best utilize HMIS to support their clients	0	0%
8a.	Develop a funding strategy with local business that includes workforce development and employment pipelines	2	6%
	Launch an initiative that partners with restaurants to regularly provide meals to YYA and offers other opportunities that may		
9a.	include kitchen skills training, apprenticeships, employment, etc.	4	11%
9b.	Evaluate the food equity effort on MV and explore opportunities to scale across the CoC	0	0%
	Launch a pilot food education program that includes cooking skills, recipe sharing, shopping, and cooking money saving		
9c.	strategies, etc.	1	3%
	Conduct an analysis of current food insecurity programs operating in the region, convene stakeholders from each effort to		
9d.	discuss coordination, create a centralized database and communication strategy	1	3%
9e.	Work together with the County food and nutrition specialist	1	3%
	Develop a YYA-specific crisis residential project where YYA can find a safe and comfortable bed to sleep in, meet their		
	immediate basic needs, and connect to navigation and case management to help them either return home or find alternative		
10a	long term safe housing	3	9%
	Conduct regular trainings on authentic YYA partnership and adultism for all CoC stakeholders	2	
12b	Develop a community dashboard for up to date and transparent public awareness and to inform policy making	0	0%

Older Adult Votes by Action (17 Total). Each participant had five votes.

	Action	Votes	%
2a.	Fund additional case managers who specialize in YYA who have high level needs	2	2%
	Fund additional case managers to reduce caseloads so that any case manager can better support their YYA who have high		
2b.	level needs	3	4%
2c.	Provide additional training for all YYA case managers to better support their YYA who have high level needs	4	5%
	Conduct a feasibility analysis for a low barrier communal housing HUB (e.g., no curfew or drug restrictions) on the Cape that		
	includes the following: i) college campus one-stop shop model; ii) Childcare; iii) Food access resources including a Community		
	Kitchen; iv) Onsite supports including behavioral health; v) Urgent care or mobile medical services; vi) Employment and		
3a.	workforce development supports; vii) consider using community college land	10	12%
4a.	Develop a region-wide transportation strategy that meet a broad range of need	8	9%
	Implement a YYA-homelessness taxi or rideshare program, like PT1, but for a broad range of needs i) Uber-like set up for		
4b.	YYA; ii) They did something similar last year where you can buy tokens from BTA and hand to Uber drivers	9	11%
	Add prevention building skills and information about homelessness resources into the curriculum at schools; i) Designed to		
5a.	reduce stigma and educate students about how to help peers	3	4%
- L	Add capacity to each school district such that there is a dedicated staff person with the capacity to support YYA experiencing	_	CO/
5b.	homelessness in each middle and high school.	5	6%
5c.	Host community meetings with YYA-relevant stakeholders to discuss YYA homelessness resources, how to use them, and the opportunities that they present for both YYA and the organizations that support them	1	1%
5d.	Host a weekly community meal by and for YYA with referrals and a YAB Rep	3	4%
	Develop a community engagement strategy to connect YYA experiencing homelessness and housing stability to their peers in	1	10/
5e.	each region of the CoC Implement a program for near-peer support and coaching, staffed by 21-30 year olds with lived experience who have	1	1%
6a.	navigated the intersection of homelessness and behavioral health	2	2%
oa.	Partner with one or more community organizations to provide behavioral health supports where YYA are located (e.g., at		2/0
	YYA homelessness organizations, drop-in locations, etc.); i) Include medical person (nurse) who can prescribe; ii) Consider a		
6b.	mobile clinic to provide urgent care and other medical care services to YYA in the community	7	8%
	Provide training in behavioral health for all YYA case-managers and other front line staff, grounded in harm reduction, to		
6c.	better help support the behavioral health needs of YYA	1	1%
	Conduct a survey of providers to identify the database elements and functionality that would most enhance their service		
7a.	provision	2	2%
	Improve or supplement HMIS, as needed, to incorporate provider recommendations, including robust service history, such		
7b.	that the system outputs are responsive the realities of service delivery as well as measuring system performance	0	0%
7c.	Conduct training for YYA providers on how to best utilize HMIS to support their clients	0	0%
8a.	Develop a funding strategy with local business that includes workforce development and employment pipelines	4	5%
	Launch an initiative that partners with restaurants to regularly provide meals to YYA and offers other opportunities that may		
9a.	include kitchen skills training, apprenticeships, employment, etc.	3	4%
9b.	Evaluate the food equity effort on MV and explore opportunities to scale across the CoC	0	0%
	Launch a pilot food education program that includes cooking skills, recipe sharing, shopping, and cooking money saving		
9c.	strategies, etc.	0	0%
	Conduct an analysis of current food insecurity programs operating in the region, convene stakeholders from each effort to		
9d.	discuss coordination, create a centralized database and communication strategy	1	1%
9e.	Work together with the County food and nutrition specialist	1	1%
	Develop a YYA-specific crisis residential project where YYA can find a safe and comfortable bed to sleep in, meet their		
	immediate basic needs, and connect to navigation and case management to help them either return home or find alternative		
10a.	long term safe housing	12	14%
11b.	Conduct regular trainings on authentic YYA partnership and adultism for all CoC stakeholders	2	2%
	Develop a community dashboard for up to date and transparent public awareness and to inform policy making	1	1%
120	preverse a community dustinous at for up to dute and transparent public awareness and to inform policy making	1 +	1/0

All Votes by Objective (n=24)

Objective	Votes	%	Priority	Preselect
1.	-	-		*
2.	19	16%	*	
3.	12	10%	*	
4.	19	16%	*	*
5.	16	13%	*	
6.	14	12%	*	
7.	2	2%		
8.	6	5%		
9.	12	10%	*	
10.	15	13%		
11.	4	3%		*
12.	1	1%		*

YAB Votes by Objective (n=7)

Objective	Votes	%	Priority	Preselect
1.	-	-		*
2.	10	29%	*	
3.	2	6%	*	
4.	2	6%	*	*
5.	3	9%	*	
6.	4	11%	*	
7.	0	0%		
8.	2	6%		
9.	7	20%	*	
10.	3	9%		
11.	2	6%		*
12.	0	0%		*

Older Adult Votes by Objective (n=17)

Objective	Votes	%	Priority	Preselect
1.	-	-		*
2.	9	11%	*	
3.	10	12%	*	
4.	17	20%	*	*
5.	13	15%	*	
6.	10	12%	*	
7.	2	2%		
8.	4	5%		
9.	5	6%	*	
10.	12	14%		
11.	2	2%		*
12.	1	1%		*