

Stuart Campbell August 9, 2019 email:

In preparation for the September 3rd meeting of the Workgroup to Study Shelter and Supportive Services for Unaccompanied Homeless Minors, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (the Department) has responded to the questions put forth by the Chairs in their July 25, 2019 letter to Workgroup members. Additionally, the Department has attached the following documents for reference:

- January 2019 Report on Available Services and Barriers for Youth Experiencing Homelessness in Maryland (**Attachment A**);
- HSP Program Components Quick Reference Guide (**Attachment B**); and,
- The Youth Homelessness Program Resource (**Attachment C**).

Below are responses to the questions:

The unique needs of unaccompanied homeless minors.

Based on existing concerns related to liability of service providers serving minor youth, the Department policy currently restricts the use of Department funds for minor youth, and consequently, the Department does not currently administer funds for minor youth. However, **Attachment A** includes details on the unique needs of unaccompanied homeless youth more broadly, including minors and unaccompanied homeless youth between the ages of 18-24.

The public and private-sector programs and resources available to meet those needs:

The Department manages \$9.3 million in Homelessness Solutions Program funds, some of which are allocated to serving youth aged 18-24. For FY2020, the Governor included an additional \$1 million specifically targeted to unaccompanied homeless youth.

The gaps in public and private sector programs and resources available to meet the needs of unaccompanied homeless minors.

Due to liability concerns of our service providers, the Department does not currently support programs targeted to unaccompanied homeless minors, however, **Attachment A** does address some of the gaps in programs and resources serving unaccompanied homeless youth.

The barriers to access safe shelter for unaccompanied homeless minors.

Attachment A includes an overview of barriers to accessing shelter and other services for unaccompanied homeless youth.

In addition, the workgroup has requested the following details on the funding sources that DHCD receives or administers through grant awards that can be used to serve unaccompanied homeless minors. See the Department's responses below.

- **All available funding sources, including federal, State, and local funds, that your agency receives that can be used to serve unaccompanied homeless minors.**

The Department does not currently support services to address the needs of unaccompanied homeless minors because of liability concerns of our service providers.

- **A description of all restrictions and allowable uses of these funding sources and grants.**

A summary of allowable activities and expenses under the Homelessness Solutions Program is included below, and the full description of all restrictions and allowable uses of funding is included in **Attachment B**.

- *Outreach*: Engagement, case management, transportation, special events (resource fairs, Point-in-Time counts).
- *Emergency shelter*: Shelter operations, case management, onsite childcare, outpatient health services, mental health services, substance use treatment services, legal services, education services, employment assistance, and job training, life skills training, transportation and transitional housing.
- *Housing stabilization services* (Rapid re-housing & Homelessness prevention): Rental assistance, financial assistance, housing search and placement, case management, mediation, legal services, and credit repair.
- *Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)*: Data management technology, salaries and training/technical assistance expenses.

A summary of allowable activities under the Ending Youth Homelessness Act is included below, and the full description is included in **Attachment C**.

- *Street and community-based outreach*: tools for locating, identifying and building relationships with youth, case management services in order to connect youth to mainstream resources and emergency shelter programs, providing meals, blankets, clothes, toiletries, or transportation for unsheltered households to emergency shelters, participation in Youth REACH, stipends for youth participation in activities organized by the Continuum of Care, outreach events (such as homeless resource days) targeted to youth experiencing homelessness.

- *Drop-in programs:* operating costs and operations of the day/drop-in program, service coordination for essential services such as medical, dental, behavioral health care, housing search support, workforce and educational development assistance, family engagement services, general case management, and emergency shelter access.
- *Emergency shelter:* Operations of the shelter, such as rent and utilities, as well as services provided by the shelter, including case management
- *Rental assistance:* Short (up to 3 months) or medium-term (up to 24 months) rental assistance to assist youth in maintaining or obtaining permanent housing. Host Homes or other short-term programs designed as a bridge to permanent housing are an eligible activity
- *Case management:* Services that support youth placed or who are already living in permanent housing, to ensure they remain housed and connected to mainstream resources.
- *Planning and implementation:* Evaluating data, conducting a needs analysis, developing and establishing a Youth Action/Advisory Board, identifying and designing program models based on need and training for staff to understand the challenges and barriers for youth experiencing homelessness.
- **A list of grant awards distributed by your agency that are used to serve unaccompanied homeless minors.**

Grant awards administered by the Department do not currently serve unaccompanied homeless minors because of liability concerns of our service providers.

- **If applicable, the statute or legislation that governs the administration of each funding source.**

The Homelessness Solutions Program is governed by the following statutes and legislation:

- A. The Crisis Shelter Home Program for the Homeless, as set forth in §4-2201 et seq. of the Housing and Community Development Article, Annotated Code of Maryland (the Act);
- B. The Rental Allowance Program, as set forth in §4-1402 et seq. of the Act.

- C. The Housing Navigator and Aftercare Program, as set forth in §4-2301 et seq. of the Act.
- D. The Ending Youth Homelessness Act, as set forth in §11.5-101 et seq. of the Act.
- E. The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009, as set forth in 42 U.S.C. 11371 et seq.

A Report on Available Services and Barriers for Youth Experiencing Homelessness in Maryland

January 2019

**Prepared by:
Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development
Office of Community Services Programs**

**Prepared for:
The Governor and the Maryland General Assembly**

**As required by:
Housing and Community Development Article 11.5-101-111**

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Purpose

The Ending Youth Homelessness Act of 2018 (Housing and Community Development Article 11.5-101) was signed into law by Governor Larry Hogan on May 15, 2018. The bill was enacted to serve as a statewide response for preventing and ending youth homelessness in Maryland. As a result, the statute also establishes an Ending Youth Grant Program and Ending Youth Homelessness Grant Fund, focused on providing funding assistance to housing and supportive services for unaccompanied homeless youth and youth at risk of homelessness. Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (the Department) must initiate program policies and procedures and funding standards, with input from current or formerly homeless youth, necessary to carry out programs to end youth homelessness. The Governor's Fiscal Year 2020 budget includes an additional \$1 million dollars to be targeted to rental assistance and case management services to youth experiencing homelessness.

Additionally, the statute requires the Department to address other issues related to youth experiencing homelessness, such as disparities based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity. To assist in this effort, the Department will continue to serve as the lead State agency for Youth REACH Maryland, a youth homelessness survey count, to perform data collection and analysis in order to determine the number and character unaccompanied homeless youth throughout the State.

Finally, the statute requires the Department to produce an annual report regarding the issue of youth homelessness. Derived from research presented by community partners and input from youth with lived experience, this document will provide:

- An overview of youth homelessness and its causes
- Systemic barriers affecting unaccompanied homeless youth and youth at risk of homelessness
- Federal and state resources to help combat this issue and program outcomes.

Overview of Youth Homelessness

The issue of identifying youth experiencing homelessness remains a persistent concern across the nation. According to the nationwide results of the 2017 Point-In-Time (PIT) count, a count conducted of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night (typically in January)¹, over 50,000 youth under the age of 25 were identified as homeless.² In Maryland, 450 youth were identified as homeless across 16 Continua of Care (CoCs) during the same PIT count. Of the 450 youth identified, 236 youth identified as unaccompanied, or not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.³ Since many of these youth are less likely to identify as homeless or access traditional homeless services, it is a challenge to accurately assess the complete number, characteristics, and needs of youth experiencing homelessness, therefore the PIT data is considered to be an undercount of the total.

To better understand the prevalence of youth homelessness in Maryland, in 2014 the General Assembly created and funded Youth REACH Maryland, a count specifically focused on identifying youth experiencing homelessness. Administered by the Department in partnership with the Institute for Innovation & Implementation at the University of Maryland School of Social Work, the count occurs over the course of two weeks, and is coordinated by CoCs. Since its inception in March of 2015 with six Continua of Care (CoCs), the count as of March 2017, has grown to include 20 of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions.

During the 2017 Youth REACH count, 1,830 surveys were completed by youth and young adults across the 10 CoCs, covering 20 of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions. Of the youth and young adults surveyed in the Youth REACH count, 865 (47%) of youth under the age of 25 and not in the physical custody or care of a legal guardian met the Youth REACH Maryland definition for an unaccompanied homeless youth. The youth identified also lacked a fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residence.⁴

According to data provided by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), there were approximately 17,429 school-aged youth experiencing homelessness identified under the United States Department of Education definition of homelessness during the 2016-2017 school year. United States Department of Education definition is more expansive than the definition mandated by HUD, which only includes individuals who are literally homeless. Of the 17,429 counted, approximately 81% of students were doubled up with other families or "couch surfing," 9% were students living in shelter, 9% are living in a hotel/motel, and approximately 2% were unsheltered. 13.4% of youth surveyed were unaccompanied and 0.3% were migrants.

¹ HUD Office of Community Planning and Development. (2017). <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Notice-CPD-17-08-2018-HIC-PIT-Data-Collection-Notice.pdf>

² HUD Office of Community Planning and Development (2017). https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/reportmanagement/published/CoC_PopSub_NatlTerrDC_2017.pdf

³ United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2018). https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Federal-Definitions-of-Youth-Homelessness.pdf

⁴ HUD Office of Community Planning and Development. (2014). https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/HomelessDefinition_RecordkeepingRequirementsandCriteria.pdf

Causes of Youth Homelessness

Across the state of Maryland, youth and young adults experience homelessness for a variety of reasons, most of which are beyond their control. Hundreds of youth and young adults are living on their own and experiencing significant housing instability, resulting in increased vulnerability to unsafe environments and decreased access to critical services. Some youth are survivors of domestic violence; some youth are rejected by family members for their gender identity or sexual orientation; and, some youth exit the child welfare or juvenile justice systems without income to secure adequate, permanent housing.⁵ Once homeless, this population is exposed to an increased risk of violence, human trafficking, and exploitation, resulting in a higher incidence of mental health problems or substance abuse.⁶ Moreover, recent data suggests that racial minority youth and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) youth are overrepresented in the number of unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness.

The 2018 Youth REACH Maryland count found:

- 78% of the youth surveyed identified as non-white,
- 53% identified as African American,
- 20% of youth identified as LGBTQ, and
- 3% identified as transgender.

This number of youth identified in the Youth Reach Maryland count is higher than the 58% of Maryland youth ages 10-24 identified as non-white in US Census data.⁷

Variations of Homeless Definitions by Federal Funding Agencies

The definition of youth homelessness varies based on the federal source of homeless assistance funding as follows:

- The United States Department of Education defines homeless children and youth under the age of 25 as “individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.” This definition includes youth temporarily sharing the housing of another, or “couch surfing.”⁸
- The HUD definition of homelessness does not consider “couch surfing” as literal homelessness; consequently, youth under the age of 25 that fall into that category are not eligible for HUD housing programs.

⁵ Edidin, J., Ganim, Z., Hunter, S., & Karnik, N. (2012). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-011-0270-1>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Miller, A., Unick, J., Hoey, E. & Harburger, D.S. (2018). Maryland Youth Count 2018: A report on the findings from Youth REACH MD's third survey of unaccompanied youth & young adults experiencing homelessness. Unpublished

⁸ USICH. (2018). Key Federal Terms and Definitions of Homelessness among Youth. https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Federal-Definitions-of-youth-homelessness.pdf

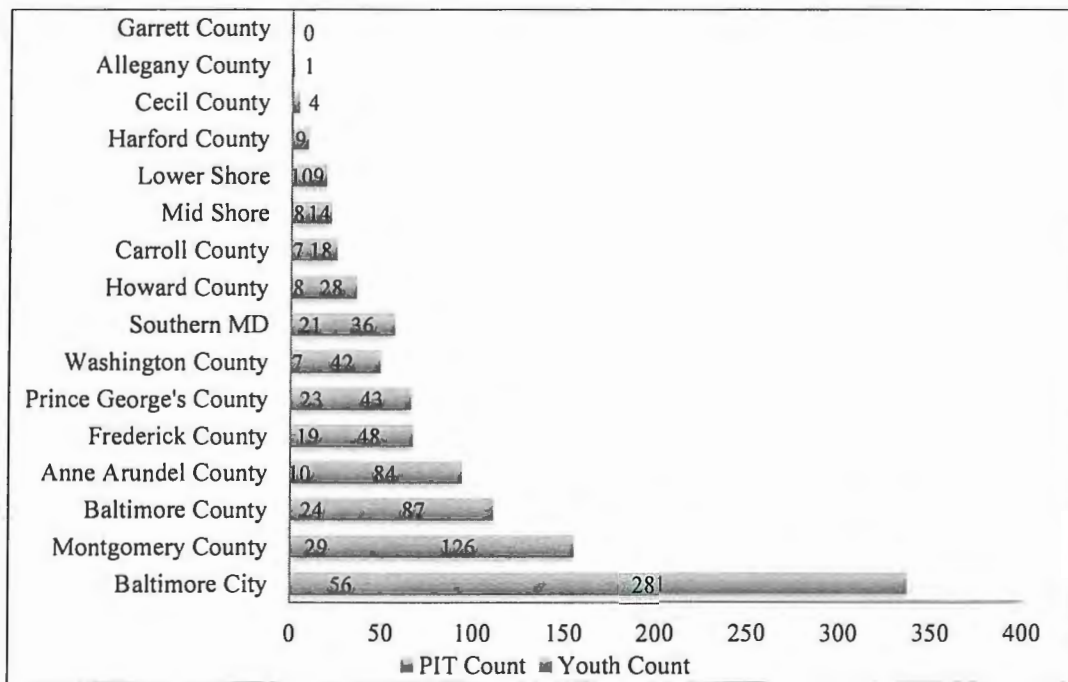
- The United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) define homeless youth under the age of 21, (not 25) and cannot live in a safe environment with a relative. Additionally, homeless youth are defined as not have another safe alternative living arrangement.⁹

Based on the definitions listed above, the variations in definitions among federal agencies limit the type of services for which youth qualify. For instance, Eighty-one percent of the students identified within the MSDE school system are not eligible to access comprehensive housing supports and services through HUD programs offered by the Department. As a result, service providers are left to find alternative interventions to assist with housing-related needs.

Where are Youth Experiencing Homelessness in Maryland?

Based on the 2018 PIT and Youth REACH MD data, the majority of unaccompanied homeless youth were identified in Baltimore City, Montgomery County, and Baltimore County, respectively. The data presented in Table One indicates that the higher number of homeless youth identified within the three CoCs above may also correlate with the greater availability of services in those jurisdictions.

Table 1: Number of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth per Continua of Care (CoC)



Source: CoC PIT Data and Youth REACH 2018 Survey

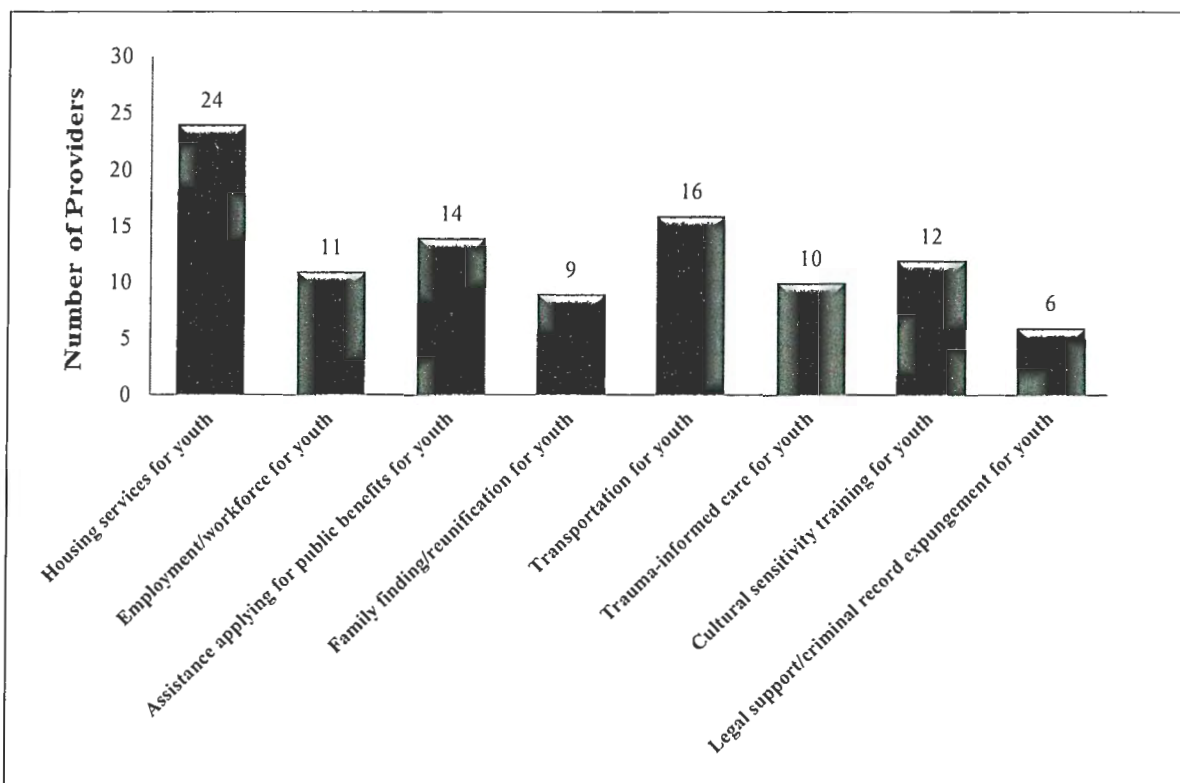
(Lower Shore CoC includes Somerset, Wicomico, Worcester Counties. Mid Shore CoC includes Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot Counties. Last, Southern MD CoC includes Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's Counties.)

⁹ Ibid.

Assessment of Services Targeted to Youth Experiencing Homelessness

In September 2018, the Youth and Young Adult Workgroup of Maryland’s Interagency Council on Homelessness (ICH) conducted a survey of CoC leads, homeless service providers and youth experiencing homelessness in order to collect information about existing programs and assess program gaps. Seventy-four surveys were completed by all CoC leads and 54 providers as well as a handful of youth experiencing homelessness. Of the 54 provider responses, 57% of CoCs and homeless service providers indicated that they do not provide housing or services specifically targeted to unaccompanied youth. Forty-three percent of CoCs and homeless service providers offer services that are youth-specific. Table Two below identifies the number of homeless service providers and types of youth-specific services rendered.

Table 2: Youth-Specific Homeless Services in Maryland



Source: 2018 ICH Youth and Young Adults Workgroup Youth Survey

In addition to community responses regarding youth-specific services, 50% of service providers that responded to the survey indicated they provide employment opportunities within their own organization for youth who are experiencing homelessness. Youth homeless advocates have emphasized the importance of having more youth with lived experience on staff to work with other youth as peers. While providers and CoCs note that they encourage youth to act as self-advocates and solicit feedback from youth on service quality, providers would like to incorporate more youth into their programming to encourage more youth to access services.

Systemic Barriers Affecting Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Obstacles Accessing Housing and Housing-Related Services

The survey conducted by the Youth and Young Adult Workgroup of Maryland's Interagency Council on Homelessness highlighted specific issues service providers identified as barriers to youth accessing services and housing they require. While some service providers and CoCs noted the need for more resources to assist youth transition out foster care and the need for stronger mental health services for youth and families, most communities identified the lack of transportation and affordable housing as the most significant barriers.¹⁰

According to survey results, 24% of service providers identified lack of transportation as the primary hinderance to education and employment for youth, and nine CoCs (75%) noted youth have difficulty accessing general and consistent public transportation. Additionally, the cost of fares and length of time required to get to work, school, or an appointment within their jurisdiction are obstacles. Additionally, out of 43 responses, 24 (56%) indicated that cost of a vehicle and insurance are the most common barriers to vehicle ownership for youth.¹¹ Service providers noted that youth are interested in receiving social services and program assistance, but transportation presents the greatest challenge for consistent program engagement.

Another barrier indicated in the survey included a lack of affordable housing, such as subsidized housing. Twenty-one percent of providers noted that the lack of subsidized housing was the biggest barrier for youth experiencing homelessness due to closed waiting lists or long waiting periods for units to become available. Moreover, age restrictions and poor rental history were further barriers hindering youth access to permanent housing. Most notably, providers indicated that some youth that enter the CoC system do not meet the HUD Definition of literal homelessness, which is necessary to access housing-related services.¹² Many of the youth accessing services are sometimes staying with friends or have other temporary housing arrangements ("couch surfing"), making them ineligible for housing services such as Rapid Re-Housing. Lastly, 40% of service providers noted that the inability for youth to pay market rate rent was the common reason why youth are at risk of homelessness after obtaining housing.

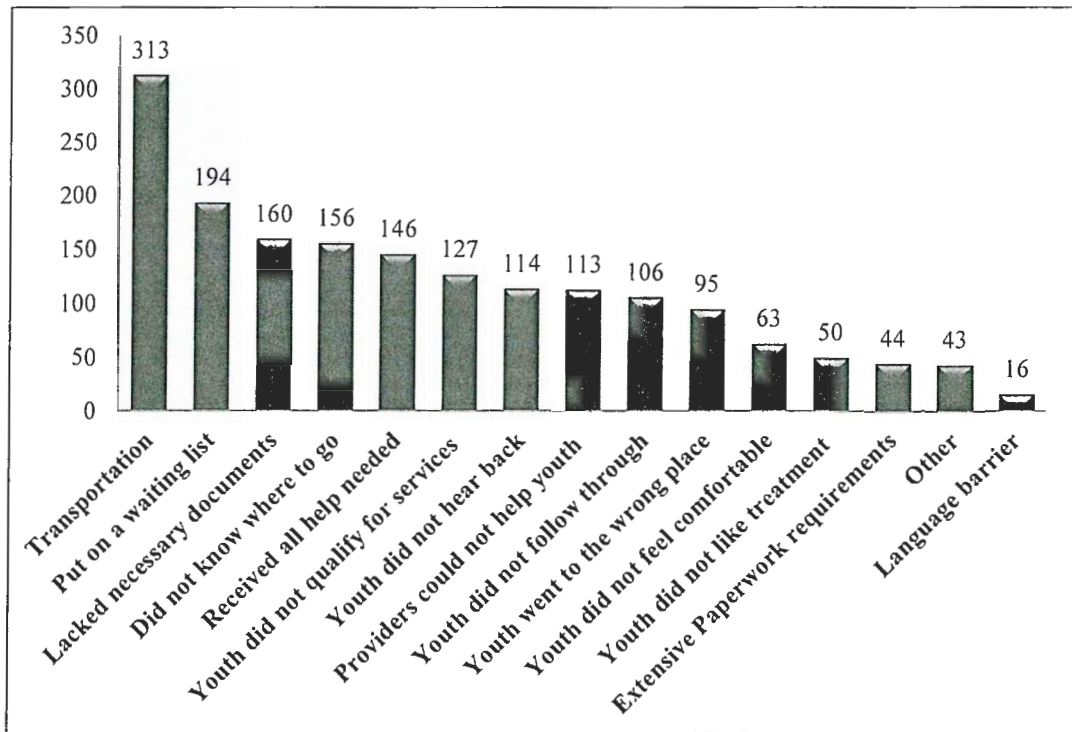
¹⁰ ICH Youth and Young Adults Workgroup. (2018). ICH Youth Survey. Unpublished manuscript

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² The HUD Category 1 definition of homelessness requires that an individual be living in a place not meant for human habitation, emergency shelters, transitional housing, or hotels paid for by a government or charitable organization. HUD (2014).

Similarly, identical gaps reported in the ICH Youth and Young Adult Workgroup Survey were also acknowledged by youth themselves in the 2018 Youth REACH Survey. Approximately, 816 youth that completed the survey identified a range of limitations in accessing critical services. The most common barriers reported by youth are issues related to transportation, delays in accessing permanent housing due to waiting lists, and lacking necessary supporting documentation (like a birth certificate or driver’s license).¹³ The full breakdown of reported barriers to receiving assistance is provided in Table Five below.

Table 5: Youth-Reported Barriers to Accessing Services



Source: Youth REACH 2018 Survey

Priority Services Identified by Youth Experiencing Homelessness

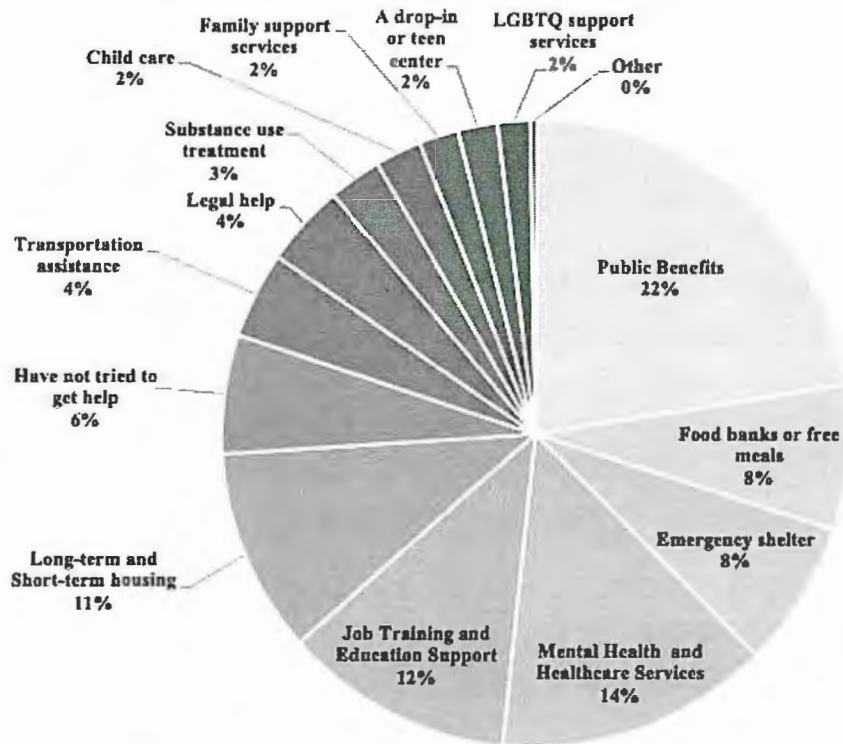
The 2018 Youth REACH Survey identified food assistance benefits as the most sought after service by youth, as well as emergency shelter and other social services such as mental health, job training, and healthcare. A breakdown of all the services and supports sought by youth is provided in Table Six. In 2018, an additional survey question was added to identify which services would be most useful. The most commonly requested services reported by youth were long-term housing assistance, food assistance, and job training opportunities.¹⁴ This information

¹³ Miller, A., Unick, J., Hoey, E. & Harburger, D.S. (2018). Maryland Youth Count 2018: A report on the findings from Youth REACH MD’s third survey of unaccompanied youth & young adults experiencing homelessness. Unpublished manuscript.

¹⁴ Ibid.

suggests youth experiencing homelessness would like greater access to permanent housing options, public benefits, and opportunities to sustain permanent housing through gainful employment.

Table Six: Services and Supports Sought by Youth



Source: Youth REACH 2018 Survey

Youth Homeless Resources Administered by the Federal Government

While the previous sections of this report highlight the various issues associated with youth homelessness, the following sections will provide a summary of key state and federal resources for reducing the numbers of homeless individuals and families in Maryland. Funding administered by the Department is provided to nonprofit organizations, CoCs and local government agencies to assist in the following areas:

- Outreach – resources for outreach specialists or case workers to identify where individuals reside, including parks, cars, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, and underpasses in order to connect them with appropriate shelter or social services.
- Shelter Services – resources for emergency shelter or drop-in centers that connect persons experiencing homelessness – such as youth – with immediate access to social service centers or overnight shelter. Shelter services are often a response to crises

or an added opportunity (in addition to street outreach) to provide further connections to vital community resources in a low to no barrier environment.

- Housing Assistance – resources designed to help persons experiencing homelessness attain and remain in sustainable and permanent housing. Specifically, the Department funds interventions such as Rapid Re-Housing, which provides short-term rental assistance and intensive case management support, tenant as well as longer term project based rental assistance, prevention assistance, and capital financing for affordable housing.

The availability of the following federal programs provide supports to Maryland communities in their efforts to address regional issues related to homelessness, including unaccompanied youth:

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG)

During Federal Fiscal Year 2017 and State Fiscal Year 2018, the administered the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG). Approximately \$2,691,891 in state and Federal funding was made available to units of local government within the State of Maryland. ESG program funds assist individuals and families to quickly regain stability in permanent housing and to prevent households from becoming homeless. Additionally, the funding supported the coordinated, community-based activities of Continua of Care (CoCs) that are designed to reduce the overall length of homelessness in the community, the number of households that become homeless, and the overall rate of formerly homeless households returning to homelessness. The funding helps to support emergency shelter operations, re-housing and homelessness prevention activities.

During fiscal year 2017, 5,380 individuals experiencing homelessness were served. According to CoC data shared with the Maryland Statewide Homelessness Data Warehouse, 363 were considered unaccompanied youth under the age of 25. Of the 363 unaccompanied youth reported:

- (60%) 217 of youth identified as female,
- (40%) 145 of youth identified as male,
- (17%) 60 of youth are parents under the age of 25,
- (13%) 48 are youth between the ages of 12-17, and
- (87%) 315 are youth between the ages of 17-24.

To respond to the needs of unaccompanied homeless youth in higher populated areas, the Department provided the opportunity for communities to apply for an additional \$80,000 of state ESG funding for service providers focusing on youth-specific services. During State Fiscal Year 2018, the Department awarded \$160,000 in total to Baltimore City and Prince George's County. In Baltimore City, ESG funding was awarded to the Youth Empowerment Society (YES) Drop-In Center, which provides housing case management services to help youth identify permanent housing and provides short-term rental assistance. The Prince George's County Department of Social Services received ESG funding in order to contract with local youth service providers to administer services such as street outreach in order to identify youth experiencing literal

homelessness, homelessness prevention assistance to keep youth housed, and emergency shelter services.

Family Unification Program (FUP) Vouchers

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Family Unification Program (FUP), administered through the Department, is a special-purpose Housing Choice Voucher. A primary purpose of FUP is to provide housing vouchers in the following circumstances:

- Families involved in the child welfare system that lack adequate housing which is the cause of out-of-home placement of children or delays in family reunification.¹⁵
- Youth 18 to 21 who leave foster care, are at risk of homelessness or literally homeless are eligible for assistance through the use of a time-limited FUP housing voucher.¹⁶

The Department serves as a public housing authority (PHA) for counties on the eastern shore and in Western Maryland; therefore, only applications within those jurisdictions are reviewed. During the State Fiscal Year 2018, the Department distributed 91 FUP vouchers to families and youth in western Maryland and on the eastern shore. The Department receives referrals of FUP program participants from the Department of Human Services (DHS). Other PHA's within Maryland work with DHS offices in their jurisdictions. DHS verifies the income of those referred as well as eligibility to participate in the Housing Choice Voucher Program. A family's income may not exceed 50% of the Area Median Income (AMI) for the county or metropolitan area where the family chooses to live.¹⁷ Those who receive a FUP voucher pay no more than 30% of their income toward rent. FUP vouchers provide rental assistance and supportive services to help equip youth and families with tools needed for independent living. Once a family or youth receives a FUP voucher, DHS provides case management services and follow-up with families and youth after housing placements. Baltimore City and Montgomery County was recently awarded 92 new FUP vouchers from HUD, totally over \$1 million dollars in funding.¹⁸

Section 811 Program

The Section 811 Project Rental Assistance Program funded through HUD, provides project-based rental subsidies and long-term services for persons with disabilities, age 18-61, with incomes at or below 30% Area Median Income (AMI) and Medicaid recipients. In February 2013, Maryland was awarded approximately \$20 million allowing for the creation of 300 units statewide. The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and Department of Disabilities (MDOD) work with the Department's Community Development Administration (CDA) to manage the program. The homeless, as defined by the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing (HEARTH) Act, are one of the four priority points. During the State Fiscal Year

¹⁵ HUD Office of Policy Development and Research (2014). https://www.huduser.gov/portal/publications/Supportive_housing_for_youth.pdf

¹⁶ HUD Office of Housing Voucher Programs. (2017). https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/FUP_FACT_SHEET.PDF

¹⁷ HUD Office of Housing Vouchers Program. (2018). https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/about/fact_sheet

¹⁸ HUD Public Affairs (2018). https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/HUD_No_18_139

2018, the program served one youth-headed household, which is still housed within the program.

Runaway and Homeless Youth Program

The United States Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) provide programs and services to support the well-being of families and youth.¹⁹ In order to address the issue of youth homelessness, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program provide up to \$200,000 of financial resources to communities in order to operate emergency shelters, street outreach programs, and transitional living programs for unaccompanied homeless youth up to the age of 21.²⁰ In Maryland, four service providers receive financial resources through supplementary programs under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Funding Program called Basic Center Program (BCP), Street Outreach Program (SOP) and Transitional Living Program (TLP). BCP assists runaway and homeless youth not already receiving services from the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. Loving Arms in Baltimore City, Promise Place (run by Sasha Bruce), and Latin American Youth Center in Prince George's County receive BCP assistance to provide emergency shelter for up to 21 days, education and employment assistance, food and clothing as well as health services. Additionally, Sasha Bruce and St. Ann's Center for Children Youth and Families received TLP funding to provide long-term residential services to homeless youth. Lastly, Loving Arms receives SOP assistance to help identify youth experiencing literal homelessness in order to connect them to vital resources. Collectively, the four services providers assisted close to 200 youth ages 13-17 in 2017 and 2018.

McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence and unaccompanied youth not under the physical custody of their parent(s) are eligible to receive services under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. During federal fiscal year 2018, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) received \$1.3 million in federal McKinney-Vento funds to support homeless youth in the school system. McKinney-Vento services, provided through local McKinney Vento coordinators, support homeless youth in need of transportation to and from school when homeless, immunizations, birth certificates and other school-related expenses.

Homeless Resources Administered by the State

Youth REACH MD

Youth REACH MD was established by the 2014 Maryland General Assembly (Chapter 425). Modeled on the federal Youth Count! Initiative, Youth REACH Maryland, in partnership with the Institute for Innovation & Implementation at the University of Maryland School of Social Work results in important data to determine effective interventions, allocation of resources, and

¹⁹ HHS. (2018). Overview of FYSB Programs. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/programs>

²⁰ HHS. (2018). Runaway and Homeless Youth Fact Sheet. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/resource/rhy-fact-sheet>

progress toward combating youth homelessness.



Source: Youth REACH 2018 website

Based on the 2018 count, the following findings were identified:

- Compared with local census data, certain groups are disproportionately represented among youth experiencing homelessness across all jurisdictions in Maryland, particularly youth who identify as Black/African American and youth who identify as LGBTQ.
- Many of the surveyed youth have come into contact with the foster care, juvenile justice, criminal justice, and mental health systems, indicating a need to identify and better support youth experiencing homelessness that are in contact with other systems.
- Ninety-eight percent of unaccompanied homeless youth identified through the Youth Count are not accessing traditional homeless services.

Youth REACH Maryland provides support to participating jurisdictions in the use of their local Youth Count results to inform local strategic planning and development of resources and supports for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness. Continuation of the Youth REACH MD count has been codified into law through passage of the Ending Youth Homelessness Act of 2018. Hence, communities will continue to collect crucial data about youth and conduct regular surveys of unaccompanied homeless youth under the continued leadership of the Department.

Homelessness Solutions Program (HSP) Grant

The passage of HB 134 through the MD General Assembly 2017 legislative session required four homeless grant programs previously administered by the Department of Human Services and the Interagency Council on Ending Homelessness, to be consolidated with homeless service grants administered by the Department. As a result of the transition, the Department consolidated six, discrete programs into a Homelessness Solutions Program (HSP). Funding for this grant were

made available to CoC applicants during State Fiscal Year 2019 in order to streamline the oversight of grant-funded activities and to align funding and requirements with federal best practices. The focus areas of the grant are housing stabilization services, such as rapid re-housing and homelessness prevention; operating costs and client services at emergency shelters; and outreach services for people who are unsheltered.

Applicants of HSP funding received bonus points within their application for youth and veteran-specific programs. Six CoCs (Allegany County, Baltimore City, Carroll County, Frederick County, Mid-Shore, and Prince George's County) identified youth-specific programs for funding. Programs identified in the HSP applications included drop-in centers for youth experiencing homelessness, rapid re-housing assistance, and a new host home program, a cost-effective model that offers a non-institutional environment.²¹

New Futures Bridge Subsidy (NFBS) Program

The New Futures Bridge Subsidy (NFBS) Program is a medium-term rental subsidy program managed by the Department that provides 12 months of rental subsidy as well as wrap-around supportive services to youth aging out of foster care, and survivors of sex crimes (including sex trafficking, intimate violence, domestic violence, and sexual assault). The objective of the NFBS is to provide a housing opportunity for these vulnerable populations whose experiences with trauma have created challenges and barriers to identifying safe and affordable housing.

During State Fiscal Year 2018, The Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCCP) received \$4.6 million in funding from United States Department of Justice. The funding was allocated to the Department to create the NFBS program to administer time-limited rental assistance, housing navigation and case management services. Additionally, the Department partnered with the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) and local agencies to receive referrals to NFBS program. DHS, the state agency with oversight over local Departments of Social Services (LDSS), provides referrals and case management for youth aging out of foster care. Of the \$4.6 million awarded, \$3.9 million was allocated to cover rental expenses application fees and security deposits, up to the payment standard for the county in which the unit is located. The NFBS program started operation in March 2017 and to date has served 105 households between the ages of 18-25. Of those served, 84% identified as African American, 9% as White, 7% as Hispanic, and 1% as biracial. The Department was recently awarded \$5 million to continue the program for a second year.

Innovative Strategies

According to HUD, HHS and the US Interagency Council on Homelessness, the Host Homes Strategies is a promising program model to assist in ending youth homelessness. Host homes offer a temporary, home-like environment and are a cost-effective resource for providing stable housing and supports.²² In 2018, the Department awarded \$148,018 of funding to St. Ambrose

²¹ HHS, HUD & USICH. (2016). <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Ending-Youth-Homelessness-Promising-Program-Models.pdf>

²² HHS, HUD & USICH. (2016). <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Ending-Youth-Homelessness-Promising-Program-Models.pdf>

Housing Aid Center to link homeless youth with housing in independent home-sharing, or host homes. Through training and background checks, a homeowner who has been recruited through the program has offered to share their home with a youth experiencing homelessness. Twenty-seven potential hosts went through host provider training offered by St. Ambrose. Of those trained, six host providers welcomed an average of two youth into their homes.

The youth's tenancy with the host homeowner is up to 90 days and the youth will eventually transition into permanent, independent group housing. For youth that need longer-term housing options, St. Ambrose connects youth to their program called Hope Houses. HOPE Houses provides youth housing for up to two years, while the youth also prepare for permanent housing solutions. Once placed in a host home or Hope House, the youth receives rent and utility assistance for permanent housing, case management, and assistance with furniture. The case management is focused on stabilizing youth so they may reach and sustain independence. During the 2018 calendar year, the goal was to assist 10-12 youth through the program. So far, St. Ambrose Host Homes served 16 formerly homeless youth between the ages of 18-24, with the average age being 21. St. Ambrose has also identified private property owners with rental opportunities that would accommodate up to four youth for permanent housing after youth host home placement. Furthermore, the host home model has extended to other areas of Maryland such as Frederick and Prince George's County to serve as an alternative intervention to emergency shelter.

Restoration Gardens

Restoration Gardens Two is the construction of the second affordable, multi-family housing specifically designed for homeless youth and those aging out of foster care. The site is providing 42 efficiencies and one-bath units. A total of 7 units will serve households with at least one member who is disabled. The Department funded the project using 9% Low Income Housing Tax Credits, Project Core funds, and other state sources. Construction costs for the property was \$6.4 million and is complete for occupancy.

Local Management Boards

The first Local Management Boards (LMBs) were established during the mid-1990s in an effort to change the way services were provided to children and families in Maryland communities.²³ The Boards bring together public and private agencies, local government, faith-based and civic organizations, families, youth, and community members to develop, implement, and review a community plan for child and family services. Specifically during the State Fiscal Year 2019 (SFY19), LMBs are encouraged to focus on Governor Hogan's goal of ensuring economic opportunity for Maryland's struggling families by implementing strategies that will address the Children's Cabinet's four Strategic Goals. One of the strategic goals is to reduce youth homelessness. The LMBs were awarded over \$19.6 million dollars in statewide grants during SFY19.²⁴ Funding was awarded to programs such as street outreach, recovery houses for youth, and family reunification strategies.

²³ Governor's Office for Children. (2018). History of Local Management Board. <https://goc.maryland.gov/history-of-lmbs/>

²⁴ Governor's Office for Children. (2019) Hogan Administration Announces Nearly \$20 Million in Grants to Local Management Boards <https://governor.maryland.gov/2018/07/05/hogan-administration-announces-nearly-20-million-in-grants-to-local-management-boards/>

Appendix 1: HSP Program Components Quick Reference Guide

**Homelessness Solutions Program (HSP)
Program Eligible Activities Quick Reference**

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, Division of Neighborhood Revitalization, administers the Homelessness Solutions Program (HSP). These funds may be used to provide a wide range of services and supports under the four program components: Outreach, Housing Stabilization Services, Emergency Shelter, and HMIS. Each component is described in the tables below, accompanied by a list of corresponding HSP activities and eligible costs.

**Note: Please reference the program regulations at [24 CFR Part 576](#) and at the Housing and Community Development article [4-1403](#), [4-1406](#), [4-2108](#), [4-2205\(a\)\(4\)](#) and [4-2209\(b\)](#) Annotated Code of Maryland for complete information about all eligible costs and program requirements.*

Outreach: These activities are designed to meet the immediate needs of unsheltered homeless people by connecting them with emergency shelter, housing, and/or critical health services.	
Activity types:	
Services	Special Events (e.g. Homeless Resource Days or Point-in-Time Counts)
Eligible costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement Case Management Transportation (Mileage /Public Transit) Emergency and Mental Health Services Services for Special Populations (e.g. Homeless Youth, Veterans, or Victims of Domestic Violence) 	Eligible costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and Survey materials Promotional Items (e.g. t-shirts, water bottles, etc.) Blankets, toiletries, etc. Incentives (e.g. gift cards) Food/beverages for staff/volunteers

Housing Stabilization Services: These activities are designed to help people locate, pay for, and remain in permanent housing, and to prevent an individual or family from moving into an emergency shelter or from living in a public or private place not meant for human habitation. They are also separated by the type of client being served:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rapid Re-Housing (RRH) covers services to individuals and households that lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Homelessness Prevention is for households who not have sufficient resources or support networks immediately available to prevent them from becoming homeless AND have an annual income below 30% of the area median income. Case Management for Permanent Housing covers case management services for residents in permanent housing.¹ 		
Activity types:		
Rental Assistance	Housing Relocation and Stabilization Services	
	Financial Assistance	Services Costs
Eligible costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short to medium term rental assistance (0 – 24 months) Rental arrears 	Eligible costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rental Application Fees Security Deposits First or Last Month’s Rent Utility Deposits/ Payments Moving Costs 	Eligible costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Search and Placement Housing Stability Case Management Mediation Legal Services Credit Repair and/or Counseling

¹ If service providers did not receive funding for this activity through the former Service-Linked Housing program, service providers may not use this funding for this purpose.

Appendix 1: HSP Program Components Quick Reference Guide

Emergency Shelter: These activities are designed to connect people with immediate access to overnight shelter in order to respond to a crisis, paying for the operating costs of shelters, and providing essential services.

Activity type:	
Services	Shelter Operations
<p>Eligible costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff salaries for those providing services. • Child Care while in shelter • Supportive Services (in accordance with clients' health insurance policies, if applicable): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outpatient Health ○ Mental Health ○ Substance Abuse Treatment ○ Legal ○ Special Populations (e.g. Homeless Youth, Veterans, or Victims of Domestic Violence). • Transportation (e.g. gas/mileage to get clients to/from appointments or interviews, public transportation fees, or cab fares) • Training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education Services ○ Employment Assistance ○ Budget Counseling & Financial Capability ○ Life and Interpersonal Skills ○ Parenting Skills 	<p>Eligible costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent • Facility Insurance • Security • Facility Maintenance (Minor/Routine Repairs, Trash Removal, Snow Removal, Pest Control, etc.) • Shelter Utilities (Electricity, Gas, Water, Fuel, etc.) • Necessary Equipment & Supplies (cleaning, linen, laundry, hygiene kits, etc.) • Food and/or Food Service Delivery • Essential Furniture for shelter residents (beds, chairs, cribs, etc.) • Hotel/Motel Vouchers (where no appropriate shelter is available for an individual or family) • Staff Salaries (for those working directly with clients) • Emergency Cold Weather Shelter Beds

HMIS: These activities are designed to fund HSP grantees and subgrantees' participation in the HMIS collection and analyses of data on individuals and families who are homeless and at risk of homelessness.

Activity type: HMIS
<p>Eligible costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HMIS Lead (as designated by the CoC) costs for managing the HMIS system. • Software Licenses for HMIS systems. • Staff Time spent contributing data to the HMIS designated by the CoC for the area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Training ○ Data Entry ○ Technical Support ○ Data Monitoring & Analysis • Establishing & operating a comparable database (for Victim Service Providers)

Administration: Costs related to the planning and execution of HSP activities. (Note: This doesn't include staff and overhead costs directly related to carrying out direct services.)

Activity type: Administrative Activities.
<p>Eligible costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General management, oversight, and coordination • Monitoring/Compliance & Evaluation • Travel costs for Monitoring Subgrantees • Training on HSP requirements • Salary/wages for program administration staff

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Youth Homelessness Program

The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (the Department) received valuable feedback from CoC partners about the Youth Homelessness Program at the Homeless Solutions Program (HSP) State Fiscal Year 2020 Training. As a result, the Department wanted to issue this resource guidance in order to:

- Further clarify the youth population to be served under the youth homelessness funding;
- Elaborate on the eligible activities allowed for the youth homelessness program; and
- Offer additional resources to Continuum of Care (CoCs) in order to better determine their system needs for youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Additionally, the Department encourages CoCs to communicate with potential community partners (such as school systems, child welfare agencies, juvenile justice programs, youth lead and youth serving organizations) as well as youth experiencing homelessness in order to identify tangible strategies to address this issue. CoCs can apply for funding to establish new programs or fund existing programs. If you have ideas and want to discuss them with our team, please reach out to Sacsheen Scott, Project Manager, at sacsheen.scott@maryland.gov.

CoCs are also encouraged to engage and employ youth in the implementation of activities funded through the Youth Homelessness Program.

Who can be served with these funds?

The Youth Homelessness Program can serve both unaccompanied homeless youth and youth at risk of homelessness.

“Unaccompanied homeless youth” is defined as follows:

An individual of 24 years of age or younger who is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian and lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence who:

- Lives in a supervised publically or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements; OR
- Lives in a motel, hotel, or campground due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; OR
- Shares the housing of other individuals due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason; OR
- Lives in a transitional housing program or other time-limited housing; OR
- Has a primary nighttime residence which is a public or private place not designed or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodations for individuals, such as a car, a park, an abandoned building, a bus or train station, or an airport.

“Youth at risk of homelessness” is defined as follows:

An individual 24 years of age or younger whose circumstances indicate a significant danger of experiencing homelessness in the near future. This includes an individual youth:

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Youth Homelessness Program

- Who is exiting a publicly funded institution or system of care.
- Who has previously experienced homelessness.
- Whose primary caregivers (legal guardians) are currently homeless or have previously been homeless.
- Who experiences serious or sustained conflict with the individual's caregivers (legal guardians) that is likely to result in family separation.
- Who is fleeing domestic violence or who is a survivor of human trafficking.

For both unaccompanied homeless youth and youth at risk of homelessness, households headed by an individual that meets the definition ("youth-headed households") are eligible to receive services.

Please note: The Department is currently unable to provide support for programs serving youth under the age of 18 at this time.

What are the eligible activities?

The Youth Homelessness Program will fund the following activities for eligible youth and youth-headed households:

- 1) **Street and community-based outreach** funds may cover engagement services to currently unsheltered individual youth and youth headed families. Outreach activities may include:
 - Tools for locating, identifying and building relationships with youth.
 - Case management services in order to connect youth to mainstream resources and emergency shelter programs.
 - Providing meals, blankets, clothes, toiletries, or transportation for unsheltered households to emergency shelters.
 - Participation in Youth REACH.
 - Stipends for youth participation in activities organized by the Continuum of Care.
 - Outreach events (such as homeless resource days) targeted to youth experiencing homelessness.
- 2) **Drop-in program** funding may cover operating costs and operations of the day/drop-in program, including case management. Additional drop-in program activities may include:
 - Service coordination for essential services such as medical, dental, behavioral health care, housing search support, workforce and educational development assistance, family engagement services, general case management, and emergency shelter access.

Drop-in programs are distinct from emergency shelters in that they do not offer overnight stays; programs which do provide overnight stays should apply for funding as an emergency shelter activity.

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Youth Homelessness Program

- 3) **Emergency shelter** for youth covers activities that provide youth with immediate access to overnight shelter in order to respond to a crisis. Emergency shelter funding for youth can be used to pay for the operations of the shelter, such as rent and utilities, as well as services provided by the shelter, including case management. This funding may cover assistance for youth and/or youth-headed households between the ages of 18 and 24.
- 4) **Rental assistance** covers short (up to 3 months) or medium-term (up to 24 months) rental assistance to assist youth in maintaining or obtaining permanent housing. Host Homes or other short-term programs designed as a bridge to permanent housing are an eligible activity, but CoCs are encouraged to discuss prospective ideas with the Department.
- 5) **Case management** funding will fund staff hours of case management services that support youth placed in or who are already living in permanent housing, to ensure they remain housed and connected to mainstream resources.
- 6) **Planning and implementation** funding may be used to plan, design and implement a system aimed at addressing youth homelessness. To effectively tackle system gaps and challenges, the Department recognizes that CoCs may require additional time to develop a youth homelessness system and targeted services. Funding for planning and technical assistance activities may include:
 - Costs associated with evaluating system data about the intended youth population to serve;
 - Costs associated with conducting a needs analysis to determine what resources are currently available and what resources need to be addressed through this funding;
 - Costs associated with the development and establishment of Youth Action / Advisory Boards;
 - Identifying and designing program models based on need. System programs may include homelessness prevention, emergency shelter services, host homes, rapid re-housing, and outreach;
 - Training for staff to understand the challenges and barriers for youth experiencing homelessness face and/or providing professional development to youth with lived experience to assist those youth in becoming peer support specialists.

Planning and technical assistance funding must include an initial expected timeline and strategy for implementing activities developed and/or supported through the Youth Homelessness Program and will only be funded with an expectation that an implementation phase will commence immediately thereafter. A planning phase may be for no more than a six month period. Implementation funds will only be released once the planning phase is concluded. CoCs are strongly encouraged to work with Department staff to craft a planning/implementation application.

Other housing-focused services provided to youth may also be eligible; however, CoCs must consult with the Department in developing any activities not mentioned above.

How will applications be evaluated?

The Department will evaluate applications received and award funding based on a consideration of the following factors:

Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Youth Homelessness Program

- Ability of a project to expand the CoC's capacity for assessing and serving homeless youth;
- Demonstrated need for programs, through Youth REACH MD, Point-in-Time Counts, and/or other CoC system assessments;
- Current provider capacity for serving homeless youth, including the ability to partner with existing community resources;
- Focus on achieving improved housing outcomes for youth, through placing and/or maintaining youth in permanent housing;
- Clarity and detail of project plans provided in the application; and
- Geographic distribution of funding.

Additional Resources

[Coordinated Entry Brief for Youth](#)

[Ending Youth Homelessness Guidebook Series: System Planning](#)

[Ending Youth Homelessness Guidebook Series: Promising Program Models for Youth](#)

[National Alliance to End Homelessness' Rapid Re-Housing for Youth Toolkit](#)

[Youth Transitional Housing Toolkit](#)