



# YHDP Heart Equity Action Lab (HEAL)

## Create a Transformative Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program Coordinated Community Plan with this Racial Equity and Social Justice Tool

This resource provides a holistic interrogation of Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) Coordinated Community Plan elements, in order to illuminate and mitigate any unanticipated adverse consequences to racially marginalized and historically disenfranchised young people experiencing homelessness. Using this tool can assist YHDP communities in creating a transformative Coordinated Community Plan central in the work of preventing and ending youth homelessness and that does not reproduce institutional racism or other forms of oppression.

### Elements of a YHDP Coordinated Community Plan

#### Governance Structures

- Is the proposed governance structure grounded in racial equity, LGBTQ2S+<sup>1</sup> equity, disability equity, and social justice principles?
- Does the membership include diverse representation from an array of stakeholders, centering youth and young adults most impacted and overrepresented in the homelessness system (as well as the criminal/legal system involvement, child welfare, behavioral health, and disability systems)?
- Are young people full participants in all aspects of YHDP governance and decision-making? Do youth and young adults experiencing homelessness make up of at least 50 percent of your YHDP decision-making body? Are technological (computer/wifi) and other barriers to full participation removed?
- Are grassroots anti-racist, LGBTQ2S+, and social justice organizations working with youth and young adults also a part of your YHDP decision-making body?

#### Stakeholders

- Which racial/ethnic groups and/or historically disenfranchised LGBTQ2S+ stakeholders may be most affected by and concerned with youth homelessness?
- Have stakeholders from different racial/ethnic groups and historically disenfranchised LGBTQ2+ groups — especially those most adversely affected — been informed, meaningfully involved with shared decisionmaking power, and authentically represented in the development of the YHDP Coordinated Community Plan?
- How are barriers removed to support and sustain stakeholder engagement with racially marginalized and historically disenfranchised young people, underfunded grassroots BIPOC<sup>2</sup> and LGBTQ2S+ organizations, and organizations serving youth and young adults with disabilities?

<sup>1</sup> Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and two-spirit

<sup>2</sup> Black, Indigenous, and people of color





## Statement of Need

- Which racial/ethnic, gender, sexual identity, disability, and systems-involved (criminal/legal system, child welfare, behavioral health) groups of young people are currently most disadvantaged and overrepresented in homelessness? How are they affected differently? What quantitative and qualitative evidence of inequality exists? What evidence is missing or needed?
- What structural and institutional factors may be producing and perpetuating racial and social inequities in youth homelessness? How did the inequities arise? Are they expanding or narrowing? Does the statement of need address root causes in efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness? If not, how could it be altered to do so?
- Does the YHDP Coordinated Community Plan seek to prevent and end youth homelessness? Does it include targeted strategies to reduce disparities and discrimination for racially marginalized and historically disenfranchised LGBTQ2S+ young people, and for young people living with disabilities?

## Vision & Mission

- Did youth and young adults most impacted and overrepresented in youth homelessness co-develop the Vision/Mission statement?
- Does the Vision/Mission statement incorporate racial/LGBTQ2S+ equity and social justice?
- What anti-racist/anti-oppressive principles or shared values are reflected in the Vision/Mission statement?

## Goals, Objectives, & Action Steps

- What adverse impacts or unintended consequences could result from the goals, objectives, and actions steps in the YHDP Coordinated Community Plan for racially marginalized and historically disenfranchised LGBTQ2S+ youth and young adults? How could adverse impacts be prevented or minimized?
- Will the goals, objectives, and action steps have a positive impact on advancing racial and social justice? Are there action steps that would further maximize equitable opportunities and impacts?
- What are the success indicators and progress benchmarks? Were they co-created by the young people most impacted? How will impacts be documented and evaluated? How will the level, diversity, and quality of ongoing stakeholder engagement be assessed?

## New Project List

- Were the projects co-developed and selected by the young people most impacted and overrepresented in the homelessness system?
- Will the new projects reduce racial and social disparities and advance racial and social justice? What can be changed or added regarding potential new projects to ensure positive impacts on racial equity and social inclusion?
- Are the projects realistic, adequately funded, and accessible to people with visible and invisible disabilities, with mechanisms to ensure successful implementation? Are there provisions for continuous quality improvement, youth collaboration, and accountability to the young people most impacted?

Adapted by [Dr. LaMont Green](#) and [Nastacia' Moore](#) from the [Race Forward Racial Equity Impact Assessment Toolkit](#).

The YHDP Heart Equity Action Lab (H.E.A.L.) was launched in August 2021 in response to feedback from YHDP Rounds 2 and 3 communities that equity work is not just head work but must connect with the heart to truly be transformative. Participants expressed a desire for a brave and restorative space to unpack and heal internalized oppression — superiority and inferiority — at the various intersections of racism, indigenous invisibility, anti-Blackness, cisgenderism, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression. These communities expressed their desire for a practice lab community to strengthen skills in utilizing toolkits and frameworks that lead to tangible transformations in preventing and ending youth homelessness and eliminating disparities.

The [Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program](#) is a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) initiative designed to reduce the number of youth experiencing homelessness. HUD supports selected rural, suburban, and urban U.S. communities in the development and implementation of a coordinated community approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness. HUD is committed to sharing the experiences of YHDP communities and mobilizing communities around the country toward the same end.