Youth Case Conferencing Supplement

ASSEMBLING YOUR CASE CONFERENCING TEAM:

- **Check if the right people are at the table**: You need people in the room who hold key information about clients on your by-name list *and* can take action to house them faster. Aim for critical mass, not perfection.

  - There are many systems and agencies that have information on your youth. Make a list: who needs to be at the table (e.g. for youth, child welfare, juvenile justice, education, adult and family system representatives); barriers keeping each party away from the table (e.g. political issues, lack of time, etc.), and what actions can be taken to get them to the table (e.g., sending other stakeholders to request attendance, working with funders to require attendance, privacy concerns, etc.)

- ***Involving youth with lived experience of homelessness creates a stronger team and focuses stakeholders on the urgency of ending homelessness.*** However, issues of client privacy and systems barriers may need to be considered when involving youth experiencing homelessness. Two options to involve youth in case conferencing can be (a) involving youth directly in the process of connecting young people to safe and stable housing and (b) involving youth in a separate meeting dedicated to crafting policy and reviewing the efficacy of the connection process.

  - Communities looking to involve youth directly in the process of connecting young people to safe and stable housing may need to consider issues such as the youth seeing their own or their peers' private information and assessment scores.

  - Communities looking to involve youth in a separate meeting dedicated to reviewing the connection process may need to consider issues such as the strain of multiple meetings on other stakeholders and whether involving youth indirectly in the process rather than directly limits youth leadership in the system.

- ○ Note: For this to be effective, the team needs to provide young people with leadership development and intentional support to ensure they feel equipped to participate fully and effectively in the case conferencing process.

- ○ Case conferencing days, time and location should be accessible to the young people who are participating and acronyms and jargon should be avoided as much as possible.

SELECT MEASURES RELATED TO EQUITY AND SYSTEM QUALITY

- **Reduce number of program rejections of clients**: Often time-limited or site-based programs have particular requirements for program participation. Sometimes those requirements are for the well-being of clients. However, sometimes those requirements are barriers to reduce interactions with clients that are labeled "difficult" due to behavior, documented status, LGBTQ identity, race, or disability.

- **Reduce number of client refusals of certain programs**: If youth are refusing certain programs or voluntarily leaving programs after move-in, analysis of the issue may improve the process of connecting young people to safe and stable housing. For example, youth may reject participation with a provider that has not prioritized cultural competency and humility. Also, youth who have indicated hesitancy to be matched with a roommate may reject a program that decides to pair them with a roommate.

- *Reduce returns to homelessness.*

- *Reduce age outs*: While often limited system capacity will result in the inability to house all youth on the BNL before they turn 25, reducing barriers to connections to safe and stable housing or advocating for the investment in new programs and services may help reduce age outs.

- **Reduce process time for specific populations represented on the BNL to promote equity**: Youth of color or LGBTQ youth may be overrepresented and specific attention to the number of connections/LOT on the BNL/program rejections/returns to homelessness may be helpful.

PROCEDURAL CONSIDERATIONS:

- *Multiple Assessments*: Does your community assess youth using multiple tools? (e.g. TAY-VI-SPDAT, VI-SPDAT, SPDAT, CAFAS). Procedures for the process of connecting young people to safe and stable housing that consider the strengths and weaknesses of these assessments as well as how they compare to one another may create better connections.

- *HUD homelessness vs. couch surfing/doubled up*: Does your community have policies and procedures to assess risk and to create prioritization criteria for youth experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness and those experiencing housing instability?

  - **Note**: Often youth experience multiple forms of homelessness over time. A single assessment at one point in time may not accurately reflect vulnerability. Developing case conferencing policies to account for this fluidity is important to get a better picture of the youth on the BNL and to ensure better connections.

- *Minors vs Young Adults*: Laws and regulations often differ dramatically between working with youth under 18 and youth 18+, Has your community analyzed these differences (e.g. in program licensure, informed consent, etc.) to reduce barriers to accessing services and promote continuity of service as youth enter young adulthood?

- *System Coordination*

  - *Single Adults*
    - Youth 18-24 often access adult services. Has your community coordinated youth with single adult systems to ensure more youth-focused programming and lessen returns to homelessness?

  - *Families*
    - Youth who are dependents in families experiencing homelessness are often at risk of becoming unaccompanied youth/youth heads of household experiencing homelessness. Has your community coordinated youth with family systems to improve the process of

connecting young people to safe and stable housing by ensuring service continuation?

- ■ For communities that connect youth heads of households to housing separately from unaccompanied youth:

    - ● Have you aligned the connection processes for unaccompanied youth and youth heads of household to ensure that an unaccompanied youth who becomes pregnant/parenting experiences as little disruption in service as possible?

    - ● Have you considered the needs of unaccompanied youth who are attempting to regain custody of their children?