

Ending Youth Homelessness:  
Youth Collaboration 102 Webinar Transcript  
December 9, 2020

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**[00:00:00] Susan:** Thank you, everyone, for joining our webinar today. We are here to talk about youth collaboration. I do want to just recognize that in the listserv message about this webinar, it provided a link to a Youth Collaboration 101 webinar that we recorded over a year ago now. I was notified yesterday afternoon that that recording is a broken link. We are working on getting that fixed. The slides are there, the transcript is there, but the recording link itself is broken. We are going to work on getting that fixed. If you didn't get a chance to participate in that a year ago, that's okay. This is a great opportunity to dive into authentic youth collaboration.

Again, just want to welcome everyone. Thank you so much for joining today. We are using Zoom. Obviously, you have logged in. We are asking everyone to keep themselves muted today. Please use the chat for questions. If there's an opportunity to come off mute, your presenters will let you know about that, but please use the chat. Also, if you want to start in the chat right now telling us who you are, your preferred pronouns, what community you're with, and what role you occupy within your community space, that would be great information to share with each other.

If you want to join over video, you are more than welcome to. I know bandwidth is sometimes an issue. Do what you feel comfortable with and what your internet capability allows you to be comfortable with. If you are having bandwidth issues and recommendation on Zoom is to go into speaker view and then you'll have half of your screen with the slides and half of the screen with whoever's speaking at that moment. That tends to help with bandwidth instead of being in the gallery view.

If you have any technical problems today, please feel free to chat Kathie Vida who is our host today and is helping to man all of the technology and things in the background. Thank you, Kathy, for that. Again, if you have any challenges, please feel free to chat Kathie Vida, our host. I think that is all-- Oh, Nope. We've already had a question. Sorry, one more thing, one more logistics before I turn it over to our presenters. We are recording today. We have the slides from today and we will share the chat and the transcript as well. If you've already asked and/or are interested in that, those will be posted on the HUD Exchange. It will take a couple of days in order for us to get the transcription completed.

The slides nor the recording will be up right away. Next week, next Thursday, December the 17th at 3:00 PM Eastern, there is a second youth collaboration webinar. It's a youth collaboration 201. We will also record that and transcribe that and post everything at the same time on the HUD Exchange, the YHDP, Youth Homeless Demonstration Program page. I would anticipate that they probably won't be posted until after the holidays and the beginning of the new year. If you can stay,

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hold tight until then, we will get everything from both today's webinar and next Thursday's webinar posted at the same time at the beginning of January.

All right. I think that was all of my logistics to get us kicked off today. Again, thank you all so much for joining. I am super excited to introduce our presenters today, Kahlib Barton and Dana White who are going to be walking through our material for today, engaging you all in conversation as well. I will let them introduce themselves further. Kahlib and Dana, I'll turn it over to you.

**[00:04:57] Dana White:** Awesome. Thanks, Susan. I'm hoping everyone can hear me.

**[00:05:00] Susan:** Yes. You're good.

**[00:05:02] Dana:** Awesome. I'm glad you're all here for youth collaboration 102 which, as Susan already mentioned, will really expand upon the 101 fundamentals that were presented about a year back providing a foundation and authentic collaboration. Today's session is going to be presented by myself, along with my colleague, Kahlib Barton.

**[00:05:23] Kahlib Barton:** Hi, everyone. I'm Kahlib, he, she, and they pronoun. I look forward to speaking with you all today about youth club.

**[00:05:41] Dana:** Here's a quick overview of the lessons that we'll cover today. We will go over funding for Youth Action Board, recruitment and retention, undoing adultism, as well as sustaining an equitable system. Let's begin with our first lesson, which is funding for Youth Action Boards. The objectives for this first lesson are as follows. Participants will understand how to collaborate with youth and young adults in securing grants. Participants will understand how to identify and respond to funding needs of Youth Action Boards. You'll also understand the importance of planning for and administering Youth Action Board compensation.

**[00:06:37] Kahlib:** One of the most critical points of youth collaboration is the planning process. Having young people involved at every level of the plan is essential. In order to do that, young people need to be intricately involved in recruitment of other youth, young adults, and the writing of the grant development and the deliverables. This is a prime opportunity to begin developing the Youth Action Board. In order to do that, young people need to be involved in grant writing, recruitment of other youth, young adults development, and the development of specific deliverables for the Youth Action Board and any specific that goes into the grant writing process.

It is vital that youth young adults are compensated for the time that they contribute, including their contribution to the grant writing process overall. It's strongly recommended that you provide grant writing skills, building, or learning opportunities for youth young adults so they are able to meaningfully participate in the grant writing process overall. Obviously, in preparation of engagement into any grant writing process, you want to be able to work with them specifically on what is a grant? What does that process look like?

Maybe even talking about the history of grant writing and the grantee process in the history of your community so that they understand exactly where funding has come in the past and how that has impacted any community initiatives. The right time to involve youth is immediately, obviously. Before you even put pen to paper is what I like to often say. Before you even start to think about any ideas or specifics for the Youth Action Board, any ideas that may be funding the Youth Action Board, or any initiatives that are youth-led, you need to make sure that you have youth at the table. This is an easy start.

If you haven't already begun to recruit young people to be able to serve any Youth Action Board or you've asked somebody, then the first thing that you can do is just start to recruit. Don't even try to put together any strategy. To see what young people you already connected to, start with them and then begin to branch out. The only pre-work that should be done is recruiting youth young adults who should be paid to be involved in the grant writing process. Be sure to have at least two youth young adults who could serve as the first two YAB members. Having at least two YAB members initially creates balance and helps ensure that these YAB members are not becoming overwhelmed or feeling isolated.

Obviously, when we think about this work, sometimes it's very heavy and because the people with lived expertise will be so connected to the experience of homelessness, we want to make sure that this isn't overbearing or overwhelming for them. Obviously, we promote self-care in anything that we do and that should be something that we're all leading with, but we want to make sure that we're also creating an environment that nurtures young people who are engaged in this work to take care of themselves first.

When writing pay into your grants, consider your state's livable wage and allow youth and young adults involved in the grant writing to determine if that makes sense. Be mindful of other social injustices in your community that can impact your defining what a livable wage is. Consider redlining, low-income inequality, and/or limited access. If you are dealing with individuals who are living at the multiple intersections and are experiencing maybe even more low-income inequality, you should consider ways that you can potentially address that. Obviously, because when you're thinking about engagement in the youth action body, you want to work to remove as many barriers as possible.

In that process that would include transportation, making sure they have food at meetings, understanding that that food is not payment and that transportation is not payment. That is just you mitigating the barriers to their engagement of the process. Someone asked in the chat, "What is redlining?" Redlining, it is a thing that happened that basically created zones for people of colors. More specifically black people not to be able to access housing. It was something that has happened historically in a lot of places they have tried to do away with it but when you think about the residual effects of redlining it still has communities of colors in specific pockets that are lower-income.

Maybe they are living in places that are food, deserts, where they aren't able to access nutritious food. When you think about redlining it's just really how that has shaped a lot of communities that are dealing with homelessness and are living in

multiple different intersections. Yes, *The Color of Law* is a great book that describes redlining in detail. Economic Justice is the idea that the economy will be more successful if it is fairer. In order for us to truly address these issues, we can't just be viewing youth and young adults coming into doing this work as people who should be getting a minimum wage.

We need to be actively working to address economic justice so considering what is fair and considering the lack of access, considering the systemic abuse that has happened to young people who are living at the intersections of potentially maybe being over lower-income inequality maybe being black, maybe also being queer. Those individuals we have to really work to make sure we address economic justice. That means that we have to go a lot further than the typical engagement or the typical means to address income.

**[00:12:36] Dana:** Thanks, Kahlib. Here are some expenses you'll want to consider when seeking or determining the appropriate funding for your Youth Action Board. You potentially will need funding for meeting materials and supplies, for food, technology, meeting space, as well as transportation. This point I can't emphasize enough, please be mindful that pizza or any sort of meal is not payment for youth and young adults. You may need to identify other private funding to cover these line items if not secured through your proposal.

I'll also add that, in order to understand the barriers that youth and young adults may face with attending in-person meetings or even virtual meetings in the time of COVID, it may be helpful to survey potential YAB members which brings us to private funding. When surveying potential YAB members in your community, you may identify unique needs that cannot be funded through government grants. An example of that would be technology and/or child care. These needs may constitute a necessity to secure private funding. Private funding we know is often less restrictive but solely relying on this may challenge YAB sustainability.

Private funding is usually limited but creating an ongoing platform for individuals to donate will allow for continuous contributions in cash flow so consider creating a donation link for your YAB. While YAB members share their initiative with community members encourage people to donate to their cause. Some things to consider with identifying private funding, are the funder's historical relationship to social justice, the expected deliverables associated with private funding, and any specific deadlines.

You'll want to start local in your search for private funding. You'll coach YAB members on how to lead those conversations and again create as many opportunities as possible for people to donate to the work of the Youth Action Board or to the cause. Remember, not all funding is good funding or not all funding is created equally and that's true for both government and private funding as majority stakeholders' youth and young adult or YAB members should decide whether or not the funding that you're identifying makes sense for them.

**[00:15:20] Kahlib:** Yes. While we're on this point about private funding, I think Riannon put a comment around emotional labor and compensating for that. I believe folds into the concept around economic justice as well. When we think again about the folks who are of little expertise because we don't just want to say live the

experience. We want to view this as live expertise, right? Those individuals are bringing their experience as a person that is potentially black, queer, trans individual who has grown up poor that is experiencing homelessness bringing that experience that has been informing the system, right?

We're trying to reimagine the system to be able to create it and what the image they view, their picture, their vision for the future. When we consider emotional labor, that's absolutely something that should be compensated, and that private funding is only ways that we can address that. When we think about what that means, that could be a lot of different things, it can potentially be access to therapists for individuals if that's something that they want. Access to it could potentially be just as simple as creating some type of initiative where the Youth Action Board is felt appreciated where they go out for bowling or something like that.

Those opportunities for them to not just be doing work but also being rewarded and letting know that their efforts are valued and they are appreciated. It goes well beyond just the things of providing pizza and transportation to and from meetings. Some of the challenges that we encounter, when we consider private funding, some of the things obviously we consider showing engagement is when an individual comes in and just has to cut themselves and bleed for individuals just for the sake of getting money.

Then that individual may then leave that experience of them telling their story of homelessness and how potentially this service helped them get to the next place but they leave that experience and they go right back into whatever harmful experience they were experiencing, that they were discussing. Then they're re-traumatized in their discussion, they're re-traumatized when they return to that environment and that doesn't do anything to actually change the system. Remember we're trying to promote something that's going to be completely different. We're trying to reimagine what is currently happening.

If we are thinking beyond showing engagement, that means that we're engaging with young people on an ongoing basis. Remember thinking back to those two individuals trying to start with two very strong committed dedicated individuals to potentially form a Youth Action Board. Working with them over a course over time to be able to paint their vision for the future. Whenever they are engaging in the speaking opportunities with people who potentially have funding in opposition to them solely focusing on the things that happened in their life, that they were harmful.

What if they began to paint their vision for the future? What if an opposition to them leaving that experience and going back into something that's potentially harmful. You and other people in the room who have the capacity to support them ask them, "What are ways that I can support you in making this vision a reality?" This goes beyond showing engagement. Number one, forces you to develop a relationship ahead of them, coming and speaking, and then afterwards, there are actionable steps that happen. This isn't just a nominal thing that just happening just to look good, this is something that's developing a relationship. It's actually trying to change the system.

When inviting funders to the table with young people, there should be a focus on developing a reciprocal relationship, work with young people to share their vision for the future instead of focusing on the traumatic experiences. Paying YAB members. Work with YAB members on a case-by-case basis to determine which is the best method of payment.

I know that that sucks, in some cases, we're like, "Oh my God," but of course you want to find something that will work across the board for everybody but you need to be very specific in making sure that whatever method you're using is effective for that person.

Some people will prefer gift cards or something like that but other folks will want cash. That just makes most sense for them or a check or something like that. If you are able to mitigate those issues obviously that will help with making sure that you're developing a report with young people and continue to come back but also just make sure that you are focusing on economic justice and addressing issues of inequity in the past. Transportation, food, and other in-kind services are not applicable methods of payment for time and services. We can't stress that enough. Transparency. YAB members should be able to access spreadsheets of the budget for each fiscal year that the YAB is being funded including an itemized list. Transparency is essential through every level of authentic youth collaboration. It is especially crucial that you share protocol for late payments, changes in pay, budget information, and miss meeting consequences well ahead of time. This is so, so important. There are too many cases even within YHDP where youth are on and they're working work and working for months without payment and there's not any clarity as to why.

Obviously, the adult partners don't want that to be the case and are actively working to address that, but the lack of transparency is the issue. The youth not understanding exactly what's going on, what's to struggle. How can they potentially be helpful and make resolving, creating a solution? Also, just making sure that you are completely clear about like okay if you miss a meeting or if you're late to a meeting what does that mean? Do you miss a meeting so you don't get that specific pay for the full day if you're late or whatever? There should be clarity but also these should be things that are negotiated with the Youth Action Board. They should be creating these standards themselves.

If they decide, okay, if you miss a meeting, you don't get paid, that's their decision. If they decide, if you're late to a meeting then you just get partial pay whatever it is. Let that be their decision because that's something again that they're creating this is their space. The other thing I would say that is very important is making sure that you plan well ahead of time for whatever you could actually more represent. Say for instance you want to bring on 10 Youth Action Board members, you know that your livable wage is \$15 an hour, you should do the math well ahead of time.

We know we have 15 members. Excuse me we have 10 members we can pay them \$15 an hour. That means we have a total of 10 hours a month for each individual, and that's just it for the budget. Then we need to be clear that this is only for 2021. We have funding throughout 2021, throughout this year, we need to be actively working to secure funding for the next year. All these things are just around transparency making sure there's clarity so that they understand exactly what the

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expectations are ahead of time. YAB members should be getting paid reasonably and receive liberal wages depending on communities' livable wages.

Obviously, this is different for each community, some places \$12 is a little wage other places it's more like 15 maybe 16. If the wage in Cali is \$13 an hour, members should not get paid anything less than that. Your Continuum of Care Board should be proactively working to address any barriers to disbursement. Again transparency if there are any barriers that come up, let them know well ahead of time that that exists.

**[00:23:15] Dana:** Thanks, Kahlib, which brings us to our second part of the session, Lesson 2, Recruitment and Retention. I want to encourage you to continue to ask questions in the chat, but also confirm that there will be time towards the end of this presentation for us to have a Q&A. Our objectives for this lesson are for you to understand the basics of YAB recruitment and retention, to also understand the importance of promoting equity and inclusion in the Youth Action Board to reflect communities disproportionately affected by homelessness, and for you to understand how to promote peer-to-peer connections for YAB sustainability.

Here are some of the basics of recruitment and retention. One crucial component of successful YAB recruitment and retention is to secure funding for reliable compensation and the following necessities for the YAB to function which are transportation assistance, to mitigate in-person attendance issues, and in my experience that has looked like everything from bus passes, or train tokens to assistance with rideshare apps like YAB or Lyft, technology support, whether young people need access to Wi-Fi, cell phone services even iPads, food during meetings which is really important as you all know to keep young people engaged.

To keep me engaged even in meetings food is a necessity, supplies for meetings for the YABs to carry out its necessary work, as well as child care for parenting YAB members. Furthermore, some key considerations for YAB retention are ensuring that youth and young adults are involved in the early formation of the YAB, including the recruitment process. If you're a community that has had a Youth Action Board in the past consider any past challenges, retaining members in work to overcome or resolve those. Support YAB members with technology and or internet access as mentioned previously.

What we've seen since the onset of COVID-19 is that it's best to anticipate your YAB will work remotely at least some time. Ensure that you are communicating with the youth and young adults of the YAB in ways that make sense, and that are accessible for all members. Some examples are group chats, Zoom, private social media groups, or text, and be mindful to utilize any and all accessibility aids like live captioning for virtual meetings.

**[00:26:18] Kahlib:** Be sure to build out that retention strategy while you're building out your recruitment strategy with the YAB members. What is our strategy to make sure that we don't only recruit them, recruit individuals that are valuable to this process but how do we also make sure that we retain these individuals? Also, make sure that your recruitment and your retention is yielding individuals that are representative of the folks who are experiencing homelessness in your community.

If you know that most of the individuals who are accessing services and are experiencing homelessness in your community are black and brown individuals that are LGBTQ identified then there should definitely be representation from those individuals on the Youth Action Board. If you know the majority of individuals who access services engage in drug use or injection drug use, there should be some representation. The only way that you can effectively address or reach these individuals or create a system that's going to reach these individuals is to have their voice a part of the process. YAB membership needs

to reflect the communities impacted and disempowered locally, it is not enough to have a racially or gender homogeneous group of young people making decisions in your community, even if they have all lived experience of homelessness. It is necessary to apply this equity lens to HIV status, immigration status, justice involvement, and pregnancy or parenting when establishing your Youth Action Board. Consider all these things whenever you can considering your recruitment of individuals. Making sure that your space is a space that is going to be supportive and a brave space for these individuals but also that if you know that any of these things are specific issues in your community that you work with folks who are reaching these communities to be able to create a Youth Action Board.

If you don't effectively know how to reach individuals who are undocumented work with some immigration services in your community, if you don't effectively know how to reach individuals who are pregnant in parenting work with family services in your community. It should just be a part of the process and your recruitment of a Youth Action Board and there are a lot of those bodies, those folks who work in those fields, who already have bodies of individuals that are informing their systems. They call them community advisory boards in some cases but that is a potential recruitment effort and strategy for you all.

There's a question in the chat around what experience have folks had around legal liability and providing tech or internet support to youth and particularly minors. If anyone has any support around that, definitely drop that in the chat. Most of the time as an agency which I don't know if we mentioned that we work for True Colors United, but our focus has been individuals that are over the ages of 18 and more and for our national youth forum specifically is over the ages of 21. We haven't necessarily encountered any of those legal liabilities but if anyone else has and accessing technology for individuals under the ages of 18, please provide some insight down into the chat.

Peer to peer support programs ensure that YAB members are feeling supported and heard as well as with retention. Not every young person will want to participate in this way encourage peer-to-peer connections but allow YAB members to opt-in or out. Allow YAB members to decide the most appropriate peer-to-peer model for them to work with them to develop their own. We have some examples, those examples are available on that launch they've been taken out, sorry.

We have an actual roadmap that all this information is coming from which will be accessible once this recording and everything else goes out, the road map will be downloadable resources without access, that has everything that you need in these predictive connections in those examples. YAB members developing their own peer-

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to-peer support model include frequency of meetings, structure meetings, length of actual connections.

Discussion question, I want you all to respond to and we can do this, we can hear a couple of people come up from you and folks put in the chat, but considering the peer-to-peer models that currently exist in your agency or community, what have been the benefits or challenges of these efforts? If you have any peer-to-peer models maybe you have a community liaison or a youth liaison that helps young people, what have been some of the benefits or challenges with that? Feel free, we could take a couple responses folks want to hop off or other folks feel free to drop it in the chat. If no one is chomping at the bit then I guess we'll just hear--

**[00:31:22] Speaker 4:** I can't answer.

**[00:31:24] Kahlib:** Okay.

**[00:31:26] Speaker 4:** I am the youth coordinator at my organization but I am also a youth. Well, I think the benefit is that when I've been trying to recruit people for the action board, it's been easy to talk to them because I used to be on the Youth Action Board. I think challenges though, I think with peer-to-peer stuff, it could be hard to not get like I don't know what the word but not let my stuff get in the way if that makes sense. I think that can be a challenge I think it's also just in general a challenge to be like peer-to-peer with the YAB but then I've have all the other co-workers who don't have lived experience and navigating that.

**[00:32:43] Kahlib:** All right. I see a couple folks coming in. Young people accessing services are leaning on youth peers for connection and understanding that they are not receiving from adult providers in the same way, as soon as one of the benefits. We have youth peer navigators who have lived expertise in homelessness and foster care so many benefits unique knowledge credibility knows what works and what doesn't, understand both the system lens and the young adult perspective and can translate between them.

Peer-to-peer model is a must, you trust other youths are more likely to listen to and engage when met by another youth. Also, peers can provide guidance and feedback from a first-hand perspective to help youth that are currently struggling with homelessness. Sometimes youth staff are really anyone being involved are very uncomfortable with supporting YAB and making its own decisions about how to be together and all the other decisions around budget et cetera. Yes, that's absolutely true.

Sometimes folks are very uncomfortable which is why we should get into that, where it's something that they can opt-in and opt-out of whenever it comes to these peer-to-peer models, but I do think that it's something that has been beneficial in some cases for Youth Action Boards. In things simple as onboarding new YAB members having those direct connections and making sure that you have one individual that's going to keep connection with a new YAB member so that they don't fall through the cracks so to speak. Yes, as a reminder to everyone, slides and recording with the transcription will be available after the holidays on the HUD Exchange.

**[00:34:18] Dana:** Okay, Lesson 3 is Undoing Adultism. What is adultism? Some of you this will be a refresher and some of you are being introduced to the term for the first time. Adultism describes the systems of privileged attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors that adults have over those of young people. We sometimes see this play out when youth and young adults are stereotyped and discriminated against on the basis of age. Adultism is driven by behaviors and attitudes that are based on the assumption that adults are better than young people and therefore, entitles them to act upon or on the behalf of young people without their agreement.

Calling out adultism whenever and wherever it shows up in working with young people is necessary for authentic collaboration. As it permeates housing systems and our culture just like other isms. Oh, what's happening? My apologies. One way to gather authentic collaboration and input is to host a listening session, they're an effective way to ensure young people are providing the necessary feedback to move forward your collaborative work in a way that is not adultist.

For this to be most effective and worthwhile, here are some tips. You want to be specific about the intention. Prior to engaging in a listening session with youth and young adults be sure that they clearly understand your intentions and the potential outcomes of the listening session. You'll want to include youth and young adults in the development of the questions and feedback forms that will be associated with the listening session. Whenever possible you will want to allow youth and young adults to facilitate and Youth Action Boards may use this model to get feedback from other youth and young adults.

I've actually seen that in practice in one of the round three YHDP communities. We conducted listening sessions with the YAB then in turn conducted listening sessions with advisory committees of young people throughout their community.

**[00:36:58] Kahlib:** Processing feedback from listening sessions, surveys, et cetera, will require shifting from a defensive response to asking questions to clarity actually seeking to understand the youth's perspective is so, so vital that whenever you are in the process of gathering feedback and processing that, that you completely remove yourself out of the equation, removing your own experience and your own emotions from it. I think one of the things that is very important is that we allow youth to be able to speak authentically about their experience regardless and without interruption, it's just one of those things that we have to do, and the listening session is a perfect tool to be able to do that.

Again, whenever you get to space where you are able to ask questions which is usually at the end, those questions to only be seeking clarity, and not to be challenging with anything that they are providing. Some of the types of feedback that you may receive is some observational feedback, in which any stakeholders or partners including young people, of course, observe a challenge or opportunity but either don't provide or don't necessarily have a solution for it.

That's just something that they observe. I just noticed that this happened, didn't necessarily think that it was a good thing I don't have a solution for it but then you also have negative feedback in which there is dissatisfaction or frustration with the process or system that needs to be expressed, prepare for and accept it as an

opportunity to create more buy-in or collaboration. It's going to happen, and if you're going to have people who express negative feedback on an ongoing basis, those individuals are perfect for the Youth Action Board.

If you know that you have someone who always complains about the stuff that's going on, put them on the Youth Action Board where they can specifically use their voice and try to change the things that they- or try to create a system that they envision. Constructive feedback, which suggests or provides solutions to the plan which is what we want to aim for, but the only way that we achieve that constructive feedback is while working with young people to be able to shape their visions for the future. That they're able to give us something that is constructive that can really help us reimagine the things that are happening.

Youth and broader equity, authentic collaboration with young people requires a commitment to understanding how identity shapes experiences. Understand how racism and oppression has impacted your community. Young people come into this work with various and multiple identities, black indigenous LGBTQ+ different abilities, et cetera which need to be acknowledged, accepted, and understood before authentic collaboration can truly take place. Just make sure that you acknowledge and understand the differences in the things that happen in your community really understand how inequity has truly shaped in your community, and actively work to address that, that's another thing.

We have to make sure that we understand how anti-blackness has shown up in our community and actively be working to address any systems of anti-blackness

any systems of Black supremacy. That's the only way that we can truly work to make sure that whenever we are having individuals at the multiple intersections of identities, that we're creating systems that work for them, creating a youth action board that's going to work for them, where they feel like they can use their voice authentically.

Historically, people experiencing homelessness have relied on systems that have taken their power away, like when a provider makes a housing decision for a young person. We've seen that so many times. We recommend that you analyze the demographics of your CoC decision-making body, as well as your youth action board, to determine if the communities experiencing homelessness locally are accurately represented. Yes, that means that sometimes in some cases, individuals will need to give up their seats, in order for there to be true representation from the community.

The goal is to create a CoC informed by youth expertise and in which young people are making decisions. We have two community examples that are in the roadmap for you. We're not going to go over those today just because we didn't think we will have time to truly talk through all of them in integrity. We want to make sure that you are able to reference those but again, those will be accessible whenever you are able to download the slides and the roadmap through the HUD Exchange website.

**[00:41:29] Dana:** Continuing with our discussion around equity, lesson four is sustaining an equitable system. The objectives for this lesson are for you to

understand the best practices for creating equity within the CoC and to identify opportunities within the current structure to advance any equity efforts.

We're defining equity as the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.

As mentioned earlier, youth and young adults come into this work with multiple identities, marginalizations, as well as adverse, lived experiences and this requires that we approach our work together through the lens of intersectionality and we are defining that here as Dr. Kimberle' Crenshaw's concept around the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, as they apply to a given individual or group and it's regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

**[00:43:02] Kahlib:** Equity and the Continuum of Care body. Authentic collaboration with young people requires a commitment to understanding how identity shapes experiences. Understand how racism and oppression has impacted the communities we support. Young people come into this work with various and multiple identities, Black, indigenous, LGBTQ, which need to be acknowledged, accepted, and understood before authentic collaboration can begin.

Historically, people experiencing homelessness have relied on systems that have taken their power away. An example of this is a provider making a decision for a young person without their input.

Again, having at least two seats for youth and young adults with lived experience is a part of your CoC structure. The CoC should reflect communities experiencing homelessness, analyze the demographics of the community's decision-making body as well as the Youth Action Board and determine whether that's representative.

Hire young people at every single level. Peer support positions have been designed for young people but have limited the voice and perspective of each individual placed in those roles.

A couple of questions that we wanted to just open up today are: How can you ensure that beyond this project, people with lived expertise will be informing both policy and practice? Beyond if a specific initiative of YHDP or if you are engaging in something else that brings on Youth Action Board, how can you make sure that you are including people with lived expertise?

Also, if you could identify the current opportunities to incorporate youth voice in your CoC structure, how can you ensure that youth voice becomes an essential part of this work? Yes, you can feel free to come off mute or you can pop those things in the chat.

**[pause 00:44:53]**

**[00:45:42] Dana:** I would just like-- Go ahead.

**[00:45:45] Rhiannon:** This is Rhiannon. One of the things that Youth for Youth board wanted to do with the YHDP projects and put it into the RFP was to ensure that young people with lived expertise were embedded into the project. From that came a project where the young people with lived expertise, some who were on the board, ended up applying and getting the jobs but in other communities, that wasn't the case but ultimately what happened was at least six of the projects hired young people as the folks who are actually doing the work in the YHDP projects both as housing case managers and as outreach workers.

There's some overlap where some of them are still on the youth board but they're also embedded into the projects, and assuming that the projects get renewed very year, they will just be able to continue doing that work. It's one way that, I would say, they've figured out how to embed themselves and other young people into the projects.

Then I wrote in the notes too but the Washington Balance State Steering Committee added two seats so that we have two representatives from the Y for Y Board at the steering committee level and then there's a subcommittee, there's a bunch of subcommittees but one of them is the youth subcommittee and one of the co-chairs of that balance estate subcommittee is a member of the youth board as well. Trying to find all the areas that there's some influence or power or decision-making to make sure that young people's voices are leading it.

**[00:47:52] Aaron White:** Well, hello everybody. My name is Aaron White. I am a YAB member here in the district of Columbia. To answer your first question, Kahlib, we talked about this a couple of other nights ago as well. How to ensure that beyond the project that you still have people with lived experience informing both policy and practice? I sit on a juvenile justice advisor group, which is a commissions board that is you have to be appointed through the mayor's office.

We are connecting, me and another one of our youth, one of my peers, Kyla, is also on the JJAG committee, is trying to connect the YAB that is dealing with homelessness and the justice YAB that we're also sitting on and just connecting those two boards and having the adults in the room understand what's going on and help us out even beyond the work that we are doing in both committees, and stuff like that. Just involving your YAB locally in justice reform or educational reform or whatever the case may be.

**[00:49:31] Kahlib:** Lead action board allowing them to be a fully functioning governing body, right, so they should have a full governing structure, a mission and vision. Whatever the CoC is working toward, whatever their collective objectives are, if they develop a mission and vision for themselves, all those things should be complementary. The Youth Action Board being a subdivision or a subcommittee of the CoC, that's something that sometimes works, but when you think around the way that the subcommittee works is at the mercy of the larger committee.

We need to view the CoC as a sister or a sibling to the Youth Action work body. Those things need to work in tandem and should be complementary at all times. I see a couple of folks dropped a few comments down in the chat.

"We include our adult advisory board and our Youth Action Board chairs in a CoC-wide advisory board meeting and present them in any policy or procedure changes to taking it to the board for a full vote. In Alameda County, we have added a YAB specific seat to our HUD CoC as well as to our systems planning committee within the CoC. The YAB was also voted as a subcommittee of the CoC and that has a standing place on the agenda to provide updates.

In Essex County, CoC, we have a Consumer Liaison seat on the e-board, the president of our upcoming Youth Action will fill that seat." Then, "We ensure this by making the Youth Advisory Board part of our overall CoC Governance structure and give them tasks regarding all community funding decisions, policy development or editing, and also includes having the Youth Board President have a seat on our CoC Board. This allows the youth to bring their voices to the table for all aspects of the CoC." Absolutely. Any other folks that wanted to speak to either one of these props?

**[00:51:42] Qariah Lucas:** I guess I will. Hi. Wait, wait, wait, so you can see me. Hi, my name is Qariah Lucas. I do Youth Coordinator Entry for Essex County, New Jersey. I sit on the CEs, but our upcoming YAB, like I had said before, we're not running it alongside of our CEs, they're going to operate as their own CEs, in their sense. God willing, when we apply and hopefully receive the youth demonstration grant, we plan on the YAB to vote on projects we would like to use on that money as well as the Consumer Liaison.

My YAB president is just running around here. I wish he could have come and popped in, but he will be sitting on our CEs meeting to be a voting actual member and be the liaison to speak on whatever the YAB votes on and wants to advocate for.

We plan on having different consumers fill different seats. We'll have the mom and babies, we'll have LGBTQIA, we'll have those different seats as well as having other people that may not be in the homeless populations fill our YAB, but I thought it was most important when I advocated for our YAB to have a space on our CEs because we're a group of 100 people who just make decisions and say, "Here's money, this is what we're going to do with it."

It's more important to have the actual president who is making moves in organizing ultimately and advocating for the youth to be on the board. When our CE said, "You know what, here's a seat, fill it," I just thought that was very progressive of our CoC to even allow that to happen out of so many different consumers that we come in counter with, to let the YAB have a specific voice is very progressive.

**[00:53:40] Kahlib Barton:** I love to hear that. Good luck and wish you all the best on that YHDP journey. Anyone else want to respond to any of the questions or have any questions for us? This absolutely opportunity just for us to process stuff and we want to open up the floor for you all.

**[00:54:03] Participant:** Can we ask questions that don't necessarily have to do with what you just said, but has to do with YAB stuff?

**[00:54:09] Kahlib Barton:** Sure.

**[00:54:20] Participant:** What do you, I guess, suggest to people who don't have lived experience, who are trying to help start the YAB groups, what do you suggest to them in terms of their involvement and when do they become, I guess, uninvolved, so that it's just people with limited experience doing the work?

**[00:54:46] Kahlib Barton:** It is a great question, and this is something that is a case-by-case thing. Every Youth Action Board, they decide what their character is going to be, what their makeup is going to be. In some cases, you do have individuals who do not have lived expertise that are on the Youth Action Body. My thing, I would automatically say is defer to the Youth Action Board members to see how they feel about that and what feels most comfortable.

To the person that may be working to develop that Youth Action Body, Youth Advisory Body, whatever, it's no different than older adult partner that's supporting a Youth Action Board. You should be taking a back seat most of the time and just creating a space for other folks to be able to speak up. Then once the Youth Action board comes on, if they say, "We're comfortable with people who don't necessarily have lived expertise being a part of this," then that's when you should be a little bit more vocal. Prior to that, allowing those folks to be able to lead. The only thing that that person should be doing is just creating a space for folks to come together or help and create this space.

That's a great question. I don't know if you had any thoughts to that, Dana.

**[00:56:06] Dana White:** No, you pretty much summed it up. I see another question in the chat from Simone, who says that many of their members in Oakland are identified through the main youth shelter and whether there are any thoughts on how to identify youth in other areas to widen YAB perspective.

Yes, Simone, it does differ by location, obviously. I always say a great place to start is with any local LGBT organization that is offering youth programs. That's a great place to recruit. I would also say any other youth-driven social justice organizations that are official or unofficial, you may find some youth and young adults who have the lived experience or expertise.

**[00:56:58] Kahlib Barton:** Yes, a lot of public health organizations and communities have very great connections with young people just because they have funding that specifically focuses on young people. If you have any agencies in your community that focus on HIV or STI treatment and testing and stuff like that, most of the time they're directly connected to a lot of young people and probably see a lot of those folks.

If you build up a connection or collaboration with that organization, you can potentially use that as a recruitment strategy for folks to represent on a Youth Action Board. I know that that may still be difficult in the times of COVID. I'm always completely supportive of using social media as a recruitment tool, especially when you consider that we will be meeting virtually anyways. It is a way to be able to make sure that you are engaging with folks who at least know how to navigate technology a little bit.

Just consider doing any type of multiple different methods of recruitment technology. Social media is definitely a method, but also partnering with local organizations. "Does anyone have recommendations for reinvigorating a YAB during COVID and recruiting remotely?" Which is a little bit about what we just mentioned. I would love to hear if anyone else has any thoughts about reinvigorating a Youth Action Board during COVID. I know a lot of folks have struggled with that, obviously, this year. [silence]

Yes, a lot of folks struggling with COVID and keeping folks engaged during COVID. I think that that's been something that's pretty consistent across the board and a lot of membership has wavered. I don't know if there's a specific solution or a way that would just be a fix-all for each Youth Action Board. I think everyone is different. One of the things that I often tell people, though, is when people leave, let them know that they're missed and when they returned, let them know that their presence is appreciated, because I think that that's something that a lot of folks don't consider.

Honestly speaking to the emotional labor that Riannon talked about earlier, when you think about folks who are feeling connected to this work in the heart, not just in the mind and their experience, but when they're connected to this with their heart and they think about, "These people are going to miss me if I'm not present," and opposition to, "If I'm not present there, maybe an email won't get sent or an agenda won't get sent." That's completely different. That approach there may help with your recruitment and your retention and some strategies.

Then I see another. "We are struggling with meaty agenda items for the YAB meetings to discuss during the meetings since our YAB is pretty new. We have governance, et cetera, solidified, they are hungry for meaningful items to discuss. Any suggestions?" Do you want to take that, Dana?

**[01:00:13] Dana:** Yes, thank you, my apologies. I thought I was off of mute. Yes, it varies of course by community. It also varies according to where you are in the process, in addition to making sure that your Youth Action Board has a really strong foundation. Mission and vision statements, bylaws, it is a really good idea to have Youth Action Boards dive into broader equity work, any interest that they demonstrate as far as racial equity, or in leading conversations around equity in your COC.

I strongly encourage you to get them discussing what that could look like. Of course, get them brainstorming about quality assurance and how they want to ensure that local programs are actually not just like meeting the needs of youth and young adults but responsive to youth and young adults.

**[01:01:25] Kahlib:** Yes, and let them develop, I don't know exactly what your funding looks like but let them develop a specific strategy. I don't know if you have all been able to do any project management work to help them like figure out what is going to be their specific objectives for 2021. This is a perfect opportunity for Youth Action Boards are just like what do we do right now? Obviously, some of them are probably just going to have holiday parties and call it a year, but at the beginning of the year, if you want to kick things off with what's our plan for 2021 what do we want to address.

Your Youth Action Board doesn't have to be one single body of individuals they can develop workgroups. If they decide, we want this year we're focusing on policy initiatives getting the word out about the Youth Action Board and recruitment maybe that's what you do. You have a policy group a communications group and then you have a recruitment group, a work group of individuals to focus on specific initiatives that help them develop a project plan help them have specific objectives.

I mean if you need any support around the development of project plans and stuff like that, True Colors United has some support. You can go to our website at [truecolorssunited.org](http://truecolorssunited.org) to be able to download some project management resources that are excellent for Youth Action Boards. It's kind of fun to just go through, click through to really learn a little bit more about and feel free to follow up with myself, Dana, or any other True Colors United technical assistant staff and we'd be happy to walk you through, support you through any work that will help expand what the focus of the Youth Action Board is.

Susan asked a question around, are folks thinking about including their YABs in conversations related to vaccine distribution policies and processes? I think that is a very, very great question to consider especially right now. My colleague, our colleague Angela Brown dropped a resource of about a virtual reading meeting resource in the chat, so everyone please feel free to click on that and use that. Hopefully, it's helpful to you.

Any other questions or any folks that want to respond to anything at this point? Well, if not still completely available to you all, feel free to reach out to either myself or Dana via email. It is [kahlib@truecolorsunited.org](mailto:kahlib@truecolorsunited.org) or [dana@truecolorsunited.org](mailto:dana@truecolorsunited.org). We will drop that in the chat for you all. We want to also encourage you all next week.

There will be a Youth Collaboration 202 webinar that is happening on the 17th at 3 PM Eastern time. It could be an opportunity for you to move further into the conversation and for youth collaboration. These concepts that we talked about today will be built on and they may expand it a little bit further with our colleagues, Angel and Dee, who will lead you all up through that conversation. Thank you all for being here today. Dana, did you want to say anything?

**[01:05:07] Dana:** Just again thank you all for taking time out of your day to be here with us, and any additional there-- I am on-screen. Any additional or lingering questions that we were unable to address in the chat, please don't hesitate to follow up with us via email.

**[01:05:24] Kahlib:** Thank you all for being here today and we look forward to working with you all in the future hopefully. Thank you. Bye, everyone.

**[01:06:27] [END OF AUDIO]**