

## **HUD Webinar**

### **“Youth Collaboration”**

**November 2018**

**[00:00:00]**

**TOM HASKIN:** Thank you everyone for your patience. Thank you so much for joining us today for this webinar on youth collaboration. Before we get started, I'd like to note that today's webinar is the second part in a two-part repeating series on the subject. So we're following up on Tuesday's webinar, which was held at 2pm ET on Tuesday. We will be covering the same content and presentation materials. Obviously, the Q&A questions and answers very well may be different, but it is the same webinar that we offered earlier the week. And we just offered it twice to make sure as many folks as possible are able to participate. We're really excited to have you all join us today. We had, I think, over 600 people register for Tuesday over 400 register for today. Really seems like this topic of youth collaboration is one that's getting folks pretty excited about this topic, and we're really looking forward to the questions that you have as they come in today. So we're looking forward to having a kind of participatory webinar using the chat feature.

My name is Tom Haskin. I'm a technical assistance provider with CSH. I'm also part of our technical assistance team through our work with the ongoing Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program – YHDP, to some of you. 21 communities have been part of YHDP in its first and second rounds, and youth collaboration has really been a key element of the process in all 21 sites. We're really excited to have you on this call to talk about this topic about how it works and how it's going on your community. Or if you're having challenges, we hope to give you some ideas on where to get started. We were hoping to turn this over to one of our colleagues from HUD to talk a little bit more about youth collaboration and how HUD sees it as an essential component to preventing and ending youth homelessness. The person is not yet on the call, so we are going to skip that portion for now and we'll see if he's able to join in a moment. Otherwise, Tim, do you think you could talk a little bit about the technology and the ways that folks can engage with the webinar, and communicate with us during the presentation? And then we'll come back to that introduction if our colleague joins us.

**TIM NG:** Yeah, absolutely. Thanks Tom. Hi, folks, thanks for joining today. I'm going to go through some housekeeping slides on how to use the WebEx technology for today's webinar. There are two audio options. I see most of you guys are listening to your computer speakers, which is great, but if you would like to listen to your phone, you can do that as well. There is a phone icon towards the bottom left portion of your participant screen. You can click on that and it will give you a number to dial into. The phone is the best quality, and it is known that sometimes if you're listening from your computer speakers, depending on how your internet connection is, it does tend to cut in and out a little bit. If that happens to you, there is a quick fix to do. Along the bottom of your screen is a row buttons, like you see in the screen shot. The second to the left button is your computer audio. Just hit “pause” and then hit “play” to reset that connection to get audio going again if you have trouble.

We will be recording today's session. The recording and the slides will be available on the HUD Exchange after the webinar at some point next week. Everybody is muted to reduce background noise. So we're going to be using the chat feature today to get your questions and comments. And to do that just make sure that along that row of buttons along the bottom of your screen, that chat bubble icon is selected and that will open a chat panel on the right side.

Make sure you set your "to" to "All Participants" so that the panelists can see your questions. There are two options, one is "All Attendees" and one is all "All Participants." Please make sure you send to "Participants" because we can't see it if you send it to "All Attendees." And this is just a closer look at how that chat feature works on your screens. I will post the number in chat right after I'm finished for you. And so I am Tim. I also work at CSH with our Training Center Team. I'm listed as a "CSH Events" in the panel window. And if you have any questions,

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I will be happy to answer those for you in the chat. So I'm going to pass it back over to Tom.

**TOM HASKIN:** Thank you Tim. Again, I want to emphasize this, if you have any issues with the technology, please send "CSH Events" or Tim the chat message. And throughout, we really encourage folks to use that "All Participants" kind of option to submit questions through the chat. Just whenever they come up in your head, put them out there. We're going to be kind of collecting them and monitoring them throughout. And we'll go through questions in the Q&A at the end.

So this point I'd like to introduce the presenters for today. Kahlib Barton and Dee Balliet are with the True Colors Fund and they're working directly with the 21 communities that are currently part of the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program, also known as YHDP, providing technical assistance around youth collaboration. Prior to becoming staff members at the True Colors Fund, they were members of the National Youth Forum on Homelessness, which you'll hear more about. It's a youth-led advocacy body dedicated to preventing and ending youth homelessness.

They'll say more about their work and the Forum, but I want to say that they've just been a really amazing asset and partner, both in local communities that they're working in, and nationally in kind of designing, and in visioning, what youth collaboration means at that macro level, across TA providers, HUD, and in these communities. I've spent a lot of time in the past few years working with Kahlib and Dee, and there's a sort of motto I've heard them use many times, and I'll paraphrase it to say that, "Nothing for us, without us." And I think that that spirit of the National Youth Forum, of the experience of people with lived experience in forming this work and guiding this work, and Kahlib and Dee themselves, I think they really embody that.

The Forum has not only brought a strong kind of youth voice to these conversations, but they have really set the direction and the vision for authentic youth collaboration in so many of these communities across the country. I think they've really pushed communities, I think they've pushed TA providers, to grow and do this work as best we can and better every day. And so Kahlib and Dee themselves have been really central to this along with the dozen or so using

young adults who have been part of the National Youth Forum. So with that, I'd like to thank them for being here today with us, and Kahlib and Dee, take it away.

**KAHLIB BARTON:** Thank you so much Tom, I appreciate it. Thank you all for being here on today. Again, my name is Kahlib Barton, I use he, she, and they pronouns.

**DEE BALLIET:** Thanks Tom. Thanks, again, everyone for being here. I'm Dee Balliet, I too use he, she, and they pronouns.

**KAHLIB BARTON:** We are here to talk to you about authentic youth collaboration. And so just to give you a little bit of background about the National Youth Forum on Homelessness, the National Youth Forum on Homelessness can be compared to what you would consider your Youth Advisory Board. We prefer the term Youth Action Board though, but our focus is not on the local level, but it's on the national level. So we have a group of individuals from across the nation right now. It's up to 21 individuals and they all have lived experience of homelessness, and collectively they make up the National Youth Forum on Homelessness. The work that they do is through collaboration with organizations like A Way Home America, CSH, the Center for Evidence-based Solutions to Homelessness, and of course, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The way we do that work is through our own advocacy, through our expertise from our lived experience. And our goal is to change national policy that then in turn affects local practice. The way that we do that work is through a lot of training, education, and advocacy. And of course, just continue to do the work we do on the ground every single day.

So, just to kick this off, and make sure that we are all on the same page, we have a few objectives. In this session, we will explain the authentic youth collaboration philosophy and why it's important to our work to end youth homelessness, to provide a list of best practices to authentically engaging young people. We will provide concepts and ideas to consider when building

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a framework of how to work with youth and young adults. We will provide some concrete examples to address adultism and as an adult. We will provide an index related resources to supplement your learning. And lastly, a framework for collaborating with youth participants who are engaging in services or programs.

**DEE BALLIET:** What we do. Here at True Colors Fund we work with communities across the country to develop solutions that prevent and end youth homelessness in three ways. Training and education. We educate and collaborate with the professionals working on the ground to ensure that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth experiencing homelessness have access to the inclusive and affirming services they need. They need advocacy. We amplify the voices of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth experiencing homelessness in government and media to ensure vital services and protections are in place to meet their needs. And then finally, youth collaboration. We provide lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth experiencing homelessness with leadership development opportunities that elevate their voices, so they can play an active role creating solutions.

**KAHLIB BARTON:** So the question, what does authentic partnership look like with youth who have experienced housing instability or homelessness often comes up for us. The ways in which youth are invited to participate is important to consider. It's up to the adults who are working with them to be intentional, communicative, and aware as these partnerships are formed. Historically youth experiencing homelessness may have been taken advantage of or tokenized in multiple ways, even by organizations and practices intending to support them. Youth are often asked to share their stories on panels, in the media, or at fund raising events. Though well intentioned, these kinds of opportunities are limiting. They rarely include the young person's ideas for impacting change, and the young person may be re-traumatized by these experiences. Particularly whenever they are able to highlight the value of their own lived experience, but it is being profited off without the exchange of information or services, it is very stigmatizing to a young person.

Authentic youth collaboration is about more than inviting a person to share their stories of the past. It's also about providing the space for them to share their vision for the future. So what we're saying is that it's not necessarily bad for you to invite a young person to share their story, but work with them to make sure that they are able to paint what their vision for the future will be. Not just stopping and sharing that story at the traumatizing piece, and not actually being able to provide some concrete steps that Continuums of Care can take to be able to make sure that whatever they would like to see in the world is happening. And then as a follow up from that, adult partners should be able to support them through that.

Authentic youth collaboration is sometimes hindered by adultism, which we will address throughout this presentation. This happens when youth and young people are presumed to lack knowledge or experience because of their age, and their ideas are dismissed. Engaging youth automatically and effectively requires one to flip this idea on its head. One example of this is through language. Consider the times when you've heard the phrase, "They're just kids." Referring to young people as "kids" can sometimes dismiss and undermine the knowledge and experience young people bring. The term "kids" inherently diminishes the experiences of a person rather than referring to someone as a "young adult" or "young person," which sets a completely different tone.

**DEE BALLIET:** So here we have the 4 I's of oppression. So if you're familiar with 4 I's, you've probably heard some of these before, maybe all of them. The first I, ideological, is very macro level. So these are like -isms: racism, classism, ableism, and sexism. Institutional: institutional oppression can show up through policies and regulations. Interpersonal oppression can show up as phobias. So homophobia being one, or xenophobia more broadly. And then internalized phobias. So internalized phobias are those phobias that one has within themselves. And that can look like internalized oppression based off of identities, which often we see in our work through youth collaboration.

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**KAHLIB BARTON:** And so all of the 4 I's of oppression heavily relate to homelessness and housing because of the way that they play out. So for example, if you consider the idea of

racism, that then plays into our institutions, for example, through our education system, or specifically talk about our Continuums of Care. This may be through things like your policies and procedures, where it could be something like mandating the way that people dress whenever they come into the room. Understanding that people of color, or more specifically black people, dress a specific way, and it may be more difficult for them to access the services if they are doing that. It can be evident through the way that people of color are dressed in your organization, compared to people who are not people of color.

It also can be present in your interpersonal relationships, whenever individuals are actually walking into the spaces that you allow them into. And then they, for example, don't see any messaging or pictures or posters or people that look like them. Now, though this may be something that's unconscious and not necessarily something that you intended to do, it is very necessary for the posters and picturing messaging that you have in the office to be representative of the people who you're serving. So although this is not necessarily something that is seen as an overt version of racism, it is something that can be a deterrent for a young person feeling like they're comfortable or safe in your space. And then that becomes internalized because then through that messaging they received, they begin to put those thoughts into their heart, and it makes it more difficult for them to be able to exist in your space. Therefore, those internalized thoughts become interpersonal, and that feeds into the institutional and ideological.

The reason why racism is put very largely on this slide, specifically, is because of how issues of housing and homelessness often relate back to race. As we know, the majority of the youth across the nation who experience homelessness, are people of color. More specifically, the majority of the people across the nation who experience poverty are people of color, and we can oftentimes attribute issues of race back to the reasons why these individuals experience these things at such disproportionate rates. Also it's very important to note that if and when you are operating and doing work with young people specifically, but this probably can be applied across the board, it is necessary that they have folks that work in an organization that look like them, that they can mirror. So that not only saying that you have someone who is young, but also people of color who are employed in your organization who are doing the work to make sure that the people who you are serving are also being supported.

**DEE BALLIET:** So what does meaningful partnership entail? One, be very intentional about the decision-making power that youth have in your work. Two, knowing that youth are the experts of their own truth. Three, when asking young people to be involved in your work, hear them out. Build a reciprocal relationship where you honor their experiences, allowing their experience and ideas to inform the process. So asking questions such as, "In what ways do youth directly impact decisions at my organization?" Or, "In what ways are youth a part of generating solutions?" Or even, "How are youth at my organization benefiting from the value of their lived experience?"

So a couple ideas there, just questions to ask yourself or even to ask your team. And we can kind of keep ourselves accountable when asking ourselves questions and also coming up with an answer. And if we don't see the answer that we get, then we have the opportunity to change that. As an adult partner, also equally, it's your responsibility not to speak for a young person but rather to elevate their voice in a way that's empowering. And I think it kind of goes back to Kahlil's point that he made and to one of the questions that I threw out there, which was, "How

are youth at my organization benefitting from the value of their lived experience?” And also, when the idea of we can invite young people to share their story, understanding that there is value to that young person's story, but making certain that if we are asking young people to show up, we're actually giving them tangible tasks or responsibilities to fulfill, outside of just kind of like storytelling. But then also if that young person has asked to share their story, to kind of use

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that to talk to other young people or youth in a way that may be beneficial to someone else. We need to also make certain that they're telling their story in an equitable way, that they're getting something out of the sharing or opening up or being vulnerable to kind of discuss elements of their story that sometimes people can put out there and not necessarily get anything back. So we want to make certain that if we're going to create meaningful partnerships, we're being very intentional about what we're asking young people to do, that we're inviting to the table or asking to come and collaborate with us. But also we're being mindful that they're experts in their own truth, and making certain that whatever ask that we're giving them, it's an empowering way to elevate their voices, offering something the young people didn't previously have.

**KAHLIB BARTON:** When we focus on meaningful partnerships with young people, one of those major tenets that can help establish a meaningful partnership is building trust. Without trust, we know that that can be very difficult barrier to be able to build authentic youth collaboration. It's essential to any effective working relationship, once the rapport is established, then genuine collaboration can begin.

So in this process, it is important to remember that youth and young adults oftentimes have the experience of going into organizations and having to tell all of their story or their experiences that are traumatizing within that first 30 minutes of meeting that individual. That's what we like to call our general intake process. Although it's something that's very standard and we see it as, “Okay, this has to be done in order for this young person to receive services,” we also have to consider how difficult it may be for that person, if there is not an effective coordinated system in place within your Continuum of Care. Because what's happening to that young person is that when they go to one agency, they're not speaking to the next agency, they're not collaborating with the next agency, so they're having to restate all of their experiences over again.

Furthermore, whenever you are referring young adults out, it's always a great rule of thumb to make sure that you do a very warm transfer. In that process, it may require you to ask a youth or young adult how they would like to be supported, and going as far as to offer them the opportunity to be able to accompany them to the visit to make sure that when they are actually into that space, that they are having an experience that is positive for them. Additionally, so that they do not have to repeat any of their negative experiences. Also prior to actually referring any individuals out, it's always necessary for you as the adult partner, you as the adult provider, to walk through whatever those services that you are referring your individuals to, as a person who will be receiving services. So walk through those services, so you know exactly where to tell them to go. That's going to help you establish your rapport with the youth or young adult.

Additionally whenever you are working with a Youth Action Board specifically, look at them as independent contractors who are your colleagues. So they are all people who are on the same level as you, you are on the same level playing field. And yes, they do have issues that come up because they are human. But at the same time, if we hold them accountable and we make sure that we state clear deadlines for all of the work that we're doing, then it's going to actually push forward for that rapport, therefore building trust with the youth and young adults.

**DEE BALLIET:** Meaningful engagement. An issue that often gets in the way of authentic youth collaboration between youth and service providers is “showy engagement,” in which young people are invited to participate simply to create the impression of inclusion and diversity. I think it's important for us to understand that if we're going to build trust with young people, our second step is how we ask to engage with those young people as well. It means nothing if we start to build trust with the person and then we just ask them to show up to a meeting or just to come in to speak to say, “Oh, hey, I'm a young person that receives services at this organization,” if we're not going to actually give that young person a tangible task and ask them to show up in a way that's meaningful. Not only for the organization, but also for that young person, that just kind of turns into what we call here “showy engagement,” or more broadly, just kind of tokenism. We're just using a young person just to say, “Hey, we have a young person, or we have a youth of color, or we have a LGBTQ youth,” but there's no collaboration there. That's the step that we miss in authentic youth collaboration is making certain that we've identified how

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we're going to engage with young people, what that looks like, and also what the value is there, for the young person and for our organization.

**KAHLIB BARTON:** Leadership development is a major component that is oftentimes missed in the experience of working with young people who have experienced homelessness. Through this leadership development process, it's important to note that we may need to know a little bit about a lot in order for this to be effective. What the assumption has been oftentimes is that youth who experience homelessness have the desire to work in homelessness systems, which is not necessarily the case. So if we are able to actually tap into resources, outside of our CoCs, then we will be able to find resources that could benefit a young person who wants to enter the medical field or someone who wants to enter welding or who wants to automotive work or cosmetology. It's helpful to know a little bit about everything so that while you're working with young people and they are open to you about their dreams, as they built as they built a rapport with you through that trust, and you're able to direct them in ways that will help them expand their capacity.

Young adults should have their freedom and agency to be the leaders of their own lives. Their autonomy should be promoted as they make decisions about the issues that impact their lives. So throughout this process of working with them, especially specifically with the Youth Action Board, allow some space to be able to figure out what is most important to them. Never come to the table with a clear agenda about what you feel is important to work on or what your marching orders are from your executive director. You should allow the Youth Action Board to say if that work is something that they are attracted to doing or not. If it's something they are collectively

comfortable doing or not, if this is something that supports or is going to reinforce their mission and vision or not. And as long as you are there, if they have that space and autonomy, then they are actually focusing on leadership development.

But additionally, it is a major thing where youth and young adults who have experienced homelessness oftentimes feel powerless. That power has been taken away through systems, through their experience of not having housing, through housing instability. So what you are doing by allowing them to be able to make decisions on their own lives, you are allowing them to take back their power. Through this process of taking back their power, it is important that you are able to support them in a multitude of ways, not specifically about youth homelessness, but things outside of the homelessness Continuum of Care as well.

**DEE BALLIET:** So here we have Intro to Adultism. Adultism describes the privilege, attitudes, and behaviors that adults have regarding young people. The idea or belief that young people don't know what's best for them. Inviting young people with lived experience to share their stories and not share their expertise. And when we say not share their expertise, we literally mean their expertise on what it is to navigate experiencing homelessness. So navigating systems, that's part of the expertise, when we say inviting people to share their stories and not their expertise.

Expecting that young people will answer any question that an adult partner asked, which I think is a big component to the adultism that we've seen and we've managed to reframe in a lot of communities. But oftentimes adult partners, however well-intentioned they may be, will often ask a youth or young adult a question or questions and expect that that young person has the answer to a question, however uncomfortable that may be, or inappropriate the question may be for that young person. A lot of times there's a disconnect if that young person doesn't answer the questions that an adult partner has. And so those are just kind of like some broad ideas of what adultism is.

But if we are going to speak about adultism of course we are going to have to speak about ageism. So what's the difference? Ageism describes systems of privilege, attitudes, and behaviors that young people have regarding elders. So it works kind of the same way that adultism works, where older people think that younger people don't necessarily know what's best for them. That opposite to that, in an ageist view, will be the idea that young people think older people don't necessarily know what they're talking about because they're older, and they understand current events, I think the fine line between there is respecting both ideas and both experiences, as an adult partner and a young adult partner. And that's

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a more equitable lens we can look at how to reframe adultism.

**KAHLIB BARTON:** Like many –isms or systemic oppressions, adultism is learned very early in life and though it is all around, it is invisible until it is pointed out. The learned ideas and behaviors of adultism come with harmful effects, including creating and perpetuating divisive power imbalances in collaboration between young people and adult partners. Some common

ideas that are rooted in adultism and some suggestions for potentially reframing can be things as simple as whenever you see a young person smoking a cigarette, telling them that it's bad for them and that they need to quit. They probably already know, or they've heard or seen a lot of the messaging, commercials, billboards, or whatever that says that smoking is bad for them, not to mention it's actually on the pack of cigarettes as well. And so that within itself is an adultist thing, it's not to say that you shouldn't work with them, quitting tobacco, quitting smoking cigarettes, but there's another way to approach it. As opposed to saying, "Hey, that's bad for you, you need to quit," maybe ask them what are the reasons for them smoking? What are the reasons why they feel like smoking is important for them, and ask them if they have ever tried to quit, if that's something that they desire. And if they need any support to be able on their smoking use.

Another example of how adultism commonly shows up is whenever a young person walks into the space. And they are feeling the blues that day, you know, someone who is typically very upbeat and chipper. And you notice on this specific day that they're not as chipper as they usually are. And you walk up to them and say, "I know something is wrong, let's talk about it." For one, it's assuming that they are feeling upset when they could just be making a face, or something like that. But if it is in fact that they're feeling upset, it's not allowing them the space to be able to feel. What is a better practice is starting up the relationship with the young adult by having a space for them that they can feel, that they can meditate, that they can be, and letting them know when your office hours are when they are welcome to come in at any time to talk about anything. So that if you build up a rapport with that young person, they should feel comfortable enough to come to you without you having to step to them, about whatever the issue is that they may or may not be experiencing. So if you set up that type of relationship very early and you allow them to have the space to be able to feel, then whenever they feel like they need to tap into your support, they will do just that.

Again, this is all about identifying and reframing adultism, and it's things that we do very commonly that we may not recognize. In the future, if we would just take a beat, you know, and think about the way we approach that, think about the questions that we ask, then we allow the young adult to be able to take back the power that they need. Additionally, I want to point out that a lot of young people don't necessarily know how to call out or how adultism shows up, particularly because, going back to 4 I's of oppression, those ideas will become internalized. In my experience there have been some youth who I have worked with or encountered, you know, who have a lot of adultist perspectives. They think that, you know, these are the way things are, this is how it's supposed to be, that person is not typically ready for this because of this, and those conversations are very valid. But the reality of it is that much of it is the idea of adultism that shows up in our institutions, that then becomes interpersonal, that then becomes internalized. So it's important that we don't only reframe and work to identify adultism within our own self, but that whenever we see a young adult partner that we're working with, and they are wanting us to take the lead or wanting us to make decisions for them, we need to let them know that that is their power, they have the right to make the decisions for themselves.

**DEE BALLIET:** All right, so input and feedback from youth and young adults. So first, set youth and young adult leaders up for success. Before asking for input or feedback, it's essential to collaborate on tools and training. So consider creating a list of acronyms for local, state, and federal agencies, including their names in the work that they do as well. Create a list of systems,

terms, and definitions as well as organizational programs and purposes. So for instance, describing the Transitional Living Program, describing the Rapid Re-Housing Program,

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explaining the Housing First theory. So I think in practice how that works for us at the True Colors Fund, specifically in the YHDP communities, is that Kahlib and I provide Youth Homelessness System 101 training to young people. So we're going to come and tell young people, you know, "Hey, we want you guys to be as empowered as you can be as part of the Youth Action Board, we want you guys to participate as equal partners," the burden of leadership training also falls on us, to make certain that we set them up for success. That was a tool that we were able to utilize in letting young people on a more broad level know what the systems look like, also kind of delving into national, state, and local levels. Also giving an acronym soup dictionary to everyone, so young people were able to understand acronyms or just kind of refer to throughout a presentation, but also keeping the language in training tools able for anyone to understand. So you shouldn't have to navigate a presentation and not understand half of it until the end, when the Q&A session comes. Especially when we're talking about youth and young adult partners who may have little-to-no understanding of how systems work outside of how they've had to navigate systems, if we're going to work on building tools, specifically training tools, to provide for young people, we also have to be conscious of the language that's in those training tools as well.

Secondly, create a collaborative environment for input and feedback. So give various options for youth and young adult leaders to give their input and feedback. Be open to printing and distributing materials for written responses, to emails with attachments, and even to working together on a shared drive or document online, like a Google Doc. Understanding that a lot of the time input and feedback comes in the form of meeting in a boardroom or meeting all at a roundtable, and just kind of like letting everyone sound off for input and feedback. Sometimes that's not always the best way for youth and young adults. Giving kind of a menu of ways for young people to see, to get feedback, or to give their input. So by requesting or soliciting input or feedback from young people, we should be able to make certain that they can maybe do that. They can get feedback online, so maybe they can email back in some of their thoughts or they can go in to like a shared document and just kind of like chime in there as well. But there should be more than one way for youth and young adults to give input and feedback.

And also for some people who may not be as vocal as well, to not have to sit in a very uncomfortable conference room, and just kind of like wait their turn, you know, to kind of say what they need to say. And for that person that may not be that vocal, they may not get anything out of that, and then also we may not get anything out of that young person, because that method doesn't work for them. So we want to be conscious, just kind of like for anyone who's ever had to look into their learning style, or anyone who's ever taught, any of my fellow instructors, if you've ever taught before, think about when you have to identify different learning styles for people. I think the same thing works here as well, particularly in a collaborative environment.

Finally set deadlines. Set clear and realistic deadlines. Be mindful that youth and young adults have personal lives outside of this work, but also work together on accountability by scheduling

milestone dates together. So I think we talk with the National Youth Forum, kind of what Kahlil said, we do have 21 young people on the Forum. We also understand that they all have lives outside of the Youth Forum as well. So when we're discussing deadlines, or kind of like guidelines, for getting something done, obviously we definitely give young people second chances. And then also extending deadlines, as well, has to be a thing sometimes. But that should be collaboration work between adult person and young adult partners, for setting deadlines and accountability.

Uplift the impact of their work. So we constantly talk about feedback loops. Give clear examples of how youth and young adult feedback was influential in the decision or product. Think about the impact that has locally and possibly nationally as well. When we're asking young people to give feedback or give their input, and we set a deadline and we finally got input back from young people, following up with those

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same young people saying, “Hey, you know, you guys gave an idea on this or you gave an idea on that, and this is how we took that idea and used it. This is how we incorporated the suggestions that you gave, or this may be the idea that the Youth Action Board came up with. And this is how we were able to implement that.” But constantly going back, and even if the input and feedback wasn't able to be utilized, in a way that previously we might have hoped for, still going back to the Youth Action Board, just kind of letting them know, “Hey, the input and feedback that we got from you, this is how we did use it or this is how we didn't use it.” However, still having that feedback loop goes back to the initial talking point that we had of building trust with youth and young adult partners.

**KAHLIL BARTON:** The listening session is a tool that we utilized to be able to put together the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project overall. It has also been very effective in implementation across YHDP communities, actually being able to identify what are some of the holes or missing pieces that were happening within the Continuum of Care, within the system, by making sure that they were centering the voices of the folks who were most impacted. And for everyone else, although it may have been brutal at times, or very hurtful, they were in listen-only mode. So it can be kind of, I guess, compared to a focus group. The only thing that is a bit different is focus groups kind of already have a fixed agenda about what they're receiving feedback on. So we have a focus group specifically about the drop-in center, or we have a focus group specifically about the Rapid Re-Housing program, but a listening session allows the youth, or the people who are the participants in the listening session, to lead to conversation about whatever it is they want to talk about.

When facilitating conversations with youth and young adult partners, ideas and suggestions are uplifted in an essential way. But the adult partners in the room are asked to remain completely silent throughout the process and it centers perspective of the young people with lived experience towards several goals. Some tips for doing this successfully are building trust, having an open mind, identifying and reframing adultism, engaging in active listening, and remaining very specific. Some of the goals are to gather the thoughts and opinions from youth and young adults on the importance of their participation in the work to end youth homelessness, to gather their

thoughts and opinions on like positive or negative aspects of the programs in youth homelessness systems, to establish their own goals for mission and vision of the work that they want to do to support their collaboration with adult partners, or to identify some of the tools and trainings that they need to be able to collaborate with adult partners. And it could also be used to select a name or determine internal structure or establish working groups whenever they're forming a youth leadership body. A listening session is very essential in actually gathering information from youth and young adults, but it also can be a very essential tool in actually laying the groundwork for creating a Youth Action Board.

I want to pause right there because we do have Norm from HUD on the line and he has to drop off soon. Norm, do you have a couple of thoughts that you want to share?

**NORM SUCHAR:** Thank you so much. That's an incredible presentation. And thanks for just sort of opening up some space for me to talk about stuff. I do want to thank everyone for participating in the webinar and listening to this incredible information. This is just a fantastic topic, and I have to say that I personally have been on a learning journey around this content and I am still on a learning journey about this. And so I hope you all are soaking it in as well.

I do want to just stress that we are huge believers. We at HUD are huge believers in the importance of young people's voices and participation and collaboration in every stage of the work on youth homelessness. I think, and I'm sure all of you know, we have been deeply engaged in the Youth Homelessness Demonstration process, and one of the things we learned incredibly early is the value of youth expertise and perspective in the process. And that really just coming in as partners worked much better than sort of just, I think it's just more than everyone being at the table, but everyone really truly collaborating and seeing each other as experts. And that has just continued to provide benefits for us. And for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program,

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we have really leaned on both Dee and Kahlib, but also other young people who have been working on this stuff from the Youth Forum and from other places on the specific work and communities. We've selected so far 21 communities to participate in the Youth Demonstration, and all of them have Youth Advisory or Youth Action Boards, and it is very, very clear that those boards are really shaping the response their communities are taking in an incredibly productive and positive way.

We strongly believe that this isn't really just about the Youth Homelessness Demonstration, but this really needs to be a part of all our work, both in the youth homelessness space and in general. So I think one of the things you'll be seeing from us is, how do we take these concepts and apply them more broadly? And how do we, you know, work with people with lived experience and people with helpful perspective and expertise in a much more robust way than we have before?

We know this is all very challenging, and I have certainly have caught myself at times just doing some of the things that you've heard are problematic. And this certainly, again, is a learning

process for me and for other people at HUD, but it is an incredibly uplifting and positive one. So I do want to thank the Youth Forum and Dee and Kahlib and all the other people who have been on this journey with us. I also want to mention that many of you have applied for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration funding and probably have not gotten it. We have had many more applications than we've been able to fund. But we will have another round of funding out soon, in the next month or two, and we will actually be able to fund another 20 or 25 communities, including many more rural ones. So please keep it up and keep participating in and keep doing this work.

So thank you very much. Hope you enjoy the rest of the session and looking forward to working with you all in the future. Thanks.

**KAHLIB BARTON:** Thanks Norm. So I just want to address a question that was specifically brought up about the listening session while I'm still on the slide. Someone asked, what did I mean by "be specific"? Of course we mentioned that listening sessions are more broad, so that the young adult partners are able to lead the conversation, which way they want to go. But the specificity that needs to happen is around whatever the topic is. For example, listening sessions can be used to be able to receive feedback on the homelessness systems the whole, or they can be used to be able to receive feedback on things specifically like education, or they can be used to create a Youth Action Board. So if you are trying to put together a listening session to be able to create a Youth Action Board, be very clear with the young adult partners about what the intentions are behind that. Additionally, if you have any follow up questions that are coming out of what the young adults are discussing during that conversation, then continue the specificity around that.

I think also another major tool that I would utilize whenever doing a listening session is trying to work with young adult partners to be able to facilitate this dialogue. Because oftentimes we allow adult partners to step in on this conversation and it doesn't leave the young adult partners feeling like they can truly open up about their experience. Lastly, it is important that you discuss with the adult partners prior to this actually happening that their services of the young adult partners cannot be, won't be, reprimanded, or punitively acted against, based upon the things that they say in that space. So again, it can be a process that is a little hurtful, or seem a little hurtful, to the adult partners in the room. There can be a lot of "ouches" in the process, but it's important that the services of the young adult partners, specifically if they're still experiencing homelessness, are protected and they remain the same regardless of the process.

And that is not only limited to the services, but the attitudes towards the youth

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and young adults as well. We have had experiences where people have said, "You know, I'm still able to go to this space, but now this person doesn't really respect me. They have an attitude with me, they're making it very difficult for me to exist in the space." So before any listening sessions happen, my highest encouragement is just to work with the adult partners who will be in a listen-only mode, to make sure that they are mature enough to be able to accept whatever it is the young adult partners are going to say.

**DEE BALLIET:** So what are other YAB's doing, you ask? So in the next few slides, Kahlib and I are just going to kind of talk about some successes and also some challenges that YABs have had, that we've had the ability to work with. So if we can get the next slide here. So some successes, the first one here, YAB members being paid at least \$15.00 an hour. Where we came up with 15 bucks is probably your first question. So that's kind of like the conversation on livable wages. And so if we're going to invite young people, obviously, we also need to pay young people, as well, for their time and their expertise. And we figured that to be a living wage of \$15.00 an hour, also it's understandable that may not be feasible in every area. And if it's not feasible in certain areas, like we've seen in some rural communities, looking up what the living wages in your area and adjusting that pay rate to that wage for youth and young adult partners. Also understanding as well, and I know some people kind of get a little bit of a shock factor when they see 15 bucks an hour, but also understanding, it's not as though we are employing young people to work full time. They're not working 40 hours a week. So the impact there isn't as great as it seems when we first look at that 15 bucks an hour. But like I said, if that's not feasible, look at the living wage in your area and then adjust accordingly.

Full integration within the CoC. So YAB members holding at least two voting seats. It's not enough, just have people on a Youth Action Board, but also inviting two people from the Youth Action Board to have voting seat on the CoC. Or at least in some capacity, be able to have decision-making power equal to everyone else that sits on the board. And so our idea is that there is two, and focusing on why there is two. One, because it can be a little overwhelming for just one person to kind of take on that responsibility and those tasks by themselves. And so we always like to feel supported. Obviously, most young people, most young adults want to feel supported as well, especially when it can be a bit uncomfortable. So it's best to have two young people together. And so that's why we have two as well. Also, just kind of for purposes of having just one person there that also maybe just kind of showy. We want to make sure we have two people there just to make that a bit more of a fair balance.

Capacity building and education. YAB members are being equipped with the proper knowledge in order to make informed decisions. Kind of like I mentioned previously, every community Kahlib and I are working in we provide Youth Homeless Systems 101 training, we provide Youth Collaboration Toolkit training, which is what this webinar is, as well as giving youth and young adults, as well as adult providers, access to other resources that we have, specifically here at the True Colors Fund, like the inclusion toolkit as well. But making certain that young people are equipped with the correct training, the proper training that they need to be able to make informed decisions and also participate in conversations with adult partners, some or many who may have been doing this work for years and years. And young people who are just kind of now learning concepts or ideas, so making certain that they can understand that. Finally, the CoC governance complements the structure of the YAB and pushes towards the YAB's mission and vision. So understanding, once your YAB has come up with your mission and vision statement, making certain that the CoC governance complements that. So it shouldn't just be lived through the young people of the Youth Action Board, but it should also be reflected

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throughout the entire CoC, so that it's truly a collaboration there.

**KAHLIB BARTON:** Some of the challenges that we have experienced are things like rural areas, specifically around location challenges and access to Internet. So some of the things that we've seen as like suggested solutions for that are CoCs actually working with any funders to be able to see if they can work in a budget to be able to purchase YAB members like little MiFi's or WiFi's, those like mobile WiFi boxes that they can actually take with them. Also, we've also seen folks being able to raise money to be able to see if they can get their YAB members laptops, and things like that, to work around that. And then meeting remotely, which has been very, very helpful for folks who aren't able to actually see each other face-to-face with, especially in those places that have like Balance of State [CoCs].

I think that another solution that we've seen is the chapter, the chapter version. So for example, in places they have like a large areas that they're spanning over in this multiple county area, we have seen YABs that have like specific chapters in their regional chapters. So it's not just one county per chapter, but you have like a region of folks who come to this specific meeting and then maybe like once a month or once a quarter, they'll have a regional meeting where they collectively bring everyone together. Of course, in that process you have to make sure the YAB members have transportation for those specific meetings, if they're spending the night in that specific space, they have to have hotel arrangements, that also encompasses all incidentals being taken care of. Or if there is an overnight stay there also has to be a per diem.

And just so everyone is clear, we do have a document that's like a travel document which is just a standard of what you should expect whenever you're traveling with young adult partners. And so that can be shared as well. But I think that it would be helpful just to make sure that whenever you're traveling with youth and young adult partners, that that it covered.

Anyways, in rural areas we've been able to work through these issues in a multitude of ways. Dee mentioned earlier using Google Drive to be able to use feedback that has been very helpful, specifically to National Youth Forum, because we're all across the nation. And so whenever we are working through our different initiatives, we can all contribute that way right there.

The YAB that is representative of the community being served is oftentimes a challenge. What we see is that YABs oftentimes have membership of the like the "star pupils." So that means the person who may not necessarily be like completely experiencing homelessness at the time, or chronically experiencing homelessness, if they are they are like housed in a shelter or something, and they are the person who always comes around, always consistent, always on time, they speak articulately. And you know the people see them as just our people. And so that is just one specific type of person who may be coming through your Continuum of Care. It does not necessarily represent every single one of them.

So specifically when you're talking about issues of race, queer-identified individuals being represented, people with different abilities, meaning that they're not all the same, they don't all have the same abilities, people who have different experiences with maybe drug use or maybe a sex partner, things like that. All those people should be represented if they are people who you

actually work with your community. What we typically see is usually predominately white members. And in most cases, the YAB directly reflects the CoC leadership. Where the CoC leadership, if they have a lot of white folks, then the YAB oftentimes has lot of white folks. So whatever your CoC is representative of, you should be focusing on making sure that there are members from each organization that are representative of the community that you're serving as well.

Laying on the governance structure and mission and vision has been very difficult for communities, but something that we have used to be able to work through that are tools like the listening session. Also, True Colors has like a specific training that we can go through with Youth Action Board members that will be very helpful in kind of helping them land on what their collective mission and vision is going to be. And then working through calling out adultism them when it shows up. Again YAB members or youth and adult partners oftentimes begin to internalize adultism, so it becomes difficult for them to call it out. If anyone recognizes exactly what it is, now that we understand what the definition is, then you have to work with your youth and young adult partners to be about identify that. And work with them in ways that they're going to be supported whenever they're calling out

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their adult partners.

**DEE BALLIET:** So some suggestions out of success and challenges. Listen to your YAB, they're the experts of their own experience. So we just want to reiterate that, making certain that any value that the young people bring, that we're listening to that, that we're uplifting that, that we're also empowering young people as well to be a part of the process.

Don't attempt to have a governance structure, mission, and vision in place for the YAB. It's never a good idea to come to a group of young people and say, "Hey, we want to create this Youth Action Board. Here's a governance structure, we're deciding for you. Here's a mission and vision we think you guys should go with." As youth collaboration technical assistance providers, we stay away from that as much as possible. We're there to assist people making certain they understand what options they have available and also understanding how to blueprint governance structure, mission, and vision. But never necessarily do we kind of implement a governance structure for the young people.

And so, in some YHDP communities, some young people kind of say, "Okay, so what should our governance structure look like?" And we just kind of have a few options of how they could look. Obviously a lot of the times we use the National Youth Forum's governance structure, just because that that was created by and built by us and that works well. So we kind of give that out, but we also kind of give out other ideas for what governance structure can look like as well. Obviously having to be creative in rural areas where there are multiple counties that span across a large, vast area. So oftentimes that governance structure may look a little bit more loose as opposed to young people that can meet in higher frequency and don't have the same barriers. That structure may have to look a bit more organized in mission and vision. So there should be someone available always to kind of help young people kind of flesh out what mission and vision

are, the differences between those two, what those two could look like, never really giving what that should look like or what that is going to look like. Letting young people decide that for themselves.

Allowing Youth Action Board members to decide what the work will look like for themselves. So allowing young people to say, you know, “This is what I'm able to do. This is what I have the capacity to do. And this is how we want for this collaboration to look like.” However, that should be self-determined from the young people that we're asking to collaborate with us. And we shouldn't necessarily say, “Hey, a young person, we're asking you to collaborate with us and this is what this work relationship is going to look like,” leaving that up to the young people.

Focus on demographics. If your recruitment yields one type of person as the majority, keep recruiting. Kind of like what Kahlil just mentioned, not always just kind of having like the star young person always be the focus of recruitment, but making certain that every young person that we say comes into our services that we try to make our Youth Action Board look as diverse and inclusive as the young people that we know we're serving.

Be transparent early and often. So being transparent about the entire process, what it is to be a part of the Youth Action Board, any decision-making that's coming up that young people should be a part of or need to be a part of, definitely needs to be a conversation. So there should definitely always be open communication, and going back there should always be a feedback loop between partners as well, the adult partners and young adult partners. That just keeps transparency. And if there's anything that comes up that would affect how young people work in collaboration, there's definitely communication about that as much as possible so that it doesn't turn into one of those things where young people feel like the only time that they're being asked for input or feedback is on something high level and that they never kind of get in the weeds of anything. And so sometimes that looks like young people never being a part of the process until nearly the end, just to kind of get young people to give feedback on an idea or on a project. And that takes us back to a not equitable place at all, that kind of takes us back to showy engagement. So if we're going to have meaningful and authentic youth collaboration, transparency is a key portion of that.

**KAHLIL BARTON:** So we're rounding out the end of our webinar and don't worry, we have a few more resources for you to tap into. So much of the information that we talked

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about throughout this presentation is part of a Youth Collaboration Toolkit. This toolkit can be downloaded on the True Colors Fund website, but you can always just go to Google and type in “Youth Collaboration Toolkit,” and it will send all the information to you. It will allow you to download a PDF. It unfortunately doesn't go into the details about like how to put together a YAB, but it does give a lot of the philosophy specifically about what you need to consider whenever you're trying to put those together. Forthcoming, True Colors Fund is trying to work on and put together a youth collaboration course. That's going to be accessible on our own online learning platform, which we'll talk about in just a moment. So that should be out very soon. And that's something that you can actually send to your coworkers, your colleagues, your

administrators, if they need it, to be able to actually, interactively go through this information that we went through today. It's very cool, it has quizzes at the end, and a set of videos and things like that. So look out for that, the Youth Collaboration Toolkit is always available for download.

**DEE BALLIET:** And then we have the True Inclusion Directory. So it's a database of organizations that provide services to LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness. You can go to the directory, it's also on the True Colors Fund website, or you can just Google "True Inclusion Directory." And it gives a state-by-state, city-by-city actually, list of organizations that provide services simply to, or highly inclusive of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness. So the True Inclusion Directory is also available. And we kind of like talked about messaging, having a directory available for young people to be able to access, or letting people know that there is a directory that they can access, may also be like good messaging to have at your organization or a space where youth and young adults frequent, like a drop-in center even.

**KAHLIB BARTON:** And then we have the State Index on Homelessness. This goes state-by-state, giving each state a score based on a set of criteria, including having an Interagency Council on Homelessness in your state, including having SOGI [Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity] protections within your policies and laws. And so unfortunately no state in this past round actually got above a D, but fortunately you all have the chance for improvement. So if you just take a look on there, you are able to see your state and what other states are doing. And if you think that there is something that is currently not in place or not actually spelled out on this list that actually exists in your state, just reach out to let us know, and we will work hard to update it after we verify. Otherwise, as practitioners of this work, you can begin to maybe work with your YAB members to see if they can work to help implement, if your state doesn't have an Interagency Council on Homelessness, if they don't have any SOGI protections in place. Then we can work with those folks to be able to make sure that those things are something that happens in the future, if that is work they are attracted to doing.

**DEE BALLIET:** And then we have the Learning Community, the True Colors Learning Community. And this is where we have our courses. We have the inclusion course in there, which all courses in the Learning Community are short videos, very interactive, educational videos about LGBTQ homelessness, that really allows learners or users to kind of learn at their own pace. But also on topics, of inclusion, like Kahlib said, soon we'll have a course on the toolkit that we're providing you, will soon be a course as well. So I encourage you, if you haven't already registered for it at [truecolorsfund.org](http://truecolorsfund.org), and then go right into the True Colors Fund Learning Community, There's already the True Inclusion course in there, so if you haven't seen that content, or if you haven't taken that course already, this would be a great time to do so, or maybe over the weekend. But all of our trainings that we provide are also stored in the Learning Community.

**KAHLIB BARTON:** All right, so at this time, we're going to open it up for questions and answers. I'm just going to move forward to the slide with mine and Dee's email addresses on it. That way, if anyone needs the information, they can take it.

**TOM HASKIN:** Dee and Kahlib, thank you so much. Just really appreciate everything you've shared with us today. And I know you guys need a second to probably look through some of

those questions, and we've been kind of collecting them as you've been typing them in. So thank you to everyone who has submitted questions so far, or has kind of been dialoguing back and forth with other folks on the call. As a reminder,

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if you want to submit a question, please select “All Participants” rather than “All Attendees,” but select “All Participants” to submit the question. Kahlib and Dee, there have been some questions kind of revolving around both pay for young people and also kind of like incentives to build kind of like trust and collaboration to start to involve and engage young people in this work. Obviously pay is not the only way to do that. We've had folks talk about things like WiFi and field trips, but first, could you talk a little bit about how paying for youth collaboration has worked? What the kind of rates are? Do rates vary for different types of work? How has this played out in communities?

**DEE BALLIET:** This is Dee. So I will just kind of broadly tackle this, and if I missed something, Kahlib, feel free to chime in. So pay, how pay has looked. And I'll speak from YHDP communities that I've worked in so far, and then also consulting I've done with other communities that are building YABs. The idea of \$15.00 an hour was like very front and foremost. That's also what we advocated for on the Forum as well, so that's kind of like where we are as far as like our messaging around pay.

But more specifically, kind of as I've mentioned, that can look a little bit different based off of funding that's available for young people. But whatever that is, that should be the livable wage in your area. And then as far as how that pay looks like, the best way to do that is just kind of like allow young people to get paid per hour, especially if they're doing a bit of work for the month that's going to result in like nine to 12 hours' worth of work. As opposed to just kind of giving like a \$25.00 lunch for young people that show up and participate.

Also like as far as how that can be handled, communities have gotten very creative as far as like what resources they're available to access. So I know we have a community that after the end of each meeting where young people are at, that there's petty cash, so young people can just get paid for that day before they leave that night. I know for some other communities, it just kind of like works for them for young people to log their hours, submit an invoice, and then get a check. So if that can be done in a way that's easy for young people to be able to complete that process and checks can be returned to those young people in small amount of turnaround time, that works and some people prefer that. Also, like Visa gift cards or MasterCard gift cards work, that actually have like a monetary value on there. That young person can also get like a pin for ATM access as well, that works.

The non-monetary value payments, that's probably kind of like a, “Mhm, probably not.” Let's kind of get past that, because it's not a good idea to think that we can just kind of give like, you know, a Target gift card to someone for their work and their expertise. So we kind of want to move past that. But those are just kind of what our quick tenets on payment structure and how that looks in some communities that I've worked in so far, to tackle that portion of the question.

**KAHLIB BARTON:** And in order to operationalize that, specifically, the thing that can be done whenever you write any specific grant, is that you can write it in there. Do the math, figure out how many hours per week that your YAB members are comfortable working. And then do the math, specifically, like for example, if it's three hours a week, \$15.00 an hour, do the math and cap your number. And say, "Okay, we can really do about 20 YAB members. We could get to 20." That is major, that's a very big deal. If you're comfortable with that, then you say, "Okay, this is what we're going to move forward with." And then for any grant that you write, any funds that you're working with, you let them know that a part of this is that we need to pay the young people. They are independent contractors as practitioners of this work. They're my partners, they're my colleagues. And so in order for me support this work, I'm going to need them to support me in the process. And just like for any other grant, you can write in for independent contractors to do technical assistance or whatever else, you can write for that same thing for YAB members as they continue to support your efforts.

**TOM HASKIN:** Kahlib, thanks, thanks so much to you and Dee. I think the nuts and bolts of how like, what it really means to fully compensate people for their time, their work, and their expertise, they're actually like really important when we're thinking about how are we taking this concept and putting it to practice. There also have been some questions like,

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you know, beyond payment and beyond that kind of compensation, just how do you bring young people into this work? How do you build the relationships that lead to the sort of authentic youth collaboration we've talked about all day? How do you, how should a community go about starting that journey, if it's not something that's kind of part and parcel of a community's work at the moment?

**KAHLIB BARTON:** Sure, so I would say, and definitely, Dee, hop in whenever, so I would say that if you haven't been a community that has been approaching working with young people with the philosophy of collaboration, then that's probably where you need to start, internally. Saying that, "Okay, what are some things that we can do in the office that would completely flip this idea on its head, how we work with them?" So if you have been approaching youth and young adults in your offices and you're telling them exactly, you know, what's best for them, and they come in and they're like, "I'm having this problem," and you're like "Okay, this is what you need," and sending them directly there, then that's already going against the philosophy of youth collaboration. If you want to do it the right way with the philosophy of youth collaboration, then what you would do is you have a conversation with them about where they are, and ask them where they want to be, and ask them which ways in which you can support them to get there.

Now if your question is more so about the issue of recruitment, my offer is that if you are already working in a youth-serving organization, then that's already, you know, half the battle. At a youth-serving organization, you have access to young people, so you just have to make sure you make clear to them what is going to happen, and then make sure that they have ownership of the space. So find that one person, find your star pupil because some star pupils are helpful and necessary, right, find that star pupil and have them actually lead the recruitment efforts that creates a messaging that's in the youth's and young adults' language. That's not something that's

very heavy with jargon, it's not very lofty. It's very down to earth, something that they can relate to, something they can get behind, and something they feel like they can support. And so my suggestion is that if the recruitment is the problem, if recruitment is your hope, we have to find those star pupils, rely on them to lead the recruitment effort and pay them to do that.

**DEE BALLIET:** Yeah, I think I'll just echo that as well. Also, and I know this may be more for rural communities, because I know in the lot of rural communities, we can struggle a bit with recruitment. And I think the tenets are the same for the things that Kahlib kind of just mentioned, still kind of paying young people to kind of carry out that recruitment, whether it looks like through word of mouth, through young people just kind of recruiting based off of the spaces they only have access to, but making certain that a young person is compensated for the work that they're doing, because they're really just kind of doing outreach to get young people in as a part of the process. So making certain that we're appreciating them for that, but also paying them for their time, that they're doing that as well. And then allow new young people that come in to be a part of the process, kind of the space to work their way in, or even to like see if this is for them. If it's not, also allowing space there for young people to kind of opt out. I know in rural areas there, we've kind of had great successes with this, and still some challenges there. But recruitment early on isn't a foreign challenge, especially in rural areas as well. So for those that do live in rural areas that may be struggling with kind of like recruiting young people, I just kind of wanted to point out that we've had success having a young person be paid to kind of work their network and bring young people into the process, and that's worked well in some of those spaces.

**TOM HASKIN:** Thank you both. I just want to say one more thing on the subject of payment before we move on to some of the other questions we've seen in the chat. On Tuesday we had some questions about, you know, where this money can come from, and I just think it's important to note for Continuum of Care folks on the call, to recognize that your CoC planning dollars can pay for youth collaboration. It's a planning expense to have people's lived experience, whether they're kind of youth, young adults, or older adults to have them at the table. That's a planning expense. And if you need like kind of like some written guidance on that, there's actually a standard written response you can get from the HUD AAQ, the Ask a Question feature. So if you want to submit an AAQ about that, you'll get that standard response back. Just something that folks had questions about last time, and figured it was worthwhile to mention today.

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We've had some questions around kind of supporting young people. We had one question that was, how to engage people, who are still young people, who are still in a complete crisis mode? We've had other questions around supporting young people who may seem, or appear, to be more focused on others than themselves. And I'm curious, Kahlib and Dee, what your thoughts are with engaging and really supporting young people who have been in crisis, who may still be in crisis, to do this work, and to do it well, and feel supported just as anybody else who might be on this call or in our line of work needs to be, to do this work well.

**DEE BALLIET:** Yeah, so I think the sensitivity that we have, specifically to youth and young adults who are eager to participate, or want to participate, who are really great at sharing their

expertise, but may be in crisis. So one thing that I hadn't thought of that, a young person from a YAB actually enlightened me, kind of gave me some enlightenment to, was saying, you know, "As we're recruiting people, what happens if, you know, we get a young person who may currently be experiencing housing instability, or actually experiencing homelessness? What is the uncomfortability that we might have to anticipate for that young person being at a table with a service provider, at which they're navigating services at, and may feel some type of discontent to?"

And so I just kind of wanted to highlight that story because for me, that was the first time that I ever actually conceptualized that. Like, "Man, we may be inviting a young person to the table, and in a room with a director or someone in management at an organization where they may be receiving services from, and may feel some type of discomfort with." And one, what does that look like? And two, what can we do to support that? And so we had a very intentional conversation with adult partners in saying, "You know, of course, there may be some youth or young adults who are absolutely perfect for the Youth Action Board and want to participate, who may be experiencing crisis." So what do we do to, you know, not necessarily just say like, "Oh, since you're part of the YAB then we're just going to kind of like prioritize you in whatever organization you're already working with organization already working with," or kind of give anyone any kind of pull that kind of pushes outside of the boundaries of fairness. But having a person available, specifically, a young person and an adult partner available, to discuss with that young person, specifically whatever obstacles or barriers they may be experiencing due to the crisis that they're currently going through. How can we best be supportive of that young person? What services can we immediately provide to that young person, to make sure their needs are being met, for the day or for the week?

And so, that has worked out great. Actually, I know there's been about three or four young people that have actually just kind of like used that avenue to say like, "Hey, I definitely want to participate. I am currently experiencing homelessness, so I may not be able to be on every phone call or I may not be able to meet any deadlines always. I may have, you know, trouble accessing Internet for documents and things like that." And so we had to be understanding that that young person still wanted to show up, and as they could, they would. But also understanding too, that young person was vulnerable and brave enough to say, "I'm currently experiencing crisis, but I do want to participate. And so, you know, kind of like, let me know what my ability or what capability I have to still participate in the process, even undergoing the circumstances that I am."

And so having someone, a young adult partner and an adult partner, both kind of be there, and to talk through that, and also walk through that with that young person to make certain that the responsibilities they have with the Youth Action Board, they can meet as much as possible. So kind of like keeping them pretty dignified in that work, but also disconnecting from that responsibility and allowing a conversation to be had for that young person with whatever crisis they may be experiencing, whether they're connected to services or not, opening up to have that conversation. And then also having someone that actually works in a system, be available to try to help navigate that person, if they don't have any navigation. Or if they already are navigating a system, supporting that young person through that process, whatever that may look like.

**KAHLIB BARTON:** Thank you, that was good. I would also add, particularly for the youth and the young adults who feel like they should help others before they help themselves, that that is like

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a human issue in my eyes. I think we have a lot of people, in general, not young, not old, specifically, but all, who have the habit of being saviors and wanting to help others before they help themselves. So I think that it's something that is like an individual issue in that you have to work with that young person to make sure that they are taking care of themselves. And that's something that you can institute as a wide rule of thumb, for always. Remember that self-care and taking care of yourself is paramount in that group, specifically, and you can make it that way and make sure that everyone is supporting each other and taking care of themselves. And I think that can potentially alleviate some of that responsibility that young adult feels to kind of look after others if everyone takes care of themselves. So I think that's something that's a very human issue that a lot of people experience, especially service providers. We experience it more than anybody. But I think that is something that can be worked through if you just go through with a serious self-care undertone with everything that you do in the work to do.

**TOM HASKIN:** Thank you, Kahlib and Dee. I think in the vein of really being responsive, and flexible, and accommodating to a lot of different circumstances and experiences that people are going through and have in their lives, we've kind of talked about young people oftentimes as being between the ages of 18 and 24 or 18 and 25 in this work, but sometimes engaging with young people, and collaborating with young people means working with people under the age of 18. What have you learned about what collaboration with minors might look like? What have communities learned about this? And what are some of the challenges?

**KAHLIB BARTON:** This is something that we're currently working through, so I definitely have never claimed to have all the answers. So we are completely outside working with people who are under the age of 18 on a day-to-day basis. As a matter of fact, none of the members of the National Youth Forum are under the age of 21. And so that makes it even more difficult for us to be able to answer the question.

Some of the things that we have been able to kind of implement as we go state-to-state working with YHDP communities though, is just focusing on making sure that everyone's voice is heard, respecting them similarly as we do to everyone else. Oftentimes, those younger adults are not as confident in speaking up about what they want. And other times they are. And so in my experience, if you treat them with the same respect that you do everyone else, and you allow them the space to speak up, then it can work. But there does have to be a little bit more attention paid to, specifically, like emotions and like to the way they're being treated in the space. So just being conscious of that and making sure that they feel supported, because their voices are necessary.

And if you have a large group of people who are under the age of 18, that's an opportunity to actually start a cohort of individuals who can speak for issues that affect people experiencing homelessness under the age of 18. And that's something that we have never actually seen, so I

encourage you to share that information if you're successful in that, because it's something that we're still kind of working out.

**TOM HASKIN:** Thanks. Dee, did you want to go ahead?

**DEE BALLIET:** I think the only thing I would in though, is in working with some youth specifically like, 14- to 17-year-olds, I know something that's necessary, is specifically like scheduling, and also how we're asking them to participate. Understanding that 14- to 17-year-olds may be navigating like high school, for instance. And so understanding kind of like the live that they have there, and then also that we're still asking them to like navigate through school, possibly through housing instability. So asking them to kind of like participate, so just kind of like keeping like a special eye on youth participants especially.

And then also like as far as scheduling, and the ask that we then have for them as well, I know like in most rural communities that have 14- to 17-year-olds that are on the Youth Action boards, like Saturdays are a thing. So we had to adapt to that, to know that meeting with that age group is going to have to be done like on a Saturday, right. But also understanding like during the week, we may have little to no participation from that portion from that age group, and so being creative as to how we can still engage that age group as part of the

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whole YAB, and not necessarily have to single them out or create like a youth and a young adult and kind of keep those spaces separately. Obviously, as we kind of learn more, like Kahlil said, we will be able to kind of push more information out. But for now, that's had to look like us just being very creative in meeting youth, specifically that under age-18 group right where they're at. And allowing multiple opportunities or multiple avenues for that age group to participate.

**TOM HASKIN:** Great. I'm scrolling through the questions that folks have submitted and there was a specific one when you two were talking about adultism and how that impacts this work, where a person asks, "Could you talk a little bit about the kind of differences and similarities between what you might call paternalism and adultism?" What the overlap is there, if you see those as different things?

**KAHLIL BARTON:** Sure. They're very similar, actually, the only difference that I would say is that paternalism is specifically talking about a power dynamic, whenever you have someone who is like a subordinate. And specifically in this work that we're doing, we shouldn't see youth and young adult partners as subordinate, which is probably the reason why we chose the word adultism as opposed to paternalism. But it can be seen as the same thing, because paternalism happens with the assumption that the decision of the person who is higher up, is doing this decision in the subordinate's best interest. So that's similar to adultism because adultism usually is like, "Oh, you don't need to be doing that. I know what's best for you because I've been there." So they share a lot of similarities. The only difference is that specifically in the power dynamic between paternalism and adultism, is an assumed power dynamic because of age.

**TOM HASKIN:** Great, I think we've basically gone through the questions that were explicitly asked in the chat here today. But I want to give Dee, you and Kahlib, just an opportunity if you want to say any final remarks. I know you've got this slide up here with your contact information, True Colors Fund information. During the webinar today I posted the four different links to the four resources that were mentioned in the slides, the four links to the pages on the True Colors Fund website. Additionally, these slides will be made available on the HUD exchange by the end of November and I'm going to post the link into the chat where the slides and the presentation recording will be available, hopefully in the next two weeks. But Dee and Kahlib, any kind of like closing thoughts from the Q&A, from these two webinars, that you'd like to add?

**DEE BALLIET:** I don't have anything specifically to add. I would kind of like say thanks again to all the participants who joined the webinar. We hope this was helpful, we hope the other resources you'll utilize at some point at the True Colors Fund as well, and a final good luck for those that will be applying for the next round of YHDP.

**KAHLIB BARTON:** I echo that.

**TOM HASKIN:** Alright, well thank you all so much. Hope you got a lot out of this, and that it's kind of building excitement to have these conversations in your community around youth collaboration and partnering with young people as part of this work. Thank you so much for your participation, your questions, for hanging with us. Have a great rest of your day, have a great Thanksgiving next week and most of all, thank you to Kahlib and Dee, and also to Norm for joining this call today. Really appreciate it, take care everyone.

**[1:34:12]**