

100-DAY CHALLENGE CASE STUDIES

HENNEPIN COUNTY, MN: EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING SYSTEMS INTEGRATION

In addition to setting a housing goal for their 100-Day Challenge, Hennepin also set a goal that 75% of housed youth would be employed. This unique focus around employment and housing systems integration pushed the community to think about the flow of youth into the homeless response system and into sustainable situations.

HOW HENNEPIN COUNTY MADE IT HAPPEN

The Hennepin County 100-Day Team established from the beginning that addressing the inter-related housing and employment needs of youth experiencing homelessness would be a primary goal of the Challenge. The Team includes strong representation from the employment system, including the City of Minneapolis Employment & Training and local employment and training agencies. Additionally, Hennepin County's 100-Day Challenge sponsors include the CoC, a youth services provider, and an employment coordinator, reflecting Hennepin's commitment to employment and housing systems integration at all levels.

Throughout the 100-Day Challenge, system leaders came together to align their housing and employment systems in completely new ways. The City of Minneapolis prioritized employment vacancies for youth experiencing homelessness through December 2017, and Hennepin County piloted the co-location of employment specialists on-site at housing provider locations. Hennepin County also began the integration of employment and income into the local Coordinated Entry process.

New policies, procedures, and tools were created to sustain these systems level changes. Employment system partners remain at the table as Hennepin continues its work to prevent and end youth homelessness.

Key Takeaways:

- Housing and employment resources are both vital for helping youth exit homelessness. Communities should take inventory of what resources exist and how they are accessed to support systems integration efforts.
- Coordination between the housing and employment systems can improve access and maximize utilization of these different resources for youth. This can include integrating employment and income resources into Coordinated Entry, diversion and prevention processes locally.
- Housing and employment systems integration requires buy-in from multiple levels, including direct services staff, experienced staff, managers, and youth with lived experience.
- Systems integration requires space and time for conversations across the table about existing work and future goals, with the purpose of identifying a shared goal for moving forward.
- Include the larger community in efforts to house and employ youth.

LESSONS LEARNED

1) Ensure People from All Levels of the Housing and Employment Systems are Involved

Hennepin County found that success in housing and employment systems integration requires the involvement of staff from all levels and backgrounds, including direct service staff, managers, experienced staff and youth with lived experience. The Hennepin County 100-Day Challenge Team intentionally sought out the participation of leaders among youth employment providers in order to build new relationships around the goals of the 100-Day Challenge. The diverse representation of staff and leaders in the 100-Day Challenge helped ensure that all perspectives and relationships regarding housing and employment for youth were understood and heard.

2) Integrate Employment into the Coordinated Entry Process

A primary goal for Hennepin County's 100-Day Challenge was to improve access to employment services for youth experiencing homelessness. As a result, the 100-Day Challenge renewed interest in adding employment and income resources to Hennepin County's Coordinated Entry, diversion and prevention system to provide more direct access to employment services and support to youth experiencing homelessness. The Hennepin County case conferencing committee meets bi-weekly and has brought housing coordinators and employment providers to the table to collaboratively connect youth to available housing and employment resources to meet their needs. An Employment-Education Committee and Charter have been developed to guide Coordinated Entry, diversion and prevention employment integration efforts moving forward.

3) Take Inventory of Available Housing and Employment Resources in Your Community

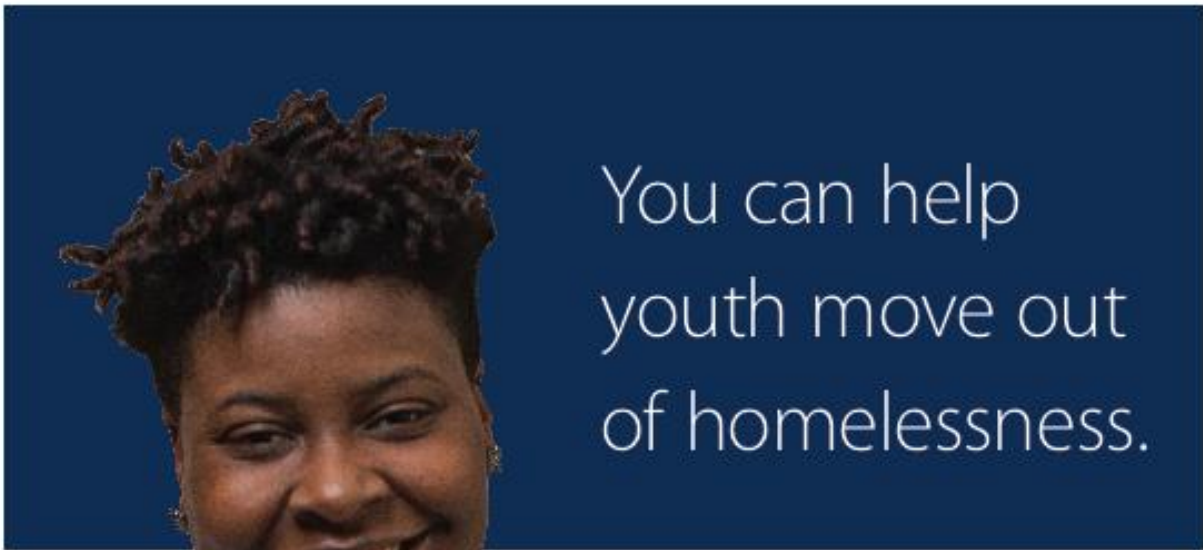
Hennepin County found that in order to effectively coordinate between the housing and employment systems, it is important to understand what resources exist in the community and how they are currently being utilized. In taking inventory of employment and housing resources, Hennepin County considered what tracks exist for youth to access housing and employment services, how eligibility for different resources are determined, and what data needed to be collected to track progress towards the County's housing and employment goals. Hennepin County found that some employment resources for youth had been underutilized. The 100-Day Team worked to increase knowledge of these employment resources throughout the community, including among housing providers and youth, and to maximize their utilization by integrating these resources into the Coordinated Entry process.

4) Gain Buy-In by Providing Time and Space for Cross-Systems Conversations

Hennepin County found that providing time and space for representatives from across systems to have broad conversations about their existing work and future goals helped to create buy-in to support the County's housing and employment systems integration efforts. By bringing people together across the table and having conversations, the 100-Day Team was able to establish a shared goal with a timeframe that spoke to the existing work and goals of both the housing and employment systems. Additionally, the 100-Day Team emphasized the importance of keeping the conversation going and providing space in future meetings for updates.

5) Establish Housing and Employment as Part of a Community-Wide Response to Youth Homelessness

The Hennepin 100-Day Challenge Team developed and distributed flyers to recruit employers and property owners to help employ and house youth ages 16 to 24 experiencing homelessness. This effort helped push the County's systems integration efforts beyond the 100-Day Challenge Team, demonstrating that it takes a community-wide response to support youth in their transition to housing and employment.



You can help
youth move out
of homelessness.

We are recruiting employers
and property owners who can
help employ and house youth
ages 16 to 24.

Become a champion for youth.

It takes a community-wide response to end homelessness. This work is a continuation of Hennepin County's 100-day Challenge on Youth Homelessness.

Our team will provide support to help youth in their transition to housing and employment.



Learn how you can help.

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www.hennepin.us/100-day-challenge



@100daysHennepin