



100-DAY CHALLENGE CASE STUDIES

HORRY COUNTY, SC: OUTREACH AND IDENTIFICATION OF YOUTH

During the 100-Day Challenge, Horry County improved outreach and identification of youth experiencing homelessness through new partnerships and innovative new strategies, including the development of a postcard-based outreach and engagement option including a text-to-access option to connect youth quickly to housing and services.

HOW HORRY COUNTY MADE IT HAPPEN

Horry County recognized that some youth experiencing homelessness were likely not being identified because they were not engaged in the homeless response system. Identifying and engaging youth is made even more difficult due to the largely rural landscape of the community, which can create barriers to youth physically accessing resources. Central to Horry County's improved outreach and engagement efforts was strengthening partnerships with youth-serving providers to create a coordinated approach for identifying, engaging and referring youth to appropriate housing and services. These improved partnerships have helped to identify youth engaged in resources outside of the homeless response system and provide them with support to meet their housing and service needs.

The Horry County 100-Day Challenge Team also identified a need for outreach and engagement efforts that meet youth where they are, resulting in the development of Horry County's Housing Action Plan (HAP). Horry County engaged youth with lived experience to assist in the development of a Youth and Young Adult (YYA) Access Card, incorporating youth appropriate language and methods of outreach that are more accessible to and comfortable for youth experiencing homelessness. The resulting YYA Access Card is a postcard with the local crisis hotline phone number, as well as a text option that connects youth to a brief survey that helps ascertain the youth's situation and needs by evaluating their current level of safety and vulnerability. Once the youth completes the survey, a Housing Access

Key Takeaways:

- Outreach and identification of youth can be particularly difficult in rural communities. Local efforts should attempt to meet youth where they are and provide diverse opportunities for youth to engage in services.
- Outreach and identification efforts are strengthened by having strong partnerships in place with other youth-serving agencies and systems.
- Outreach and engagement efforts should not only be reflective of youth preferences and needs, they should be informed by youth voice to create tools and strategies that will work for youth in your community.
- It is important that youth are supported and engaged quickly once they are identified as being at-risk of or experiencing homelessness. This may include working with youth to figure out their current situation and needs and helping them navigate the homeless response system.

Planner (HAP) is able to reach out to the youth and walk through a HAP conversation to determine appropriate housing and service interventions to meet the youth's needs.

The YYA Access Card and the HAP have helped Horry County identify and engage youth who had not yet been engaged in the homeless response system, including 10 youth identified and engaged in housing and services during the 100-Day Challenge. Horry County is working to make YYA Access Cards accessible to a wide range of partners to share with their youth clients who may be at-risk of or experiencing a housing crisis, including schools, mental health agencies, and youth-serving shelters.

LESSONS LEARNED

1) Involve Youth With Lived Experience in the Development of Youth-Focused Outreach and Identification Strategies

Youth engagement was crucial for creating an outreach plan in Horry County that works for youth in the community and is reflective of their preferences and needs. Horry County initially developed a flyer with an extensive list of resources and information for youth experiencing a housing crisis in order to connect them to the HAP. However, feedback indicated that this type of resource would not work for many youth. Youth with lived experience helped to develop appropriate language and a method of outreach that would be more accessible and comfortable for use by youth experiencing a housing crisis. The utilization of a postcard with a text-to-access options for the HAP reflects youth preference for a simple and easily accessible tool that can be utilized from anywhere to quickly connect youth to housing and services, without creating an overwhelming experience. Horry County has worked to ensure that all outreach, identification and engagement strategies are developed and implemented from a youth-centered perspective.

2) Employ Outreach Strategies That Meet Youth Where They Are

Horry County is a largely rural community which can make it difficult to conduct outreach and identify youth in need of housing and services. Transportation challenges can also make it difficult for youth at-risk of or experiencing homelessness to reach physical access points when they experience a housing crisis. Horry County found that a postcard with text- and phone-based engagement options would help reach youth in parts of the county where transportation or service options are limited, meeting youth "where they are" rather than requiring them travel to a physical access point to be assessed for housing and services. Horry County is also working to establish additional youth-specific Coordinated Entry access points among providers and agencies that are already working with youth in their community, such as schools and mental health agencies. By offering both physical and virtual options for outreaching and engaging with youth, Horry County has been able to overcome some of the challenges of its rural geography to more quickly and effectively identify and engage youth in housing and services.

3) Work with Diverse Partners to Improve Youth Outreach and Identification Efforts

Horry County's development of new and strengthened collaborative relationships with diverse partners as part of the 100-Day Challenge helped the community improve its youth outreach and identification efforts. Horry County established new partnerships with youth-serving agencies such as schools and mental health agencies to improve coordination when they identify youth within their systems who may be experiencing a housing crisis, including how to engage and connect youth to appropriate resources through the homeless response system. Horry County also worked with partners to understand and define their role in local outreach, identification, and engagement efforts and how collaboration with the homeless response system will help them better serve their clients. As a

result, Horry County has seen an increased number of partners who are identifying, engaging and referring youth experiencing homelessness for housing and services.

4) Quickly Engage and Support Youth Who Identify as Experiencing a Housing Crisis

Horry County has worked to ensure that its outreach and identification efforts are supported by equally strong efforts to quickly engage youth in services and provide them with support in resolving their housing crisis. Youth who connect to the crisis hotline via the YYA Access Card are immediately provided with assistance in response to their urgent situation. Youth who complete the HAP via the YYA Access Card are always contacted the next business day by a Housing Access Planner who is able to talk with them about their current situation, identify existing supports and networks that could assist the youth to exit homelessness (housing problem solving), and identify appropriate housing and service options based on their individualized needs. Horry County found that it is important to have multiple ways for youth to identify that they are experiencing a housing crisis, but also that they are able to quickly connect with a real person who is able to assess their situation, ascertain their needs, and engage them in housing and services.

HORRY COUNTY YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT (YYA) ACCESS CARD





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Housing Access Connection

Youth & Young Adults: Age 24 and Younger

If you are a Youth or Young Adult (Age 24 & Younger) please complete our access form below or give us a call during business hours at 843-213-1798 and we will get you connected with a Housing Access Plan.

Adults 25 and Older can also receive access to services by calling or visiting [here](#).

Full Name: *

First

Last

Email Address: *

Your Email Address

I do not have an email address

Phone Number: *

Phone Number

This is a cell phone number

I do not have a phone number

Age: * (Adults experiencing homelessness should visit [here](#))

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Current living situation: *

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Location: *

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Additional Details:

Please include any additional details here if needed.

Consent to be contacted: *

I agree to be contacted by a Housing Access Planner.

