

GULF COAST, MS

BACKGROUND: WHY AND WHY NOW?

The Gulf Coast of Mississippi Continuum of Care (CoC) has strong history of addressing homelessness in specific subpopulations through embracing nationwide best practices and community coordination. This community has previously ended veterans' homelessness and has nearly met the definition to end chronic homelessness. In 2017, the Gulf Coast turned its attention toward youth homelessness, which would present unique challenges and demand that new partners join their work. In the annual Continuum of Care Competition, the CoC reallocated funds to create several new rapid rehousing projects dedicated for youth. And when presented with the opportunity to participate in a 100-Day Challenge on youth homelessness, the community's system leaders signed on.

The 100-Day Challenge allowed the Gulf Coast CoC to focus on quickly housing the community's most vulnerable youth and young adults, deepen partnerships with non-housing youth social services providers, and incorporate the perspective of youth with lived experience into the decision-making process. At the end of the 100-Day Challenge, the team had met their goals for housing and transitioning youth, established a Youth Advisory Board, and planned to formally integrate their work into the CoC by transitioning into a role as the Continuum's Youth Homelessness Committee.

100-DAY CHALLENGE PRIORITY AREAS

The system leaders in the Mississippi Gulf Coast identified the following priority areas to address during their 100-Day Challenge:

- **Increase housing placements for literally homeless youth and young adults** using the coordinated entry process and case conferencing among agencies represented on the team.
- **Prevent at-risk youth and young adults from falling into homelessness**, especially those exiting the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.
- **Address challenges related to leases and income** to stabilize youth who have exited homelessness or are at risk of falling into homelessness.

The 100-Day Challenge team discussed these priorities at length and set the following goal for themselves:

100-Day Goal

In 100 days, the Gulf Coast team will permanently house 50 literally homeless youth and will improve the percentage of young adults who transition to permanent housing solutions by implementing cross-sector housing transition plans for 75 youth aging out of Child Protective Service and juvenile justice.

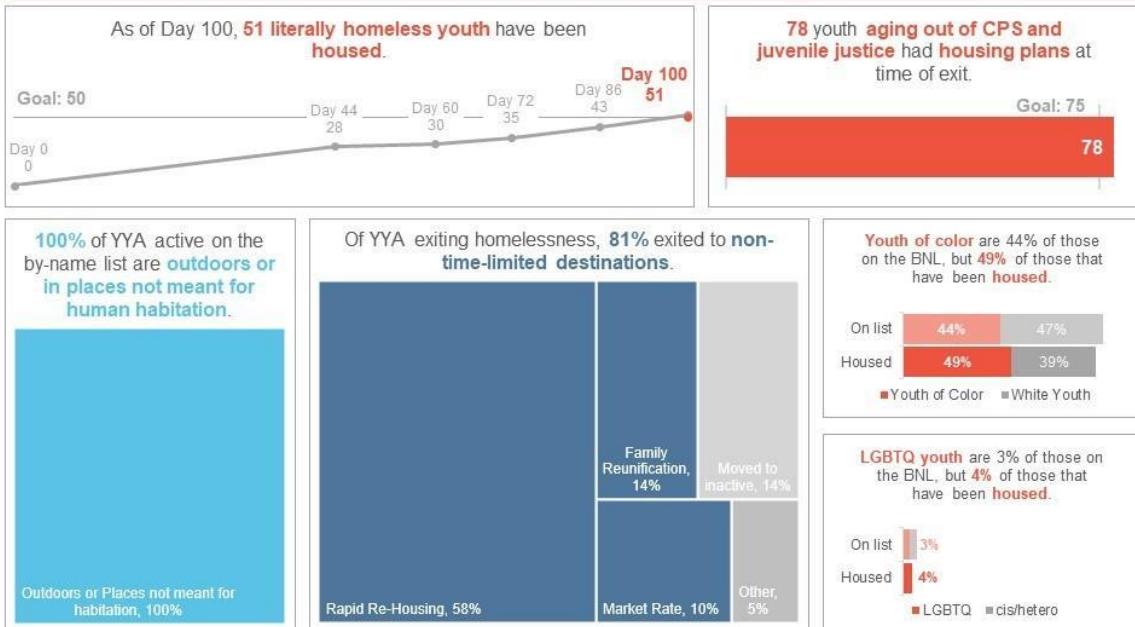
PROGRESS, SUCCESSES, AND ACHIEVEMENTS

GOAL	RESULTS
The Gulf Coast team, in 100 days: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will house 50 literally homeless youth into permanent housing solutions. Will implement cross-sector housing transition plans for 75 youth aging out of CPS and juvenile justice. 	As of Day 100: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 51 literally homeless youth were housed in permanent housing. 78 youth aging out of CPS and juvenile justice had housing plans at time of exit.

100-Day Challenge: GULF COAST, MS

Day 100 | Mar 21

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SUCCESSES IN INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION**SYSTEMS CHANGE AND LEADERSHIP**

The 100-Day Challenge allowed the Gulf Coast CoC to dedicate resources and attention on the issue of youth homelessness in a way unprecedented in the community's history. Before 2017, there were few resources in the community dedicated to youth homelessness; youth and young adults experiencing homelessness needed to navigate the more general homeless response system as well as try to access mainstream resources geared for young people. The 100-Day Challenge allowed homeless services providers, some of whom had recently received CoC grants dedicated for homeless youth, and other service providers to collaborate in the creation of a system dedicated to young people experiencing homelessness.

CROSS-SYSTEM PARTNERSHIPS

Key to the Challenge's success was the partnership between homeless service providers and other mainstream youth service providers, namely the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. Representatives from both systems joined the 100-Day Team from the outset, and one of the team's goals was to develop housing transition plans for youth and young adults who are exiting these systems into unstable housing situations. The child welfare system was conducting a review of their transition planning and decided to treat the challenge as a test for how their agency can better interact with housing providers to ensure exits to stable housing. In Mississippi, the juvenile justice system is run through youth courts at the county level (or state level for very rural counties). The team worked with judges in three separate counties to institute a transition planning policy. These systems committed to staying engaged with the transition planning and cross-system case conferencing process at the conclusion of the Challenge period.

COORDINATED ENTRY

The Gulf Coast 100-Day Team implemented a coordinated entry system dedicated to young people, and as a result, met their goal of housing 50 youth and young adults during the Challenge period. The CoC Lead organization had experience running coordinated entry for other subpopulations, including veterans and chronically homeless, so they were able to educate other partners on the concepts and processes. The team created a by-name list using data from the HMIS, the local public health outreach team, the child welfare system, the youth court system, and other youth service providers. They conducted case conferencing as part of their weekly team meetings to coordinate housing placements and address service needs of the most vulnerable young people experiencing homelessness.

AUTHENTIC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

The Gulf Coast 100-Day Challenge team sought to incorporate youth with lived experience into their work from the first day of the Challenge. Several young adults were recruited to join the team

through a workforce development partner agency. Early on in the challenge it became apparent that the voices of young people would be better heard if they were part of their own advisory body sanctioned by the CoC. The team worked with CoC Leadership to establish a Youth Advisory Board as a subcommittee of the CoC Youth Committee.

MAINTAINING 100-DAY MOMENTUM

To preserve the gains made during the 100 days and maintain momentum around preventing and ending youth homelessness, the Mississippi Gulf Coast plans to:

1. Continue to house literally homeless youth and young adults through coordinated entry, and expand the services provided to housed clients through a multi-disciplinary service team that will join regular case conferencing meetings;
2. Align the work of the Youth Advisory Board and case conferencing team to ensure that housing placements and service provision are executed by input from youth with lived experience;
3. Write and execute a communication and outreach plan to target and recruit additional partner agencies to join the cause; and
4. Work with system leaders to advocate for expanded transportation options for clients who have been housed or diverted to ensure that they can reach employment and education centers, and thus retain housing.