

MENDOCINO, CA

BACKGROUND: WHY AND WHY NOW?

As of 2017, approximately 1,238 individuals experience homelessness in Mendocino County on any given night, 42 of whom are unaccompanied homeless youth age 18 to 24. Of families experiencing homelessness, over one fifth of households are headed by an unaccompanied homeless youth. In the fall of 2017, the community experienced devastating wildfires, which led to the shrinking of an already very limited amount of housing options and an increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness. Mendocino County aims to build a robust, highly coordinated and collaborative, data-driven youth system with shared values that prioritize self-determination, trauma-informed and culturally sensitive care, and equity in outcomes.

Through the 100-Day Challenge, Mendocino County was successful in: 1) breaking down silos and fostering collaborative relationships among diverse providers; 2) engaging individuals with experience of homelessness to spearhead outreach efforts and provide input regarding system improvement; and 3) developing tangible solutions to prevent and end youth homelessness within the community. They overhauled their Coordinated Entry System in order to serve more people experiencing homelessness more effectively and provide adequate training and support to individuals administering the process. By facilitating new partnerships among community stakeholders and revamping Coordinated Entry, Mendocino County built crucial momentum around ending youth homelessness.

100-DAY CHALLENGE PRIORITY AREAS

In addition to increasing housing placements, Mendocino County identified three key priority areas to address during their 100-Day Challenge:

- **Creating shared focus among agencies for working with youth**, including developing access points and best practices, integrating new partners into the community's efforts to address homelessness, and generating new ideas and solutions to overcoming limited housing options accessible to youth via the Coordinated Entry System.
- **Engaging youth in building a system that works for them**, including gathering input from them and providing meaningful and empowering opportunities for involvement.
- **Fostering a culture of data-driven decision making**, including standardizing information-collection practices, providing training to support agencies participating in Coordinated Entry, and exploring questions to be addressed through data.

100-Day Goal

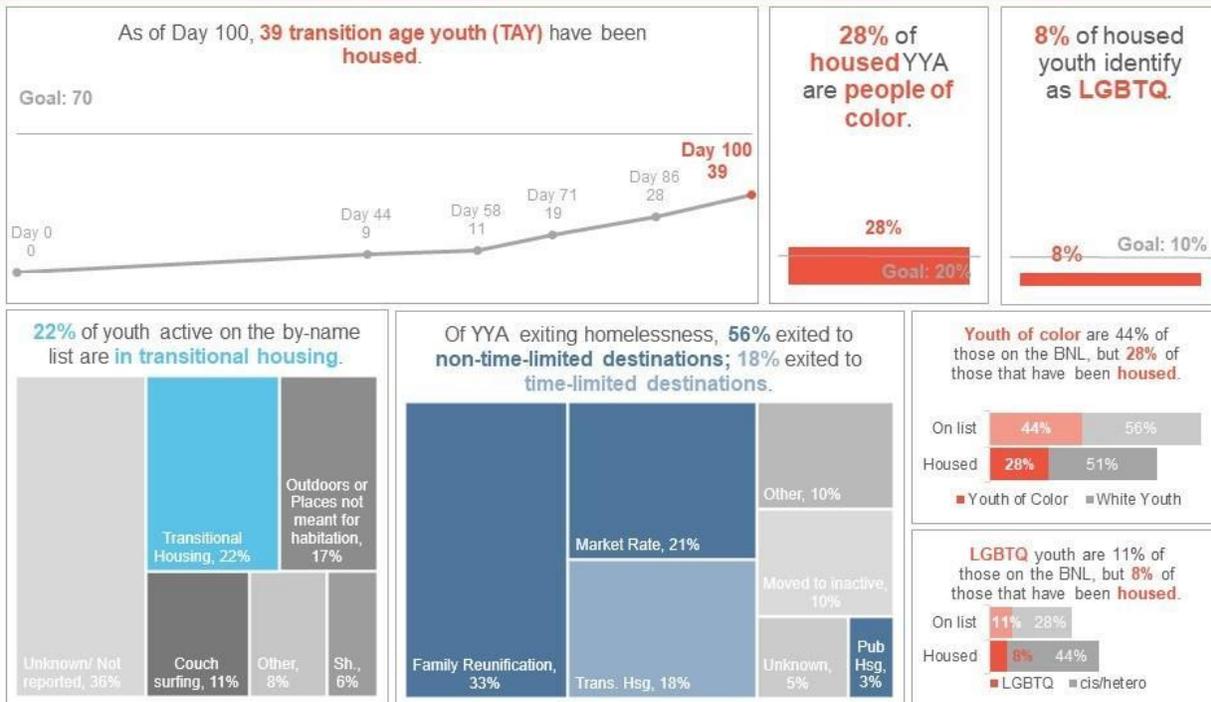
Mendocino County will stably house 70 youth, aged 18-24, including but not limited to systems-involved youth and/or pregnant/parenting youth, of whom 10 percent identify as LGBTQ+ and 20 percent as people of color.

PROGRESS, SUCCESSES, AND ACHIEVEMENTS

GOAL	RESULTS
<p>In Mendocino County, in 100 days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70 youth, aged 18-24, will move into safe and stable housing and will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systems-involved youth Pregnant/parenting youth 10 percent youth who identify as LGBTQ+ 20 percent youth who identify as people of color 	<p>As of Day 100:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safely and stably housed 39 youth and young adults ages 18-24, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systems-involved youth Pregnant/parenting youth 8 percent youth who identify as LGBTQ+ 28 percent youth who identify as people of color

100-Day Challenge: MENDOCINO CO, CA *Day 100 | Mar 21*

In 100 days, we will stably house 70 TAY between the ages of 18-24 including but not limited to YYA's who are system involved and or pregnant/parenting, of whom 10% identify as LGBTQ+ and 20% as people of color.



SUCCESSES IN INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION

SYSTEMS CHANGE AND LEADERSHIP

The 100-Day Challenge greatly advanced Mendocino County’s understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their system, improved collaboration among system leaders, and helped break down silos

within the community's homeless response system, thus broadening its reach. Mendocino County has shifted the focus of providers from agency-specific goals to community-wide goals and has developed a culture of coordination of services around clients. The community has assembled a TAYAction Team, that includes transitional age youth (TAY) with lived experience, which will provide guidance and feedback to the homeless system of care and support the creation of solutions that better meet the needs of youth experiencing homelessness.

CROSS-SYSTEM PARTNERSHIPS

Prior to the 100-Day Challenge, many team members within the community had not met or collaborated around preventing and ending youth homelessness. The 100-Day Challenge promoted strong partnerships among the diverse stakeholders involved in the process, including youth with lived experience, the Continuum of Care (CoC), homeless service providers, advocates, medical care providers, and the school district.

EXPANDED OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Mendocino County implemented a Street Medicine program in collaboration with Ukiah Valley Medicine Center, which brings medical assistance directly to homeless encampments and staffs weekly clinics for youth experiencing homelessness. This endeavor has been a client-centered practice key to outreach and engagement efforts and has provided a meaningful opportunity for involvement by persons experiencing homelessness, who accompany the medical teams and support their efforts.

Mendocino County has also created a youth resource center with computers, food, yoga and other classes, medical services and health insurance application assistance to engage youth and connect them to Coordinated Entry. The center is staffed with people trained in conducting assessments and has access to several youth-dedicated housing vouchers, which were set aside by the PHA for youth and youth adults as part of their commitment to this project. Additionally, high school students were empowered to support peers experiencing homelessness through education on community resources.

COORDINATED ENTRY

The Mendocino County 100-Day Challenge team began building methods for capturing system-wide data and use of by-name lists. Mendocino County harnessed the momentum of the 100-Day Challenge to implement a youth-specific assessment tool and begin case conferencing for youth. To support these changes within the Coordinated Entry System, Mendocino County launched a training program for participating agencies.

MAINTAINING 100-DAY MOMENTUM

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

1. Educate anyone working with youth experiencing homelessness to positively engage LGBTQ+ youth and to provide culturally competent and trauma-informed care to all youth experiencing homelessness;
2. Strengthen the Coordinated Entry System, ensure it is utilized by all service providers that interface with youth experiencing homelessness, and develop effective transition plans in collaboration with child welfare and juvenile justice;
3. Foster capacity to collect, share, and analyze outcomes data across agencies and disciplines to more effectively serve youth experiencing homelessness;
4. Strengthen youth involvement at all levels of decision-making and empower youth to advocate for system improvement on the community and government leadership levels.