

HUD Cohort 5 100-Day Challenge Summary

Monroe County, FL

100-Day Challenge Goal

In 100 days, Monroe County will permanently house 7 homeless unaccompanied youth aged 16-24 with connections to supports (e.g., employment, life skills training, education, behavioral health, etc.), of whom 40% will be people of color, LGBTQ+, and/or have a disabling condition and 20% will be previously involved with the Departments of Juvenile Justice or Children and Families.

*Monroe County rallied around the 100-Day Challenge process to build out key structures of a youth homeless response system for the first time. This work to develop a coordinated community response to youth homelessness – including engaging new partner organizations, developing new CoC structures, and building out youth-focused coordinated entry processes – was crucial for Monroe County to reach its 100-Day goal. Please see Monroe County’s **Building the Infrastructure of a Youth Homeless Response System** case study to learn more about how the community expanded its capacity to address youth homelessness and increased housing placements for the small but vulnerable population of youth experiencing homelessness in the region.*

100-DAY CHALLENGE CONTEXT & FOCUS AREAS

BACKGROUND: YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN MONROE COUNTY, FL

Monroe County, FL identified 35 unaccompanied youth and young adults (YYA) experiencing homelessness during the 2019 Point-in-Time Count, of whom 20 (57%) were unaccompanied youth under the age of 18.¹ The County faces a number of unique challenges connecting YYAs experiencing homelessness to housing, including the geographic difficulties of working across the 125-mile-long chain of islands of both densely populated and rural areas that comprise the Florida Keys. Monroe County also has one of the most expensive housing markets in Florida, with very few affordable housing options that are accessible to YYA populations.

There are a number of youth-serving agencies and homeless service providers in Monroe County, but the current homeless response system lacks youth-dedicated resources such as shelter and Transitional Living Programs (TLPs) that could help consistently engage YYA experiencing homelessness and connect them to permanent housing opportunities. Additionally, youth homelessness in Monroe County varies seasonally, with higher numbers of YYAs experiencing homelessness during the winter and then leaving the Florida Keys in the summer. This seasonality

¹ U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), 2019 CoC Homeless Populations and Subpopulations Report - FL-604: Monroe County CoC, https://files.hudexchange.info/reports/published/CoC_PopSub_CoC_FL-604-2019_FL_2019.pdf

makes it more difficult to build trust and rapport with YYA clients to provide them with connections to appropriate supports such as family reunification services.

The 100-Day Challenge brought a dedicated attention and focus to youth homelessness in Monroe County. The community was able to leverage the opportunity to bring together new and diverse agencies and bridge the gap between homeless service providers and youth-serving agencies around the shared goal of improving housing outcomes for YYA experiencing homelessness in Monroe County.

100-DAY CHALLENGE FOCUS AREAS

System leaders from across Monroe County, FL came together to identify the following areas of focus for the community's 100-Day Challenge to prevent and end youth homelessness:

- Provide permanent housing to YYA aged 18-24 using innovative options (e.g., shared housing, vacation rentals, etc.); and
- Develop processes to better identify resources and/or engage landlords.

System leaders also identified the need to focus on vulnerable populations of young people experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ YYA, youth exiting the care of the Departments of Juvenile Justice or Children and Families, and YYA with disabling conditions.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE 100-DAY CHALLENGE

Only a couple of weeks into their 100-Day Challenge, the COVID-19 pandemic became a reality for Monroe County and the other Cohort 5 100-Day Challenge communities. A decision was made to pause the Challenge so that the community could first address its immediate needs related to the growing pandemic, including staffing changes, shifts in local priorities, and changes in how YYA were engaging with the homeless response system.

During this pause, members of the Monroe County 100-Day Challenge Team – particularly the several team members operating emergency shelters and health centers – shifted their focus to COVID-19 response. Team Leaders and Sponsors worked together with their coach to provide youth-centric, COVID-19 related assistance throughout the initial surge of the pandemic in the community.

About 6 weeks after the initial pause, the 100-Day Challenge relaunched for another 75 days, with a number of new and additional 100-Day Challenge Team Members joining the effort following the pause. Sponsors, Team Leaders, and new and returning Team Members actively participated in the relaunch event and committed to provide permanent housing to 7 YYA experiencing homelessness (an increase from Monroe County's original 100-Day Challenge housing goal to house 5 YYA clients).

“COVID-19 created a situation where youth are seeking housing stability and resources in a really active way. We saw this need and we knew that we needed to use this opportunity through the 100-Day Challenge to hunker down and house more youth than we thought it would be possible to achieve.”

- Monroe County, FL 100-Day Challenge Team Leader

100-DAY CHALLENGE SUCCESSES, ACCOMPLISHMENTS & INNOVATIONS

SNAPSHOT OF 100-DAY CHALLENGE PROGRESS

100-Day Challenge Goal: In 100 days, Monroe County will permanently house 7 homeless unaccompanied youth aged 16-24 with connections to supports (e.g., employment, life skills training, education, behavioral health, etc.), of whom 40% will be people of color, LGBTQ+, and/or have a disabling condition and 20% will be previously involved with the Departments of Juvenile Justice or Children and Families.

OUTCOMES AS OF DAY 100: 8 YYA permanently housed in safe, stable housing

Safe and Stable Housing



8 YYA permanently housed in safe, stable housing with connections to supports (e.g., employment, life skills training, education, etc.)

Populations of Focus



87.5% of all YYA housed during the Challenge were people of color, LGBTQ+, and/or have a disabling condition



12.5% of all YYA housed during the Challenge were previously involved with the Departments of Juvenile Justice or Children and Families

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN SYSTEMS CHANGE

CROSS-SYSTEMS COLLABORATION

The Monroe County 100-Day Challenge facilitated the development of new partnerships among service providers that had not previously been part of the conversation regarding youth homelessness. The 100-Day Challenge Team worked to bring youth-serving agencies and homeless service providers together for the first time around a focused goal of preventing and ending YYA homelessness, successfully engaging new partners such as the Department of Juvenile Justice and Department of Children and Families in the process. The Team established weekly case conferencing meetings that brought together case managers and team leads from local homeless shelters, Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) providers, mental health service agencies, juvenile justice, child and family services, and school systems. These meetings opened the door for new agencies to share their resources and create a sense of shared accountability and buy-in towards the 100-Day Challenge goal. The Team found that coordination between multiple agencies and case workers was essential for overcoming the unique housing challenges in Monroe County, including facilitating warm handoffs between providers across islands. Monroe County has worked to formalize the new partnerships forged during the 100-Day Challenge and implement processes that ensure coordination of efforts across youth-serving systems and agencies continues.

COC YOUTH HOMELESSNESS STRUCTURES AND SUPPORTS

The Monroe County 100-Day Challenge helped the Continuum of Care (CoC) establish new structures and supports that will allow the community to better address YYA homelessness. A key change to the CoC structure was the

establishment of a new End Youth Homelessness Committee to serve as a formal subcommittee of the CoC. This committee meets monthly and includes representation from a range of youth-serving agencies, homeless service providers, community members, and YYA with lived experiences of homelessness. Committee members are tasked with continuing cross-systems YYA case conferencing and working together to identify additional partners, housing opportunities, and funding to respond to YYA homelessness. The End Youth Homelessness Committee will also be responsible for updating and maintaining Monroe County's "Trusted Landlord" list, which was developed with feedback from multiple agencies to identify landlords willing to house YYA tenants. The End Youth Homelessness Committee and the CoC decided to maintain a goal of ending YYA homelessness to help sustain the momentum created during the 100-Day Challenge. The CoC has also invited a member of the Youth Action Board², known as Keys Youth Action Network, to participate on the CoC Board.

YOUTH-SPECIFIC BY-NAME LIST

Monroe County utilized the collaboration and momentum of the 100-Day Challenge to create and maintain a "dynamic" YYA by-name list that can be populated by agencies outside of HMIS. Information is collected and stored using a client identification number to ensure that no personally identifying information is captured on the by-name list. The by-name list uses universal data elements similar to those collected in HMIS, but allows for new partners that do not currently use HMIS to report their data on YYA experiencing homelessness within their systems. Additional information that can be collected and tracked in the by-name list includes disabling conditions and histories of involvement with the child welfare or juvenile justice system. The 100-Day Challenge Team has worked to fold this data into HMIS and to engage these partner agencies in Coordinated Entry and HMIS as desired and appropriate. The dynamic by-name list is updated in real time during weekly case conferencing meetings to discuss client housing and case management status. When a YYA client is housed, the by-name list allows for 30-, 60-, and 90-day follow-up notes to be captured by case managers, including information on each young person's stability in their new housing situation and continued case management and supportive services being provided as needed.

INCREASED UNDERSTANDING OF YYA EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

The 100-Day Challenge helped homeless service providers, youth-serving agencies and system leaders learn more about the experiences and needs of YYA experiencing homelessness in Monroe County. During the Challenge, the Team found that many of the unstably housed YYA identified during their outreach and engagement efforts meet the HUD definition of homeless, but may not see themselves or define themselves as experiencing homelessness. The 100-Day Challenge Team also found that many YYA they engaged have a distrust of systems due to previous negative experiences. The Challenge confirmed that a significant number of YYA experiencing homelessness have needs related to mental health, substance use, education, and justice involvement and that rates of homelessness are particularly high among LGBTQ+ YYA (40% of YYA engaged during the 100-Day Challenge identified as LGBTQ+). This information has encouraged youth-serving agencies and homeless service providers to evaluate their program models and increase their focus on robust wraparound supportive services, trauma-informed and culturally competent care, and comprehensive case management in order to respond to the distinct needs of YYAs experiencing homelessness in Monroe County.

² A Youth Action Board (YAB) is a decision-making body composed of youth and young adults who help shape and inform local youth homelessness policy and project decisions. YAB members should be representative of the youth and young adult population experiencing homelessness in the community, including being comprised primarily of people with lived experiences of homelessness. For YHDP community YAB requirements, please see the [YHDP NOFO](#).

AUTHENTIC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

The 100-Day Challenge helped increase authentic youth engagement in Monroe County and supported the growth of the Keys Youth Action Network (KYAN), the local Youth Action Board (YAB). A member of KYAN was engaged in the 100-Day Challenge from the beginning and helped advocate for the establishment of the End Youth Homelessness Committee and a YAB seat on the CoC Board. Since the 100-Day Challenge, KYAN has been active in recruiting new members and meeting weekly to establish goals and activities for the ongoing work of preventing and ending youth homelessness in Monroe County. KYAN identified increasing economic opportunities for young people as a current focus for their work and established a partnership with the local Farmer’s Market to set up a booth every Thursday. KYAN holds weekly workshops to design products to sell at the market and to learn about topics related to entrepreneurship and economic stability, such as marketing and budgeting. This initiative helps KYAN members gain additional income and develop professional skills, while also providing an opportunity to conduct public outreach and bring awareness to the issue of YYA homelessness to the wider community.

MAINTAINING 100-DAY CHALLENGE MOMENTUM

In order to lock in their gains and maintain the momentum around preventing and ending youth homelessness, the Monroe County 100-Day Challenge Team plans to focus on the following priorities moving forward.

ACTION PLAN FOR ONGOING WORK

- Strengthen collaboration with new partner agencies and organizations;
- Continue to hold monthly case management meetings;
- Maintain and update the “Trusted Landlord” list;
- Further develop the Youth Action Board (Keys Youth Action Network); and
- Address and overcome COVID-related challenges in the provision of housing and services.

ACTION PLAN FOR NEW WORK

- Engage new landlords willing to house YYA experiencing homelessness;
- Integrate housing specialists into housing programs to develop relationships with landlords and identify units across the community; and
- Develop and update specific annual goals regarding progress on ending youth homelessness.

PRIORITIES FOR SYSTEM LEADERS

Additionally, the team has established the following priority system shifts needed to sustain performance and proposed actions to make those system shifts a reality.

- Integrating the Youth Action Board into the CoC governance structure
- Expanding CoC participation to new partners and agencies:
 - Housing Authority
 - Youth-involved agencies (nonprofits, Juvenile Justice, foster care, education, etc.)
- Improving care coordination and housing/service provision:
 - Increasing involvement of multiple housing/service providers in addressing client needs (not just warm handoffs)
 - Improving system navigation

- Developing a system-wide coordinated entry system to determine YYA needs and match them to appropriate resources
 - Ensuring that homeless housing/services are viewed as a community-level intervention to prevent and end homelessness
- Establishing funding set-asides for YYA experiencing homelessness
- Implementing a public awareness campaign/commitment from the CoC regarding efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness