

HUD Cohort 5 100-Day Challenge Summary

North Central West Virginia

100-Day Challenge Goal

In 100 days, we will safely and stably house 35 homeless and at-risk youth and youth adults (YYA) ages 18 to 24, of whom 75% are or have been involved with child welfare and/or juvenile justice and/or are affected by substance use.

*North Central West Virginia launched an innovative mobile mental health and substance use program for YYA during the 100-Day Challenge. This program helped the 100-Day Challenge Team increase outreach to and identification of YYA experiencing homelessness who are affected by substance use and provide rapid connections to housing and services, allowing the community to make significant progress towards its 100-Day Challenge goal. Please see North Central West Virginia's **Youth-Focused Behavioral Health Outreach** case study to learn more about this innovative approach to outreach and identification for YYA with behavioral health needs.*

100-DAY CHALLENGE CONTEXT & FOCUS AREAS

BACKGROUND: YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN NORTH CENTRAL WEST VIRGINIA

The West Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness (WVCEH) staff and partners have seen the need for an immediate and coordinated response to the issues that affect youth and young adults (YYA) in North Central West Virginia. Challenges such as poverty, substance use, violence between family members, unemployment, and lack of opportunities for positive youth development have impacted housing stability for West Virginia's YYA population. West Virginia has identified particular challenges in accessing and maintaining housing for youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice or child welfare systems, as well as young people who have been affected by substance use amongst themselves or family members.

North Central West Virginia joined the 100-Day Challenge to begin the process of shifting the community's response to be more proactive towards the goal of ending and preventing YYA homelessness. The community committed to investing in new and expanded housing, case management, and programming options that reflect the distinct challenges and needs of YYAs experiencing homelessness in North Central West Virginia, including programs grounded in the principles of Housing First, Positive Youth Development (PYD), and Trauma-Informed Care (TIC). The 100-Day Challenge enabled the community to increase connections to housing for YYA experiencing homelessness while continuing to learn more about their needs, developing methodologies for sharing data, and planning for future funding opportunities.

100-DAY CHALLENGE FOCUS AREAS

System leaders from across North Central West Virginia came together to identify the following areas of focus for the community's 100-Day Challenge to prevent and end youth homelessness:

- Making substantial progress on housing vulnerable YYAs in Harrison, Marion, and Monongalia counties; and
- Focusing on providing housing for YYA who have been involved with the foster care or justice system, giving particular attention to youth at highest risk of homelessness, including pregnant and parenting YYA and young people with identified mental health needs.

System leaders also emphasized the need to explore innovative housing solutions for YYA facing high barriers to housing and multiple service needs.

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 North Central West Virginia 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 North Central West Virginia 100-Day Challenge Team continued to meet virtually on a biweekly basis. Partnerships between the CoC, youth-serving providers and the justice system were also strengthened during this time, and a small number of YYA clients were assisted in resolving their housing situation and exiting homelessness.

About 6 weeks after the initial pause, the 100-Day Challenge relaunched for another 75 days. North Central West Virginia maintained its focus on providing housing for YYA who have been involved with the child welfare or juvenile justice system or are affected by substance use, but chose to lower its 100-Day Challenge goal during the relaunch to align with new staff demands and capacity given the impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

“COVID-19 drove many youth in West Virginia into unsafe spaces. It was so much more difficult to identify youth in these situations once the pandemic hit– it was hard to reach youth for so many reasons, including technology and lack of staff to focus on this part of this work. The fact that they continued the 100-Day Challenge and provided so many youth in unsafe situations with safe and stable housing is remarkable.”

- North Central West Virginia 100-Day Challenge Coach

100-DAY CHALLENGE SUCCESSES, ACCOMPLISHMENTS & INNOVATIONS

SNAPSHOT OF 100-DAY CHALLENGE PROGRESS

100-Day Challenge Goal: In 100 days, we will safely and stably house 35 homeless and at risk YYA ages 18 to 24, of whom 75% are or have been involved with child welfare and/or juvenile justice and/or are affected by substance use.

OUTCOMES AS OF DAY 100: 17 YYA safely and stably housed

Safe and Stable Housing



17 YYA were safely/stably housed, including through Rapid-Rehousing, self-resolution, market rate housing, and family reunification

Diversion



23 YYA were diverted from homelessness during the 100-Day Challenge

Populations of Focus



8 of 17 (47%) YYA housed during the 100-Day Challenge have either been involved with the juvenile justice or child welfare systems or been affected by substance use

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN SYSTEMS CHANGE

CROSS-SYSTEMS COLLABORATION

The North Central West Virginia 100-Day Challenge Team brought together eight agencies, including representatives from the homeless, housing, health, justice, education, and child welfare sectors, to work together to prevent and end youth homelessness. Even after restrictions were imposed due to COVID-19, the 100-Day Challenge Team continued to meet on a regular basis and maintained a high level of engagement utilizing virtual technologies. Team members worked to identify successes and areas of improvement in existing collaborative partnerships and break down barriers to cross-system communication in order to better serve YYA touching multiple systems of care. The 100-Day Challenge Team built new relationships with the juvenile justice and child welfare systems, with efforts underway among system leaders to develop and implement data sharing agreements that will enable appropriate and efficient cross-system sharing of information pertinent to YYA housing needs.

AUTHENTIC ENGAGEMENT OF YOUTH WITH LIVED EXPERIENCE

Over the course of the 100-Day Challenge, North Central West Virginia supported the growth and development of the West Virginia Balance of State CoC Youth Action Board (YAB)¹. The YAB nominated a YYA member to join the

¹ 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](#).

100-Day Challenge Team who was engaged throughout the Challenge and played an active role in strengthening the Team's social media outreach strategies. North Central West Virginia's YYA team member also developed a [video](#) for YYA aging out of foster care or exiting the juvenile justice system outlining the steps they can take to seek services. As a sub-committee of the governing council of the CoC, the YAB plays an active role in spearheading the sustainability efforts of YYA homelessness efforts and elevating this work to the state level. Operation of the YAB is supported through funding from the State to provide appropriate compensation to members, as well as access to computers, cell phones, and tablets in order to participate in meetings.

YOUTH-FOCUSED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH OUTREACH

The North Central West Virginia 100-Day Challenge Team supported the launch of an innovative mobile mental health and substance use program for youth called Resilient Minds. Resilient Minds was developed by West Virginia University (WVU) Medicine and United Summit Center (USC) in collaboration with the 100-Day Challenge Team to serve as a youth mental health and substance use disorder street outreach program for young people ages 18-21 who are experiencing homelessness, at risk of homelessness, or aging out of the foster care system. The program provides 24-hour youth-focused crisis response services to young people in their environment, including behavioral health assessments, referrals to treatment, case management, counseling, and medication management using telemedicine platforms. Homeless outreach workers can call and request an on-the-spot assessment for YYA experiencing homelessness with mental health or substance use needs who they identify during outreach and engagement efforts. Resilient Minds staff can assess YYA where they are and streamline their referral for mental health or substance use services as needed. The 100-Day Challenge Team developed a [flyer](#) and [social media post](#) to inform the community about this new program.

YOUTH-SPECIFIC BY-NAME LIST

The North Central West Virginia 100-Day Challenge Team created a YYA-specific by-name list (BNL) that has assisted in communication between agencies and coordination of housing and supportive services for YYA experiencing homelessness. The Team met regularly throughout the Challenge to review the by-name list and explore ways to ensure that YYA on the BNL are given equal access to available housing resources with other populations of focus, such as Veterans and individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. Housing providers, Coordinated Entry staff, and referral agencies in North Central West Virginia are continuing to meet bi-weekly to review the YYA-specific by-name list to determine who has been housed, who still needs housing, and who has lost contact in order to make appropriate referrals to housing and services and conduct additional outreach as needed.

MAINTAINING 100-DAY CHALLENGE MOMENTUM

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

ACTION PLAN FOR ONGOING WORK

- Meet bi-weekly to discuss youth specific housing placements utilizing the youth by-name list by CoC region;
- Increase awareness of existing youth resources;
- Develop and enhance a cross-agency approach to address youth homelessness in West Virginia; and
- Continue to improve access to mental health and substance use disorder support for youth.

ACTION PLAN FOR NEW WORK

- Identify new landlords and units available for youth experiencing homelessness;
- Expand outreach and advertising methods, including through social media, resource flyers, and merchandise/"swag"; and
- Increase access to other housing options outside the traditional ESG and CoC resources (e.g. private funding, youth-specific state and federal funding, creating new opportunities for youth specific vouchers and other transitional housing options).

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.

- Expanding the youth homelessness and housing efforts from the 100-Day Challenge to at least one other CoC region, utilizing HMIS and other state data to identify the region with the highest need; and
- Consulting with federal partners for guidance from the U.S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Health and Human Services (HHS), Justice (DOJ) and Education (DOE) to develop statewide MOUs with each system.