

# ITHACA/TOMPKINS COUNTY, NEW YORK

## BACKGROUND: WHY AND WHY NOW?

The Ithaca/Tompkins County Continuum of Care (CoC) has been engaged in systemic, regional efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness since its inception in 1999. Through the continuous planning of the 28 member organizations of the CoC and its working committees, Ithaca/Tompkins County has developed strong collaborative relationships that include representation from the County, City, public and private housing providers, service providers, local foundations, education, law enforcement, faith communities and concerned individuals. That community has learned that it can make youth homelessness rare, brief and a one-time occurrence through continued collaboration. Key stakeholders and community partners in Ithaca/Tompkins County embarked on the 100-Day Challenge ready to challenge themselves and push themselves to discover more innovative approaches to combat youth homelessness.

The Ithaca/Tompkins County CoC also had strong structures in place to help undertake and support the 100-Day Challenge. The community operates an active Youth Advisory Committee and convenes a Barriers Committee, which brings together front-line staff who deal directly with adults and youth experiencing homelessness to identify barriers and develop solutions. Together, the Ithaca/Tompkins County Youth Action Committee, Barriers Committee, and the CoC's robust collaborative of partner agencies formed a strong team to take on the 100-Day Challenge in their community. Additionally, the beginning of construction on a 16-bed permanent supportive housing (PSH) project for pregnant or parenting youth and discussions about opening an emergency shelter for homeless youth helped create momentum around developing new options for youth leading into the 100-Day Challenge.

## 100-DAY CHALLENGE PRIORITY AREAS

In addition to increasing housing placements, Ithaca/Tompkins County identified the following priority areas to address during their 100-Day Challenge:

- Identify new shelter and housing options for youth; and
- Create circles of support (i.e., sponsors/advocates and youth peer advocates to assist in system navigation) young people on the community's by-name list.

### 100-Day Goal

In 100 Days, we will house 50 youth and young adults ages 16-24 from the community's Coordinated Assessment Team (CAT) list. By Day 100, all youth and young adults ages 16-24 on the CAT list will have a designated sponsor/advocate, and at least 50 will have been connected to 2 or more supports.

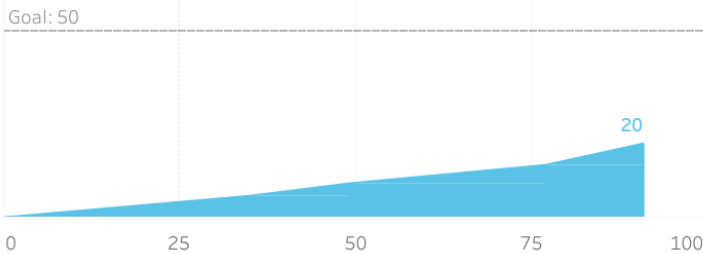
PROGRESS, SUCCESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

100-DAY CHALLENGE | ITHACA, NY | DAY 91 | JUL 31 2019

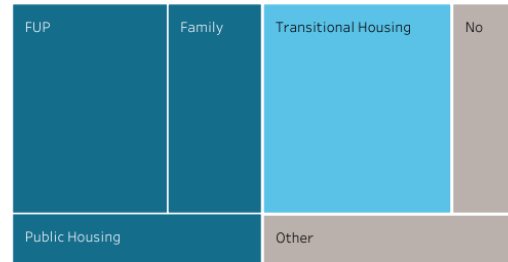
In 100 Days, we will house 50 youth and young adults ages 16-24 from the community's CAT list. By Day 100, all youth and young adults ages 16-24 on the CAT list will have a designated sponsor/advocate, and at least 50 will have been connected to 2 or more supports.

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS SAFELY & STABLY HOUSED

20 youth and young adults have been safely and stably housed as of Day 91.

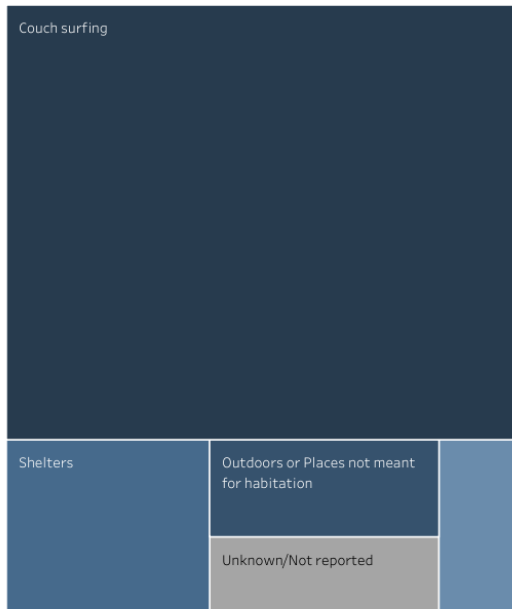


Of the youth and young adults who exited homelessness, 50% went to non-time-limited destinations and 30% to time-limited destinations.

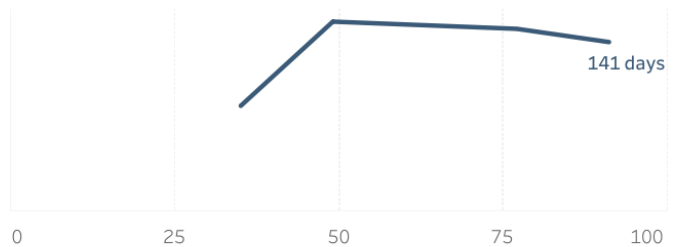


YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

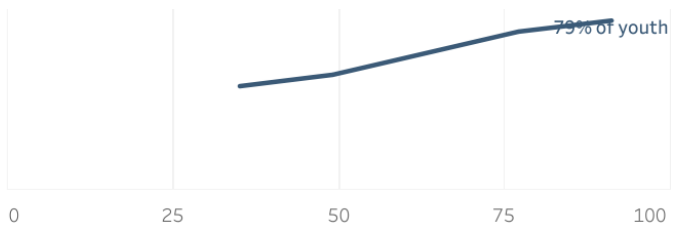
71% of youth and young adults report most frequently sleeping on couches.



As of Day 91, youth and young adults have been on the CAT list for an average of 141 days.



As of Day 91, 79% of youth and young adults have been on the CAT list for over 90 days.



**FOCUS ON POPULATION PROPORTIONALITY**

Of youth and young adults on the CAT list, 57% are people of color, but 60% of those housed are people of color.



GOAL	RESULTS
<p>In Ithaca/Tompkins County, in 100 days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50 youth and young adults will be housed from the community’s CAT list.</li> <li>• All youth and young adults on the CAT list will have a designated sponsor/advocate.</li> <li>• At least 50 youth and young adults on the CAT list will have been connected to 2 or more supports.</li> </ul>	<p>As of Day 100:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 youth and young adults were safely and stably housed from the community’s CAT list.</li> <li>• Action plan developed to launch the Youth Sponsor Pilot Program with 5 youth from the CAT list.</li> <li>• Service plan template created to create circles of support for youth on the CAT list.</li> </ul>

**SUCCESES IN INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION**

**INCREASED COLLABORATION & AWARENESS AROUND YOUTH HOMELESSNESS**

The Ithaca/Tompkins County 100-Day Challenge brought together agencies that do not often have the opportunity to collaborate to create a community-wide focus on preventing and ending youth homelessness. The 100-Day Challenge Team included representatives from Tompkins County Youth Services Department, The Learning Web, Family & Children's Service of Ithaca, Tompkins Community Action Advocacy Center of Tompkins County, Youth Employment Service, Child Development Council, Tompkins County Department of Social Services Children's Services, Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County, and First Congregational Church of Ithaca United Church of Christ. Additionally, the Team was visited by supporters from other community agencies that learned about the 100-Day Challenge, including United Way of Tompkins County, Opportunities, Alternatives, and Resources (OAR) of Tompkins County, and more.

The Ithaca/Tompkins County 100-Day Challenge Team operated robust social media campaigns to increase public awareness of the initiative and the community’s overall efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness. The work of the 100-Day Challenge was also highlighted by the local newspaper, the Ithaca Voice, and gained the attention of the Mayor, county legislators, and concerned citizens.

Ithaca/Tompkins County's commitment to sharing information, providing updates on the Team's progress, and reaching out to additional stakeholders for their support and engagement helped to increase local awareness and build momentum for preventing and ending youth homelessness that can be sustained beyond the 100-Day Challenge.

### **STRENGTHENING SUPPORTS FOR YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS**

Ithaca/Tompkins County utilized the 100-Day Challenge to develop new tools and processes for providing youth experiencing homelessness with necessary supports to attain and sustain housing. The 100-Day Challenge Team developed a service plan template to be used in creating circles of support for youth experiencing homelessness to help ensure that their comprehensive needs outside of housing are met, including education, employment, and health needs. The Team has worked to get youth feedback on the service plan and is working to make the service plan accessible for all stakeholders working with unstably housed youth in the community.

Ithaca/Tompkins County also launched an effort to connect each youth seeking housing and services with a designated sponsor or advocate during the 100-Day Challenge, with the goal of supporting youth to navigate the homeless system of care and choose the housing and service interventions that will work best for them. The community is working beyond the 100-Day Challenge to launch the Youth Sponsor Pilot Program with 5 youth experiencing homelessness on the CAT list. Ithaca/Tompkins County is also working to develop a Youth Peer Advocate position to support youth as they navigate the homeless response system and provide youth with critical trainings and support on maintaining housing stability, including life skills and tenants' rights.

### **EXPANDING HOUSING OPTIONS FOR YOUTH**

The Ithaca/Tompkins County 100-Day Challenge Team worked to expand housing options for youth through a variety of different methods that worked with the unique housing landscape of the community. Ithaca/Tompkins County is home to a large number of students attending local colleges and universities who need rental housing only during the academic school year. The 100-Day Challenge Team developed a "Sublet Survey" for college students to explore the possibility of making student housing available to local youth at-risk of or experiencing homelessness during academic breaks through a subletting process. Additionally, the 100-Day Challenge Team created a shared housing matching form to help connect youth to potential roommates and increase access to housing options in the tight, high-cost rental market of Tompkins County. Ithaca/Tompkins County also began the process of engaging landlords and breaking down barriers to effective landlord partnerships for serving youth. The 100-Day Challenge Team met with a local landlord to learn more about his experiences and hear his concerns about working with youth experiencing homelessness, generating new insights into how local agencies can work with landlords to provide supportive housing opportunities for both youth and landlords and address landlord concerns. Ithaca/Tompkins County continues to work with landlords to build trusting relationships and to improve engagement and recruitment to provide additional youth housing options.

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MAINTAINING 100-DAY MOMENTUM

To preserve the gains made during the 100 days and maintain momentum around preventing and ending youth homelessness, Ithaca/Tompkins County plans to carry out the following activities:

**TEAM'S ACTION PLANS FOR ONGOING WORK**

1. Launch Youth Sponsor Pilot Program with 5 youth from CAT list;
2. Develop Youth Peer Advocate position(s);
3. Provide training and education for youth and young adults on topics and skills to successfully navigate systems and secure and maintain housing (e.g., life skills, tenant rights, etc.); and
4. Bring key people to the table for conversations and planning who have not been involved in the Challenge and/or the community's overall efforts to end youth homelessness generally.