

# NORTHERN MICHIGAN

## BACKGROUND: WHY AND WHY NOW?

Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford counties – part of the 59-county region of the Michigan Balance of State CoC (MIBOSCOC) – were identified by community leaders as being poised to take on a 100-Day Challenge to prevent and end youth and young adult (YYA) homelessness in Northern Michigan. These three counties are part of the NW Michigan Coalition to End Homelessness (NWCEH), a ten-county cross-CoC coalition (five counties from MIBOSCOC and five counties from the Greater Grand Traverse Area CoC (GGTACOC)) that has come together to share resources and work collaboratively on regional homelessness planning efforts. Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford counties are rural communities that have made great strides in ending veteran and chronic homelessness, are part of a larger coordinated entry system that prioritizes youth, and are dedicated to identifying and maximizing existing resources for youth experiencing homelessness. Working with GGTACOC, a YHDP community, as part of the NWCEH also helped Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford counties learn from the Grand Traverse CoC's YHDP efforts and inspired these communities to take part in their own youth homelessness initiative.

As part of the 100-Day Challenge, Northern Michigan also sought to demonstrate how Balance of State communities can be involved in the national movement to prevent and end youth homelessness. In small towns like those in rural Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford counties, this type of initiative can create the sense of urgency needed to move the needle on addressing youth homelessness. Northern Michigan took on the 100-Day Challenge with a desire to end future youth homelessness and future adult homelessness through innovative solutions and cross-systems collaboration. The 100-Day Challenge Team was dedicated to utilizing this opportunity to change the culture of how local providers work with youth when their housing becomes unstable in order to improve the trajectory of their lives.

## 100-DAY CHALLENGE PRIORITY AREAS

In addition to increasing housing placements, Northern Michigan identified the following priority areas to address during their 100-Day Challenge:

- Collaborating with the education system to identify YYA at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
- Creating innovative housing solutions for youth and young adults.
- Finding flexibility in existing housing resources and funding.

### 100-Day Goal

In 100 days, 64 unstably housed youth and young adults (14 to 24 years old) who are unaccompanied or a head of household will be safe and stably housed. 45% will be identified through McKinney-Vento, Department of Health and Human Services, Community Mental Health and Juvenile Justice. The remaining 55% will be identified through the homeless crisis response system.

PROGRESS, SUCCESSES, AND ACHIEVEMENTS

100-DAY CHALLENGE | NORTHERN MICHIGAN | DAY 100 | AUG 10 2019

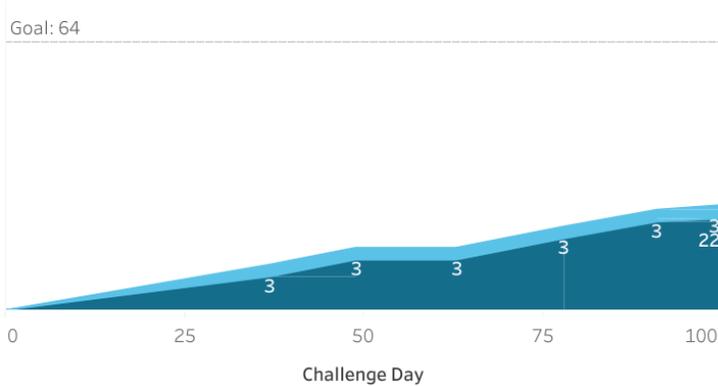
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YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS SAFELY & STABLY HOUSED

25 youth and young adults have been safely and stably housed as of Day 100.

88% were identified by the homeless crisis response system. 12% were identified by other systems.

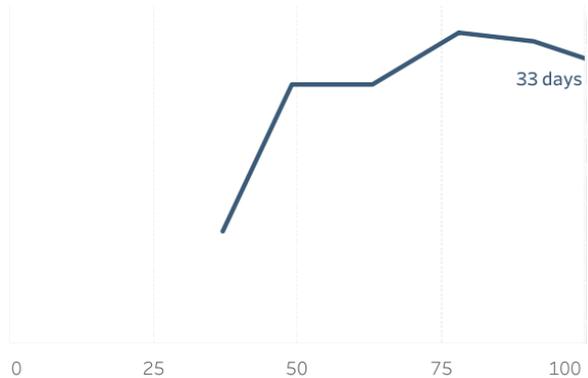
Of the youth and young adults who exited homelessness, 88% went to non-time-limited destinations and 12% to time-limited destinations.



YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

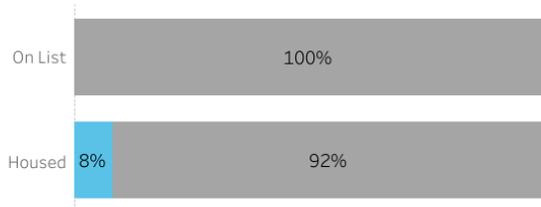
67% of youth and young adults report most frequently sleeping on couches.

As of Day 100, youth and young adults have been on the BNL for an average of 33 days.

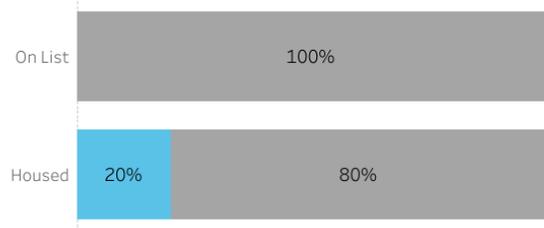


**FOCUS ON POPULATION PROPORTIONALITY**

Of youth and young adults on the by-name lists, 0% are LGBTQ+, but 8% of those housed are LGBTQ+ youth and young adults.



Of youth and young adults on the by-name lists, 0% are people of color, but 20% of those housed are people of color.



GOAL	RESULTS
<p>In Northern Michigan, in 100 days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>64 unstably housed YYA will be safe and stably housed.</li> <li>45% will be identified through McKinney-Vento, Department of Health and Human Services, Community Mental Health, and Juvenile Justice. 55% will be identified through the homeless crisis response team.</li> </ul>	<p>As of Day 100:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>25 unstably housed YYA were stably housed.</li> <li>18 at-risk YYA remain on the by-name list.</li> <li>13% of referrals came from McKinney-Vento, Department of Health and Human Services, Community Mental Health, and Juvenile Justice.</li> <li>87% of referrals came from the homeless crisis response team.</li> </ul>

**SUCCESSES IN INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION**

**YOUTH-SPECIFIC CASE MANAGEMENT**

Northern Michigan’s 100-Day Challenge helped local service providers look at case management from a new youth-specific, needs-focused lens. Service providers utilized the 100-Day Challenge as an opportunity to educate themselves and other community partners on youth-based case management, including adoption of youth-specific case management methods to best support youth experiences and strengths. Since the Northern Michigan 100-Day Challenge has ended, local case managers and other staff have attended a youth-led Adulthood Workshop and have utilized True Colors’ Youth Collaboration Toolkit and other tools to prepare staff for working with youth clients and provide case management services. Key stakeholders in the community are also looking to implement youth-based discussions as part of all upcoming bi-weekly Case Review meetings. The 100-Day Challenge helped create a culture of introspection and continued learning among Northern Michigan’s case managers and other service provider staff to be better prepared and better informed in order to work with youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in their community.

**CROSS-SYSTEM PARTNERSHIPS**

Northern Michigan's 100-Day Challenge resulted in new and strengthened partnerships around preventing and ending youth homelessness. Representatives from the local CoC, child welfare system, behavioral health, education, youth housing and service providers and youth with lived experience were involved in designing the Northern Michigan 100-Day Challenge and identifying priority focus areas for the Challenge. The 100-Day Challenge Team determined that one of the most important outcomes for this effort would be to form better connections to mainstream resources such as education, foster care and juvenile justice. Demonstrating this commitment to cross-system partners, one of the team leaders chosen for the 100-Day Challenge was a McKinney-Vento Liaison who was very involved in helping to integrate and form connections between the school system and housing and homelessness system.

The 100-Day Challenge also saw the successful engagement of the Wexford-Missaukee Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness, with DHHS offering access to one of their housing units for youth in emergency situation. The 100-Day Challenge team also improved communication with adult shelter providers to form stronger connections and begin conversations around serving youth and young adults.

**PRIORITIZATION OF YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS**

Northern Michigan was able to leverage the 100-Day Challenge to critically evaluate the current prioritization process for subpopulations of persons experiencing homelessness and reprioritize youth across the ten-county NWCEH region. The Northern Michigan 100-Day Challenge Team chose to address the reprioritization of youth experiencing homelessness as part of a larger conversation with community partners about effectively preventing and ending homelessness through strategic prioritization efforts. This framework helped to increase stakeholder buy-in and address concerns that other subpopulations such as Veterans and individuals experiencing chronic homelessness would be negatively impacted by changes to the prioritization process.

The 100-Day Challenge Team utilized past experiences and lessons learned from efforts to prioritize individuals experiencing chronic homelessness to develop a refined message around the importance of equitably prioritizing youth for housing and services, with a particular focus on preventing adult, chronic homelessness by quickly helping youth exit homelessness and achieve housing stability. Northern Michigan also has a relatively small number of youth experiencing homelessness; therefore, the 100-Day Challenge Team emphasized that by ensuring that highly-vulnerable youth were equitably prioritized for housing and services, youth homelessness could truly and effectively be ended among the ten NWCEH CoCs. As a result of these efforts, Northern Michigan was able to develop a new "zipper" prioritization process that alternately prioritizes individuals from several subpopulation groups – including youth, Veterans, and individuals experiencing chronic homelessness – in order to ensure that the most vulnerable members of each subpopulation were able to access housing and services. This process creates consistent movement from the by-name list into housing and services and allows for the improved prioritization of youth experiencing homelessness without taking away focus from other priority populations among the Northern Michigan CoCs.

## **DIVERSION, FAMILY REUNIFICATION, AND HOUSING INTERVENTIONS**

The 100-Day Challenge helped Northern Michigan identify the most effective housing interventions for youth at risk of and experiencing homelessness in Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford counties. During the 100-Day Challenge, Northern Michigan found that there are less youth experiencing unsheltered homelessness in their communities than they had thought, leading the team to increase its focus on how to best identify youth who are at risk of homelessness in order to divert them from experiencing homelessness. Given the limited availability of resources, Northern Michigan had the greatest success ending youth homelessness by assisting family reunification efforts by providing counseling services, case management, and housing problem solving. Throughout the period of the 100-Day Challenge, 66% of youth and young adults who exited homelessness did so through family reunification efforts. This led to a realization among stakeholders that youth service providers should increase services that facilitate and support family reunification for youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Northern Michigan also identified a need to think creatively regarding housing interventions for youth in order to maximize use of existing but limited housing resources. The community experienced success in working with a state funding organization to adjust ESG policies to allow for the utilization of ESG resources for youth and young adults who are "at risk" of becoming homeless. Northern Michigan plans to make a continued investment in host homes, identification of existing affordable housing options, and the creation of new and innovative housing solutions beyond the 100-Day Challenge in order to better meet the needs of local youth experiencing homelessness.

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### **MAINTAINING 100-DAY MOMENTUM**

To preserve the progress made during the 100 days and maintain momentum around preventing and ending youth homelessness, Northern Michigan plans to carry out the following activities:

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

1. Reduce the number of youth experiencing homelessness for the first time.
2. Increase authentic youth engagement in system design through employment and self-advocacy.
3. Grow street outreach in Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford counties for youth ages 14-24.