

# A Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) FAQ: Governance

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Communities selected to participate in the YHDP are required to establish a governance structure designed to help address the system level challenges that individual organizations, coalitions, and agencies are otherwise unequipped to address on their own. The governance structure should have broad stakeholder representation, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, rules for approving decisions, and a process for resolving disagreements. It should be transparent and flexible enough to evolve with the community's coordinated response to prevent and end youth homelessness.

## What does HUD mean by a “governance structure” and what are the expectations for communities selected to participate in the YHDP?

A governance structure in the context of the YHDP is a codified framework of roles, rules and practices that allows the community to make decisions and ensures accountability, fairness, and transparency regarding the community's youth homelessness related activities. In practice, the structure may take the form of a board or committee. It may have subcommittees, a lead agency, shared or rotating leadership, and might be within or simply connected to the existing governance structure of the CoC. To satisfy the governance structure requirement included in the NOFA, communities selected to participate in the YHDP must submit an organizational chart that graphically represents partner relationships and responsibilities and a description of the community's formal decision making process. It must be incorporated into the Coordinated Community Plan that selected communities must submit to HUD within 6 months of the YHDP selection announcement.

## Our community is planning to apply for selection as one of the participating communities in the YHDP. Must we already have a YHDP-specific governance structure before we submit our application?

No. A YHDP-specific, or youth homelessness-specific, governance structure is not a threshold criterion for applying for participation in the YHDP. However, existing coordinated community efforts to address youth homelessness may help a community respond to application questions located in Section V.A.1 of the YHDP NOFA. HUD encourages communities to review these questions carefully and to begin to develop system level responses designed to prevent and end youth homelessness as soon as possible. If selected, your community will be expected to develop a governance structure for the YHDP and incorporate it as a part of the Coordinated Community Plan that you will be required to submit to HUD.

## Which partners must be represented in the governance structure?

HUD requires that the local CoC, local or state public child welfare agency, and a youth advisory board take formal roles within the community's YHDP governance structure. HUD also expects that the community will include as many of the other partners that are described in Section III.C.3.b of the YHDP NOFA as possible:

- Runaway and Homeless Youth Providers
- Local and State Educational Agencies
- Local and State Government
- Public Housing Authorities
- Institutions of Higher Education
- Landlords

- Community Development Corporations
- Non-Profit Youth Organizations
- Affordable Housing Developers
- Juvenile and Adult Corrections and Probation
- Local Advocacy, Research, and Philanthropy
- Health and Substance Abuse Agencies
- Privately Funded Homeless Organizations
- WIOA Boards and Employment Agencies

The governance structure may include partners that HUD has not described in the NOFA and the number and types of partners will be determined at the local level based on the existence of these partners, their capacity, and the needs of the community.

HUD understands that coordinating a broad group of diverse stakeholders is challenging work, particularly when collaborations are new or relationships are strained; however, the work of building a collaborative group of diverse stakeholders is central to the work of developing a coordinated community approach. Communities should identify partners, share values, cultivate stakeholder buy in, and formalize partnership roles with as many youth and homelessness related partners as possible and should view their organizational chart as a living document that is updated as partners and responsibilities evolve over time.

### What does HUD expect with respect to a decision making process?

HUD requires that each selected community develop a formal process for making decisions. The process should be inclusive of the partners represented in the organizational chart, respectful of the roles of the partners and the resources that they represent, and transparent to both the partners and the public. The process must include a specific mechanism for resolving disagreements and should be subject to feedback and a process of continual improvement.

### Can we use an existing structure and process to satisfy the requirement of creating a governance structure and decision making process?

Yes. Communities may have existing youth committees within the CoC or other inter-organizational structures that coordinate the local effort to prevent and end youth homelessness. Communities should consider the following when assessing existing governance structures:

- **Operational Capacity:** Leading the YHDP will require significant resources. A governance structure should include partners willing to dedicate staff to operate the convening, information gathering, recruiting, mobilizing, and decision making processes.
- **Membership:** A successful governance structure will require the perspectives and resources of as many youth stakeholders as possible. At a minimum, existing structures must include the required partners (local CoC, local or state public child welfare agency, and a youth advisory board), but they should also include as many of the partners that are described in Section III.C.3.b of the YHDP NOFA as possible. Leadership should regularly solicit stakeholder participation and establish a formal process to add membership, as needed.
- **Formal Authority:** Making system level decisions requires persons of decision making authority across a broad and diverse group of stakeholders. YHDP governance participants should be able to fully represent partner constituents and organizations, including the ability to make decisions.
- **Trust and Efficacy:** The successful development and implementation of an impactful YHDP plan requires robust partnership and collaboration. Stakeholders from a variety of organizations and sectors must trust that the governance structure will value their perspectives and be effective.