

SOUTHERN NEVADA PLAN TO END YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

With the third-highest prevalence of youth homelessness in the nation, Southern Nevada is experiencing a startling crisis that demands immediate action. The Southern Nevada Homeless Continuum of Care (SNH CoC), a group of local stakeholders committed to addressing homelessness in the community, counted 2,096 unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness — nearly a third of the entire homeless population in the area — in its annual Point-in-Time (PIT) count in 2017. Even more alarming is that 93 percent of these youth are sleeping either outside or in places not meant for human habitation, like their car or an abandoned building.

Federal leaders and communities across the country now recognize that youth experiencing homelessness require a response that accounts for their specific situations and stage of life. Without such tailored interventions, youth will remain in the homeless system without the necessary supports to exit, and will become our future population of adults experiencing chronic homelessness.

Thanks to the creative collaboration of a diverse group of funders, national experts, community stakeholders, and youth and young adults who have themselves experienced homelessness, the Southern Nevada Plan to End Youth Homelessness is in our hands. This Plan will serve as a roadmap for the many partners working together to prevent and end youth homelessness in Southern Nevada.

CREATING THE PLAN

This Plan is the result of a collaborative community effort by individuals and organizations, led by the Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth (NPHY); Las Vegas Sands; Clark County Social Service, the SNH CoC collaborative applicant; the SNH CoC Planning Working Group, represented by the City of Las Vegas; the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Greenspun College of Urban Affairs; and Young Adults in Charge (YAC), Southern Nevada's Youth Action Board.

In November 2017, our community came together for the first annual Southern Nevada Youth Homelessness Summit, presented by NPHY and Las Vegas Sands. This community-wide event served as a kickoff to the Movement to End Youth Homelessness in Southern Nevada (the Movement), an initiative to build a focused and sustained effort to end youth homelessness in the region. The Movement was tasked with producing the first-ever Southern Nevada Plan to End Youth Homelessness.

The Movement's decision-making structure was based on four core teams working in coordination. **Young Adults in Charge** was established to ensure that voices of youth led the drafting of the Plan from the very beginning. This group began by meeting monthly, and then elected to meet weekly as its membership grew. YAC representatives also participated in meetings of the **Joint Decision-Making Team (JDMT)**, which was comprised of Movement leaders, including Plan funders, and was tasked with reviewing all Plan components and making final determinations about what content to include. The **Planning Team**, made up of key community stakeholders and youth-serving providers, acted as the driver of the Plan throughout much of the process, synthesizing and packaging all information and recommendations for JDMT to consider. Finally, an expanded version of the **SNH CoC Youth Working Group (YWG+)** was made up of members of the SNH CoC's existing Youth Working Group and newly invited subject matter experts. This group provided community input throughout the process, along with others who were brought in to address specific topics.

To keep up with progress on the Plan, visit the Movement at www.nphy.org/themovement.

OUR VISION FOR SUCCESS

We will know the Plan has succeeded when our community's coordinated response system can ensure that homelessness among unaccompanied youth is rare, brief, one-time, and equitably addressed.

These criteria are modeled on federal standards that define homelessness among youth as **rare** when homelessness does not occur often, and when youth and young adults do not exit our public systems into unstable housing conditions. Homelessness among youth is **brief** when, if a young person does experience homelessness, their experience in the homeless services system lasts only a short time. Homelessness among youth is **one-time** when after exiting the homeless services system into housing, youth remain stably housed and do not return to homelessness. Homelessness among youth is **equitably addressed** when all youth experiencing homelessness, regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender identity, gain equitable access to our system and its services and have equitable exits to safe and stable housing.

Six principles, described in detail in the Plan, will guide our efforts as we make the changes necessary to meet these standards. Our system to end youth homelessness will...

- ... **be person-centered.**
- ... **be accessible and equitable.**
- ... **provide comprehensive wraparound housing and support.**
- ... **promote accountability.**
- ... **be as efficient as possible.**
- ... **be collaboration-focused.**

GOALS

As the convener of federal bodies addressing the issue of homelessness, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has published criteria and benchmarks on ending youth homelessness. After discussion, the decision-making groups in the Movement decided that USICH criteria would form the best framework for the goals of our own Plan, and would help propel our community towards the vision of making youth homelessness rare, brief, one-time, and equitably addressed.

Our goals outline in broad terms what the community hopes to achieve. In the Plan, each of these goals is defined by specific objectives and supported by metrics that will keep us accountable to our vision and make our work transparent to all stakeholders.

- 1** The community identifies all unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness.
- 2** The community uses prevention and diversion strategies whenever possible, and otherwise provides immediate access to low-barrier crisis housing and services to any youth who needs and wants it.
- 3** The community uses coordinated entry processes to effectively link all youth experiencing homelessness to housing and services that are tailored to their needs.
- 4** The community acts with urgency to swiftly assist youth to move into permanent or non-time-limited housing options with appropriate services and supports.
- 5** The community has resources, plans, and system capacity in place to continue to prevent and quickly end future experiences of homelessness among youth.

STRATEGY FOCUS AREAS

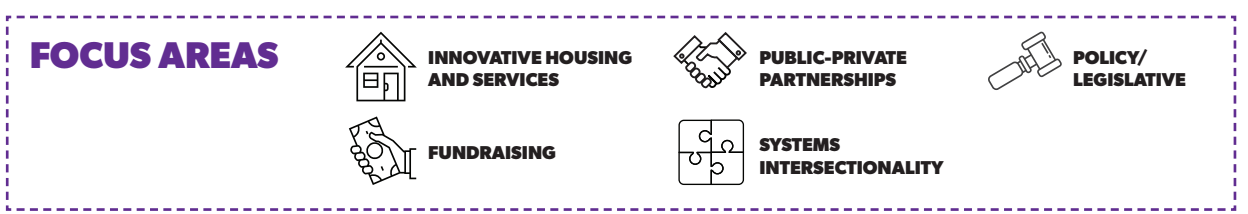
There is no one-size-fits-all approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness, and our goals will not be achieved if we focus all of our efforts in one area alone. Instead, a variety of strategies have been identified that each align with one or more of the following focus areas: Legislative/Policy, Fundraising, Public-Private Partnerships, Housing & Services, and Systems Intersectionality. The strategies will serve as active steps toward achieving each of the five goals of the Plan. Aligning each strategy with one or more of these focus areas will help diverse partners and stakeholders to institutionalize and amplify our successful innovations.

NEXT STEPS

Now the hard work of implementation begins. To succeed, we need the voices and energy of policymakers, service providers, businesses, and community stakeholders. Much like the heavily collaborative planning process, implementation must also be carried out with an all-hands-on-deck approach. Southern Nevada is rich with subject matter experts and systems leaders whose participation will be essential as we move forward. Youth and young adults with lived experience of homelessness will continue to play a central role. Together, we will use the Plan to transform our existing systems and create a sustainable end to youth homelessness in Southern Nevada.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

to make youth homelessness in Southern Nevada rare, brief, one-time, and equitably addressed.



GOAL ONE: THE COMMUNITY IDENTIFIES ALL UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?

- Reduction in unsheltered youth and young adults to zero
- Multiple data sources (HMIS, schools, child welfare, juvenile justice) contribute to a youth-focused list



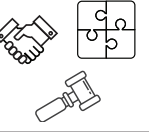
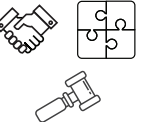
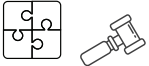
Objective	Strategy	Focus Area
Create a community-wide identification and crisis response system covering the entire CoC. BRIEF	Create comprehensive youth-dedicated outreach with staff who are trained to respond to youth with complex needs	
	Connect the coordinated entry system more intimately with the crisis response system (via system design and easy-to-access transportation)	
Enumerate and collect data on all youth experiencing homelessness and/or who are unsafe or at risk of homelessness under any federal definition. RARE, BRIEF	Create a framework to house, keep, and manage data	
	Look into means of obtaining youth client-level data from the Harbor, CCSD, Nevada System of Higher Education, providers working with pregnant and parenting youth, providers working with commercially sexually exploited children, and other youth service providers beyond homeless service providers	
	Improve the youth component of the annual Southern Nevada Homeless Census	
	Conduct an annual count of all youth experiencing homelessness under any federal definition (including Chapin Hall-style randomized sample surveys to collect better data on unstably housed youth, working with other systems, etc.)	
Ensure outreach and in-reach efforts are tailored to the unique needs of vulnerable youth, including pregnant and parenting youth, LGBTQ youth, minors, youth involved with the juvenile justice or foster care systems, commercially sexually exploited children, and youth with mental health or substance use issues. BRIEF, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED	Train all community outreach teams in current best practices for interacting with vulnerable youth*	

GOAL TWO: THE COMMUNITY USES PREVENTION AND DIVERSION STRATEGIES WHENEVER POSSIBLE, AND OTHERWISE PROVIDES IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO LOW-BARRIER CRISIS HOUSING AND SERVICES TO ANY YOUTH WHO NEEDS AND WANTS IT.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?

- No youth or young adult is exited into homelessness from other systems of care
- Reduction of inflow of youth into the homeless services system
- Zero turnaways or denials from shelters or transitional housing unless the person can be successfully diverted to a safe living environment of their choosing
- Reduction in the number of youth who are experiencing homelessness for the first time



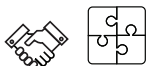




Objective	Strategy	Focus Area
Help youth reunify with or return home to their given or chosen families, as desired. RARE, BRIEF	Increase family engagement, counseling, and reunification services	
	Create support groups for youth experiencing homelessness, families experiencing homelessness, and reunified families*	
	Partner with schools of social work and counseling assistance to support family reunification efforts	
Standardize screening and assessment of youth at imminent risk of homelessness who are referred from other systems to ensure an equitable and quick connection to available services. RARE, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED	Create transition plans for youth who may be enrolled in multiple systems to ensure exit to stable housing	
	Implement a standardized tool to measure the likelihood of housing instability (i.e. those at risk of homelessness) that can be administered upon exit from child welfare, juvenile justice, and other systems	
Offer all youth experiencing homelessness immediate connections to services. BRIEF, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED	Train assessors to refer to services as needed	
	Expand the Safe Place Program	
	Establish a 24/7 hotline or app to connect youth to services	
Increase access to safe shelter options. BRIEF, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED	Create accessible public awareness videos targeted to youth (e.g. for the youth coordinated entry system, youth emergency shelters, etc.)	
	Pilot additional crisis housing options for youth, including host homes and respite beds	

Objective	Strategy	Focus Area
Strengthen partnerships with other youth-serving systems, including child welfare and the juvenile justice and educational systems.	Ensure representation of leaders from other youth-serving systems in CoC leadership	
	Conduct inter-system care coordination at major milestones (ex: intake and exit, school enrollment and graduation, etc.)	
RARE Strengthen connections with law enforcement to ensure behaviors associated with homelessness are not criminalized.	Train law enforcement and private security about the issue of youth homelessness, what resources are available in the community, and how to assess youth who may be experiencing homelessness*	
	Have police conduct Know Your Rights trainings and community forums about youth homelessness*	
	Re-evaluate policies and practices that might criminalize youth experiencing homelessness (ex: status offenses, sex trafficking laws, etc.)	
RARE, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED		

GOAL THREE: THE COMMUNITY USES COORDINATED ENTRY PROCESSES TO EFFECTIVELY LINK ALL YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS TO HOUSING AND SERVICES THAT ARE TAILORED TO THEIR NEEDS.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?













- Average stay in emergency shelter is less than 30 days
- Length of time from assessment to safe and stable housing is less than 90 days

Objective	Strategy	Focus Area
Continue to implement a youth-focused coordinated entry system that is trauma-informed and culturally and linguistically responsive to youth.	Perform quarterly coordinated entry housing assessment trainings that focus on sensitivity training, trauma-informed care, and promote equity*	
BRIEF, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED		
Develop intentional strategies to target vulnerable sub-populations such as LGBTQ youth, commercially sexually exploited children, and youth of color.	Create and distribute outreach materials that reflect diverse populations of youth experiencing homelessness*	
	Sponsor pop-up outreach events at locations that may target youth subpopulations*	
	Create a youth-focused coordinated entry public awareness campaign	
BRIEF, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED		
Ensure coordinated entry processes provide access to housing options for youth with high potential barriers to housing (criminal background, poor credit history, etc.), using a Housing First approach.	Create mental/behavioral health group homes	
	Hire housing navigators to assist youth experiencing homelessness in securing stable and adequate housing	
BRIEF, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED		
Increase connections to coordinated entry throughout the community.	Expand youth coordinated entry to include more youth access sites (including “pop-up” locations), housing assessors, and means of assessment (e.g.: hotlines, online surveys, or apps)*	
BRIEF, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED		

GOAL FOUR: THE COMMUNITY ACTS WITH URGENCY TO SWIFTLY ASSIST YOUTH TO MOVE INTO PERMANENT OR NON-TIME-LIMITED HOUSING OPTIONS WITH APPROPRIATE SERVICES AND SUPPORTS.




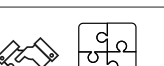












HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?

- Reduction in the number of youth who were previously homeless who return to homelessness within two years
- Higher percentage of youth with increased or sustained employment
- Higher percentage of youth with improved education

Objective	Strategy	Focus Area
Increase inventory of affordable housing, both inside and beyond the homeless services system.	Establish a landlord mitigation fund to incentivize landlords to house young people	
	Conduct outreach to potential landlord partners to encourage them to house young people	
	Pilot long-term host homes*	
	Fund non-time-limited community-based housing for youth that operates with a Housing First orientation	
	Establish tiny-home communities for young adults*	
RARE, BRIEF, ONE-TIME		
Utilize strategies to make non-subsidized housing more affordable to youth in the community.	Implement a roommate matching service for youth*	
	Promote the establishment of a living wage*	
	Expand the HOPE Scholars Program to ensure housing affordability is not a barrier to higher education	
	Establish co-ops for all youth	
	Pass an inclusionary zoning ordinance in Clark County	
BRIEF, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED		
Reduce barriers to ensure youth can meet all of their self-sufficiency needs.	Require in all contracts case management standards and core competencies to include self-sufficiency and financial literacy	
	Incorporate financial literacy into the school curriculum	
BRIEF, ONE-TIME		

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*Strategy developed by Young Adults in Charge

Objective	Strategy	Focus Area
Ensure that youth exiting the homeless system have the supports they need to remain housed.	Establish transition support staff to assist youth exiting the homeless services system	
	Establish community standards for stabilization services that include case management and behavioral/mental/physical health support services, flexible financial supports, and employment and education support*	
ONE-TIME		
Support youth in reaching educational and employment goals that will help them achieve long-term stability.	Increase educational supports in secondary education to ensure more students experiencing homelessness graduate and continue to higher education	
	Provide or promote tutoring and workforce development programs, such as vocational training at schools, to improve access to sustainable careers*	
	Establish peer mentoring and support for students experiencing homelessness*	
	Establish specialized liaisons to help youth move through systems and meet educational and employment goals*	
	Incentivize local employers to hire youth who are currently or formerly homeless	
ONE-TIME		
Improve networks to non-traditional housing options to ensure youth are connected to all available housing.	Establish a set-aside of units for youth-headed households at Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority	
	Connect with Low Income Housing Tax Credit-funded properties to match youth households experiencing homelessness with housing and supportive services	
	Create a points incentive in the NV Qualified Allocation Plan, the annual plan that guides allocation for housing tax credits, for youth aging out of foster care	
BRIEF		
Increase access to basic needs services.	Establish a mobile app to connect youth to available basic needs services (socks, tampons, etc.)	
	Increase transportation accessibility to connect youth to needed services	
	Work with businesses and others to retrieve necessary supplies and create a system to streamline the distribution of goods	
BRIEF, ONE-TIME		
Ensure all provider and program staff are trained to provide high-quality services through practices such as harm reduction, trauma-informed care, and positive youth development, and are accountable and respectful in all interactions with youth.	Establish an accountability system to ensure standards are implemented across homeless service provider agencies (such as certification, CEUs, licensure requirements, monitoring, etc.)	
	Establish an annual Mainstream Program Basic Training-Youth Homelessness Training	
	Conduct an assessment of training requirements and needs for youth service providers	
BRIEF, ONE-TIME, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED		



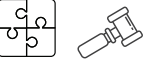






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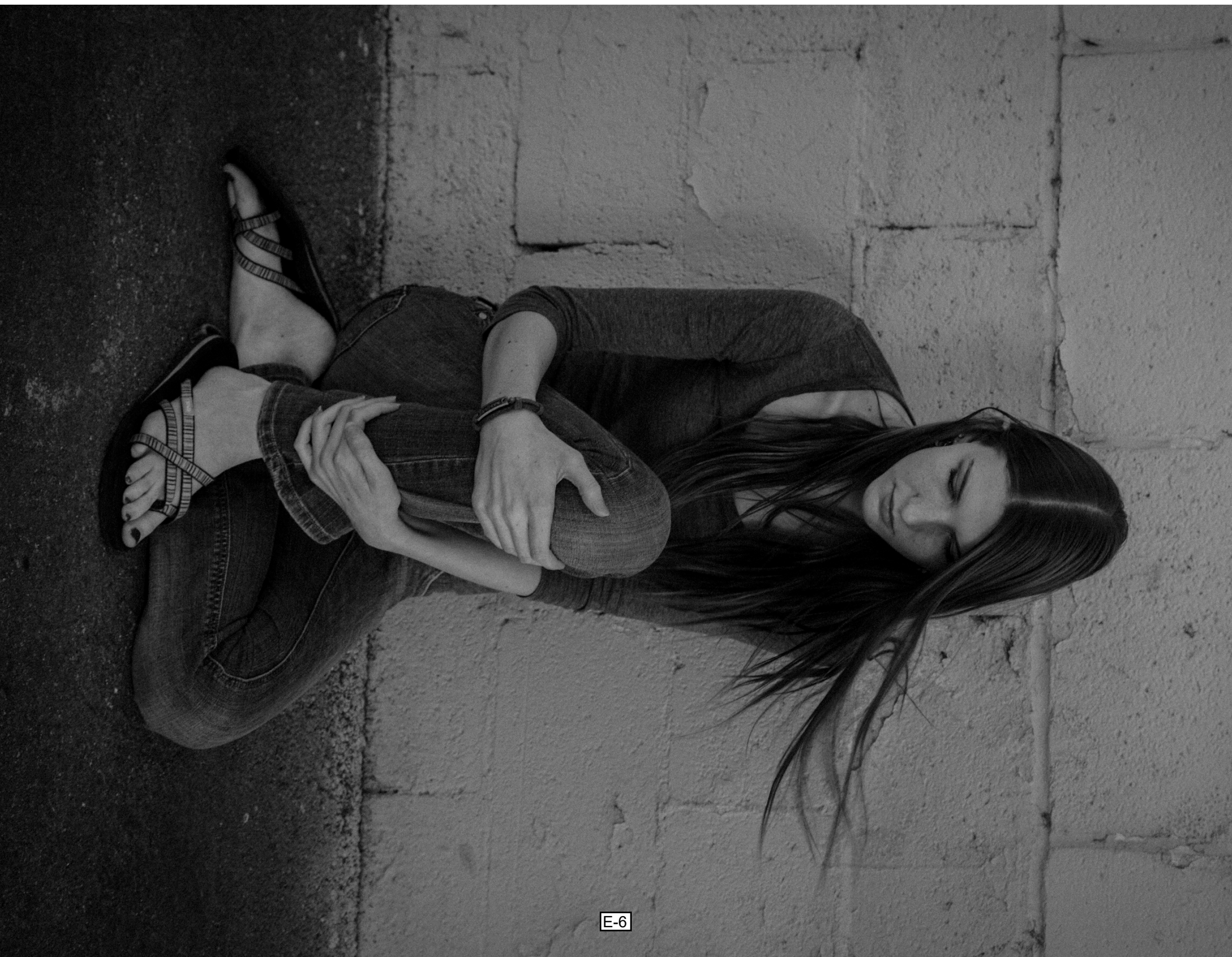
*Strategy developed by Young Adults in Charge

GOAL FIVE: THE COMMUNITY HAS RESOURCES, PLANS, AND SYSTEM CAPACITY IN PLACE TO CONTINUE TO PREVENT AND QUICKLY END FUTURE EXPERIENCES OF HOMELESSNESS AMONG YOUTH.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WHEN WE ACHIEVE THIS GOAL?

- Percentage of exits to permanent housing for youth and young adults of color are greater than or equal to those of white and non-Hispanic youth and young adults
- Percentage of exits to permanent housing for youth and young adults who identify as LGBTQ are greater than or equal to those who identify as straight and cisgender
- The number of youth entering the homeless system is smaller than the number of youth exiting the homeless system
- Reduction in the annual number of youth who are experiencing homelessness

Objective	Strategy	Focus Area
Improve data quality, data use, and data sharing to better understand the needs of youth.	Increase participation of other youth-serving systems (Clark County School District and Clark County Department of Family Services) and other community partners (The Center, Boys & Girls Club) in HMIS	
	Establish a data dashboard that is updated regularly (at least monthly) that informs an annual youth homelessness data report	
	Identify uncaptured/gaps in available data and create methods to capture needed data	
RARE, BRIEF, ONE-TIME, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED		
Increase collaboration between youth-serving systems.	Establish a leadership network that includes policymakers, sector leaders, youth, providers, and others to lead sustainability efforts	
	Develop a funded State Office of Youth Homelessness	
	Create opportunities for youth to act as advisors (e.g. peer mentors, agency liaisons, etc.) to provide recommendations for system guidance and more*	
RARE, BRIEF, ONE-TIME, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED		
Establish funding to support activities in this plan.	Create a funders' coalition to guide funding asks	
	Pass a funding mechanism (taxes, fees, Measure H, or other sustainable efforts)	
	Establish a community collaborative for accessing new funding sources	
RARE, BRIEF, ONE-TIME, EQUITABLY ADDRESSED		



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Even though you usually only see adults over the age of 25 sitting outside asking people for money or help so they can get food, **most people don't even know that there are kids** that's sleeping outside on park benches and having to beg for their next meal because they don't have money to go and buy food. I believe that maybe if we got **more people to speak up** or maybe get these homeless youth centers on the news or something, people would be **aware of what's happening in their city.**

— NJ, Age 19, Las Vegas

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