



YHDP INTRODUCTION

Polk County’s Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) is a comprehensive effort to reduce the number of young people under 25 experiencing homelessness in our community. The program includes federally funded grant projects and a Coordinated Community Plan to build structures and support for young people experiencing homelessness.

AREAS OF FOCUS FOR YOUTH IN OUR COMMUNITY



HOUSING

As our community continues to advocate for more affordable housing choices, additional options are needed for youth and young adults. By providing clear avenues of housing and services for youth, Polk County can ensure our most vulnerable residents have access to safe housing options for long-term stability.

EMPLOYMENT

It’s difficult for many young people to find sustainable work that pays enough to maintain housing, food, and other costs. There’s a great need for Polk County youth to pursue passions, build skills, and develop connections to the community through job and employment opportunities.



EDUCATION

As a community, it’s our role to step in quickly for young adults with necessary programming, supports, and accommodations to connect youth with education, learning, and training opportunities.



SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

For many youth, trauma is often intertwined with mental health concerns and family dynamics. A healing-centered approach serving youth experiencing homelessness can truly address the social/emotional needs of young people while helping them reach safe, stable housing.

OUR YHDP COMMUNITY GOALS

- **GOAL 1**→ The community will join together to prevent youth homelessness by fostering safe, healthy, stable families and permanent connections for youth.
- **GOAL 2**→ The community will identify all youth and young adults who are experiencing or are at imminent risk of experiencing homelessness.
- **GOAL 3**→ The community will rapidly link youth and young adults with safe, affordable, and low-barrier housing of their choice and voluntary supports.
- **GOAL 4**→ The community will provide opportunities and supports that are healing-centered and responsive to the individual strengths of youth experiencing homelessness.
- **GOAL 5**→ The community will improve education and employment outcomes and provide diverse, skill-building opportunities to ensure youth are successful and thriving.
- **GOAL 6**→ The community will eliminate disparities for youth of color and LGBTQ youth to ensure equitable experiences within high quality programs and service



POLK COUNTY'S YHDP-FUNDED PROJECTS

Children & Families of Iowa Joint Transitional Housing/ Rapid Rehousing - \$364,618 for Joint Transitional Housing & Rapid Rehousing program for youth who have experienced domestic violence. The program has a transitional housing component for youth who need a landing spot. And/or youth can also chose to enter the Rapid Rehousing side of the program. The program serves 11 youth 18-24, providing services in domestic violence support, healthy relationship education, substance use treatment, mental health support, and career planning, and education.

Iowa Homeless Youth Centers (IHYC) Rapid Rehousing - \$527,448 for rapid rehousing assistance for youth/young adults, including rental assistance, security deposits, case management and services. The program provides 13 units of scatter site Rapid Rehousing support for young people 18-24 and youth-led families. Youth receive up to 24 months of housing assistance as well as wrap-around supportive services. 2 YHDP Youth Advocates provide young people in the program with tailored case management and one-on-one time to work on the youth's goals, finances, connection to community resources, education, and employment.

Institute for Community Alliances Homeless Management Information System- \$74,940 for YHDP project data evaluation and analysis. The Institute for Community Alliances (ICA) is a crucial partner in the work to support and monitor YHDP direct-service grants. The ICA team provides training, support, and guidance to grantees in utilizing the HMIS data system. ICA also tracks program outcomes, provides evaluation suggestions, and produces reports.

Anawim Housing Youth Permanent Supportive Housing - \$375,464 for a non-time-limited housing assistance and supportive services program for youth ages 18-24 with disabilities. This YHDP Grant project serves youth 18-24 who have a serious mental illness, substance use disorder, or medical need. The program has 12 units available to serve single youth or youth-led families. In addition to housing supports for as long as the youth wants and needs, the program offers an array of intensive supportive services including case management services, life skills training and connection to vocational or educational services. YHOP is staffed by a program manager and peer support specialist.

Primary Health Care Youth Housing Navigator - \$162,446 for this project to help young people 18-24 who are experiencing homelessness navigate the rental market and find housing. Clients in the program have some barriers to finding housing including their age, rental history, and criminal background. The Housing Navigator helps ease those barriers and make connections with landlords. This grant functions as a Supportive Services Only (SSO) grant meaning that the program does not provide rental assistance, but can serve youth who have income or support from other programs to find and maintain housing. Primary Health Care works closely with other organizations in the community to take referrals and hand-offs.

Iowa Homeless Youth Centers Mental Health Network Youth Drop-In Services - \$304,178 for this unique project that functions as a Supportive Services Only (SSO) grant to provide crucial community supports and services to young people. The grant aims to serve at least 75 youth annually at the IHYC Youth Opportunity Center (YOC). This project includes 2 licensed mental health therapists to make mental health support more accessible for youth experiencing homelessness. In addition, drop-in center weekend hours are part of this program for youth to access emergency and basic need items, laundry facilities, life skills classes, and BHIS Services. A Peer Support Advocate serves as a crucial member of the staff for this program.



OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

<p>POLK COUNTY YHDP GUIDING PRINCIPLES #1</p>	<p>POLK COUNTY YHDP GUIDING PRINCIPLES #2</p>
 <p>POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT An intentional, prosocial approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive.</p>	 <p>YOUTH CHOICE An intentional, prosocial approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive.</p>
<p>TRAUMA-INFORMED & HEALING-CENTERED CARE A healing-centered approach views trauma not simply as an individual isolated experience, but rather highlights the ways in which trauma and healing are experienced collectively through events and environments, and offers a strengths-based approach.</p> 	<p>INDIVIDUALIZED AND CLIENT-DRIVEN SUPPORT Our Coordinated Community Plan takes into account the individual needs of all youth, including special populations, who are currently experiencing or at-risk of homelessness.</p> 
 <p>FAMILY ENGAGEMENT For youth experiencing housing instability, family engagement can provide the sense of belonging and nurturing youth need to thrive.</p>	 <p>SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY INTEGRATION These social and community connections will help each YYA to transition into healthy and productive adulthood while developing a sense of purpose through peer groups, volunteerism, work, arts, education, recreation, and chosen activities.</p>
<p>HOUSING FIRST In a Housing First system, assistance and housing is offered to youth without preconditions or barriers to entry such as treatment or service participation requirements.</p> 	<p>CENTRALIZED INTAKE Polk County's Centralized Intake system is designed to limit the re-traumatization that can occur from multiple forms of outreach and assessment.</p> 

MORE INFORMATION

For additional details about Polk County's efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness, visit homewardiowa.org