

Ending Youth Homelessness: A National Prevention Model

Jamie Snyder- Our Family Services CEO
jsnyder@ourfamilyservices.org

Colleen McDonald – Our Family Services CPO
cmcdonald@ourfamilyservices.org

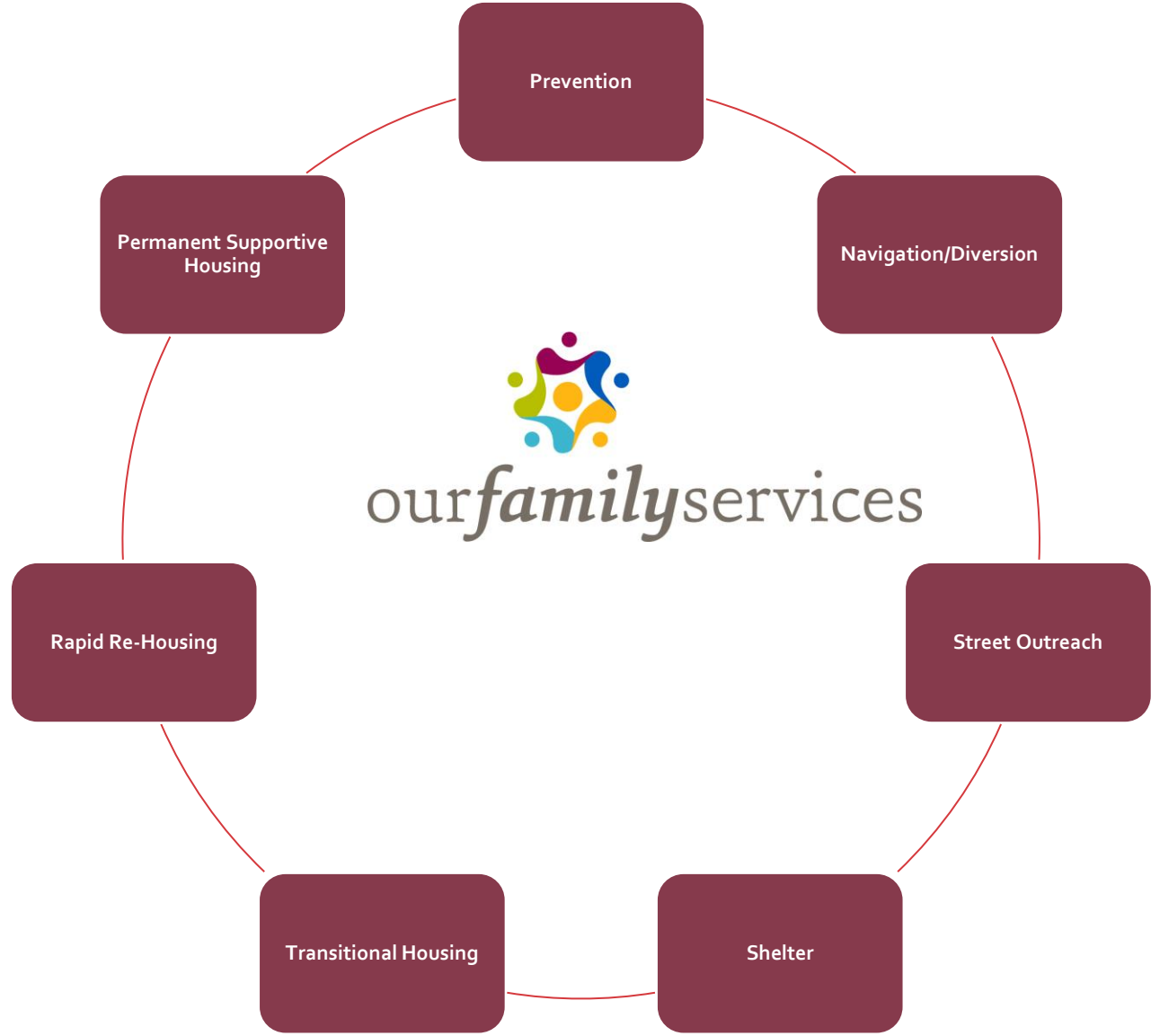
“Recent estimates suggest that as many as one-in-ten young adults aged 18–25 experience some form of homelessness over the course of one year. In addition to the immediate need for shelter, housing unstable young adults face multiple challenges that make them particularly vulnerable. Evidence shows that those who experience homelessness during emerging adulthood often face a number of physical and mental health problems exacerbated by violence and victimization that often result in increased substance use, unplanned and early pregnancy, and early death. **Beyond the adversity associated with homelessness, emerging adulthood is a critical period that often can set a trajectory for the remainder of the life course.**”

Semborski, Sara LCSW. Redline, Brian. Madden, Danielle PHD. Granger, Theresa PHD. Henwood, Benjamin PHD. “Housing interventions for emerging adults experiencing homelessness: A scoping review” Children and Youth Services Review Volume 127, August 2021, 106081 <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8372952/> Accessed on 2/12/2024

1 in 10 young
adults
experience
some form of
homelessness
each year

Our Family's mission is to eliminate homelessness and strengthen our community, and we do this by providing stability in times of crisis, linking people to support and resources, supporting social connectedness, engaging our neighbors to tackle tough community issues, and acknowledging and combating systemic inequities through policies and advocacy.

We envision a socially and economically just community where everyone has a safe, affordable, and stable home.



Prevention Demonstration Pilot Grant (PDP)

- DHHS - Administration for Children and Families has brought 11 agencies across the country together to pilot prevention programs for youth ages 18-21
- Design and deliver community-based demonstration initiatives to prevent youth from experiencing homelessness
- 3 year award with an emphasis on centering youth voices and coordination of partnerships with youth and young adult services providers, community organizations, and private and public agencies
- Demonstrate and measure equitable service delivery; positive outcomes; and a reduction in disparate outcomes for youth of color, youth who identify as LGBTQIA2S+, tribal youth, and other underserved youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability
- Resources and supports include flexible cash assistance, rental/utility assistance, basic needs assistance, and intensive case management

PDP will be carried out using a two-phase process

Phase I – Develop Plan

- 6 Month Planning Period
- Build community around program- establish key partnerships
- Identification and assessment process
- Expand upon responsive strategy
- Co-design alongside youth with lived experience of homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness or housing instability

Phase II – Implementation

- Implement and evaluate prevention interventions for 20 young adults/year for 3 years
- Individualize supportive services through intensive case management
- Distribute flexible cash assistance, reinforcing the agency and independence of young adults
- Implement referral strategy increasing community connection and care

Lessons Learned

What we learned from previous eviction prevention programs was that in order for these programs to be most successful, we had to capture referrals immediately, which was challenging due to the referral/assessment process.

Barriers:

- Relationship to landlord was difficult to salvage
- Expensive – legal fees, excessive late fees, hotel fees, relocation fees – deposit, utilities, etc.
- Negative rental history
- Trauma/survival mode – predatory loans, survival crime, etc.

We needed more time!

Youth Engagement is Critical in Defining the Problem and Finding Solutions

**Nothing about us without us,
incorporate lived experience at every
level**

- Youth Advisory Committee
- Peer Outreach
- Lived experience Case Managers
- Lived experience Board Member(s)
- Lived experience Senior Leadership
- Participant surveys

“It’s more of changing what people think is ‘the time’ to help ... Maybe you should help them when they are on the verge of becoming homeless, or they’re well on the way, and they’re seeking the help beforehand. Instead of, like, when their bank account is zero and they’re on the street, and THEN you help them. Why didn’t you do it when they had a few dollars and a couple of days left? Why couldn’t you do it then?”

EDMONTON YOUTH

WHAT WOULD IT TAKE? Youth Across Canada Speak Out on Youth Homelessness Prevention Kaitlin Schwan, Stephen Gaetz, David French, Melanie Redman, Jesse Thistle, Erin Dej

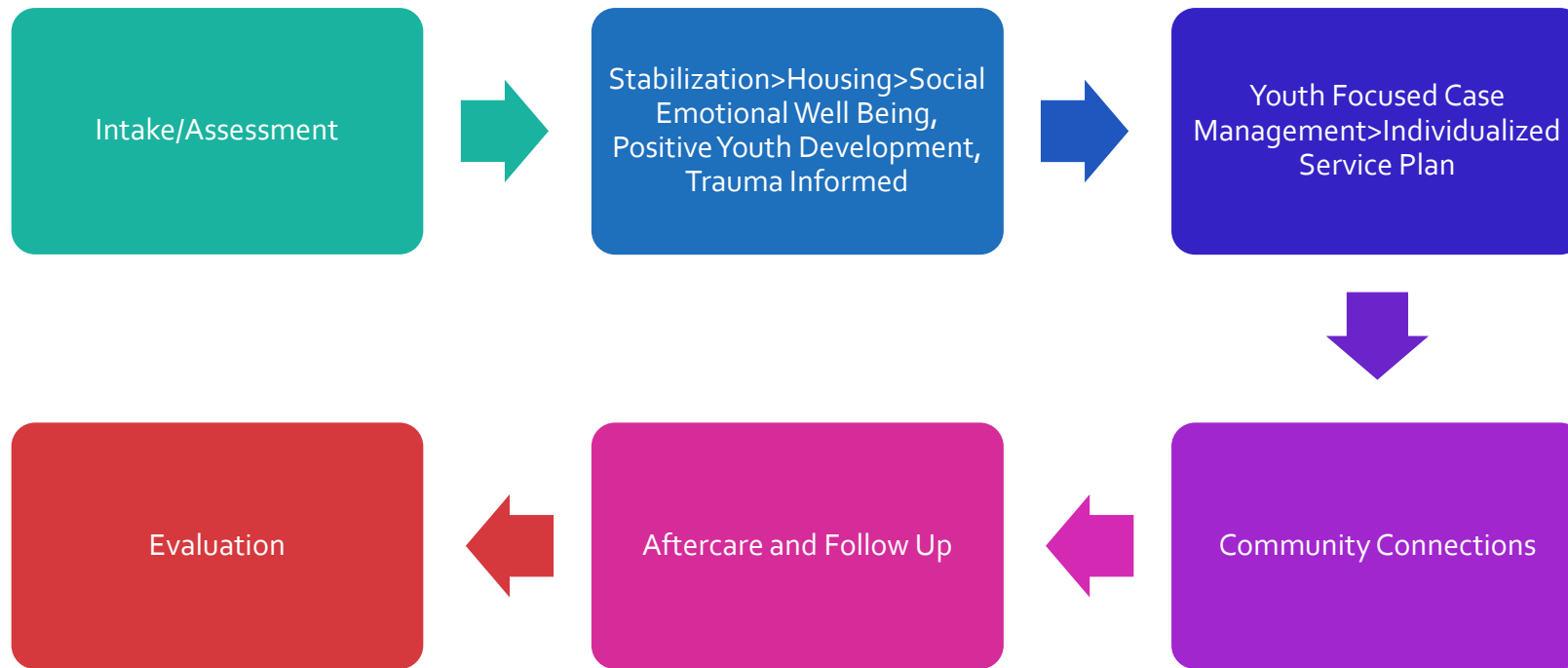
PDP allows us flexibility to continue working with coordinated entry, while collecting comparable data through direct referrals.

Eviction Prevention Model through Coordinated Entry:

- Obtain referrals through Coordinated Entry, individual must have eviction notice – in accordance to HUD’s Category 2: *Imminent risk of homelessness - Residence will be lost within 14 days of the date of application for homeless assistance; No subsequent residence has been identified; and The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.*
- Referrals come through TucsonEvictionHelp.org

Adding flexibility:

- Obtain direct referrals through community partnerships; La Frontera, Jobpath, Goodwill Metro Youth, Pima Community College, SAAF etc.
- Referrals directed to our website for short assessment
- Housing insecurity can be proven through a late notice on rent, giving more time than an eviction notice.



Client Rent & Utilities (20 clients) - \$1500 x 3 months = \$4,500/client

Client Basic Needs (20 clients) - \$1,660.20/client

Flexible Cash Assistance (20 clients)- \$1,000/client – offered according to the individualized service plan – youth choice

Total Cost- \$7,160.20/client

Hotel Vouchers (8 clients)- \$1,554/client (up to 14 nights)

-National
Network
for Youth

Research from cities has shown that a high proportion of their chronically homeless adult population first experienced homelessness as a young person under 25. For example, the City of Seattle found 43% of their unsheltered homeless population first experienced homelessness as a minor (18%) or as a young adult between the ages of 18 and 24 (25%). **Therefore, we will not effectively address homelessness in America unless we boldly focus resources and investments on young people and intervening early.**