



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 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 PROPOSED PROJECT TYPES

Transitional Housing/ Rapid Rehousing - This project will provide short-term, low-barrier, crisis housing for youth while working to quickly exit them to permanent housing. Youth can choose transitional housing and/or rapid rehousing when they enter into the program.

Rapid Rehousing - This project will provide rapid rehousing assistance for youth/young adults, including rental assistance, security deposits, case management and services.

Permanent Supportive Housing - This project will provide non-time-limited housing assistance and supportive services for youth ages 18-24 with disabilities.









Youth Housing Navigator - This project will create a housing system navigator dedicated to helping youth get identified, navigate Centralized Intake, access housing, and connect with benefits and resources.

Mental Health Network - This project aims to support the social/emotional development of youth and young adults with clinical mental health services. Youth have the ability to quickly access services and regularly meet with a peer support navigator.

Youth Drop-In Services – This project allows youth and young adults to stop by for basic services such as showers, food, laundry, clothing, case management, transportation, computers, employment programs, crisis counseling, life skills classes, and other services.



OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

POLK COUNTY YHDP GUIDING PRINCIPLES #1	POLK COUNTY YHDP GUIDING PRINCIPLES #2
 <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> 

OUR YHDP 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