

FY2020 ANNUAL REPORT

VCRHYP

VERMONT COALITION
OF RUNAWAY & HOMELESS YOUTH PROGRAMS

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM (YHDP) KICK-OFF

This year, VCRHYP and our member agencies kicked off four new projects funded as part of Vermont's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program. The following youth-specific projects were piloted at different agencies around the state:

- **Rapid Rehousing** (piloted at 9 agencies) — tenant-based rental subsidies for youth to use in their own apartments while receiving ongoing support from case managers
- **Transitional Housing-Rapid Rehousing Joint Component** (piloted at 3 agencies) — supported housing in apartments managed by agencies, with the guarantee of a Rapid Rehousing voucher when youth are ready to move to more independent housing
- **Housing Navigation** (piloted at 4 agencies) — service coordination designed to help youth as they navigate our different systems of care and work to identify, apply for, and move into housing
- **Landlord Liaison** (piloted at 4 agencies) — community-based work focused on building and improving relationships with landlords so that youth can be more successful in locating housing

These two-year projects will continue through FY21 when VCRHYP will also pilot a fifth project designed to divert youth from experiencing homelessness by providing short-term, flexible financial support.

WHAT WE DO

VCRHYP ensures the existence of a statewide network of local services for Vermont youth who are disconnected from their families, experiencing homelessness, or at risk of becoming homeless. All Vermont youth should have a safe place to stay and access to supports as they build permanent connections and skills for long-term stability and well-being.

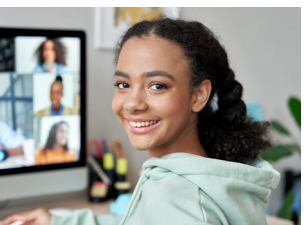
Services our members provide include:

Emergency shelter for youth 12-17: Youth are provided with 24-hour access to safe shelter and supports to meet their basic needs.

Housing for young people 16-24 years old: Young people are supported through transitional housing apartments, rental subsidies, mediation with landlords to preserve housing, help finding housing, eviction prevention, connections to other housing supports, and information about housing rights.

Independent living supports: Youth receive services designed to move them towards a successful adulthood by helping them re-engage with education, increase employability, and build vital life skills to help them achieve sustainable self-sufficiency.

Youth and family reunification & stabilization supports: Youth and their families have access to crisis intervention, case management, counseling, family mediation and other supportive services to stabilize youth in crisis, prevent them from running away and preserve families.



YOUTH AND FAMILY REUNIFICATION & STABILIZATION SUPPORTS

64

youth served

16 youth provided with emergency shelter

HOW DID COVID-19 IMPACT OUR WORK?

Staying connected:

VCRHYP members had to make an abrupt shift from in-person work to remote/virtual work. This created unique challenges when it came to providing some of our core services, such as outreach, as well as establishing meaningful relationships with the youth in our programs. A lack of consistent internet, access to technology, and safe, private spaces to have sensitive conversations was a very common experience for youth and families, requiring youth care workers to come up with creative ways to stay connected and do this important work.

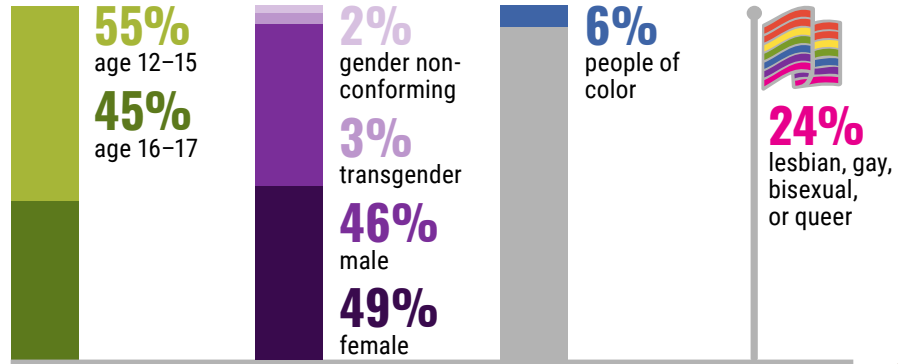
Ensuring safe housing:

VCRHYP programs utilize a variety of housing models, such as host homes and shared transitional housing settings. Member agencies had to find ways to safely house youth while following CDC guidance on physical distancing, testing, quarantining, and deep cleaning. Some youth and families expressed concerns about accessing shelter during stay-at-home orders and some of our host home providers were unable to provide shelter in their homes due to being at high risk of contracting COVID-19.

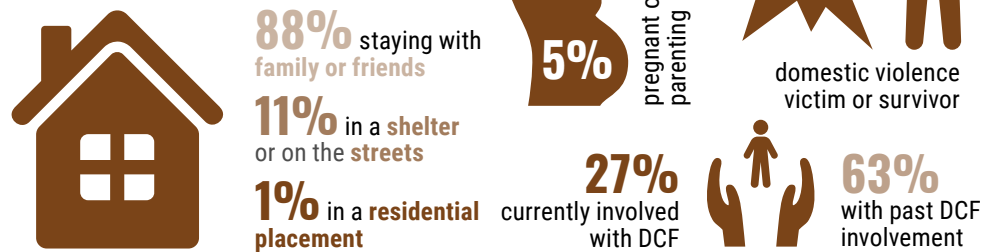
Connecting youth with services:

Systems of care all around Vermont were faced with new and increased challenges as a result of the pandemic. VCRHYP members rely on strong partnerships with other community providers to meet the needs of youth and their families. When our state's systems of care are overburdened or under-resourced, this is felt across the entire continuum of care.

WHO WE'RE SERVING



AT TIME OF ENTRY



HOW WE'RE DOING

Social & Emotional Well-being



100% have health insurance at exit

89% have seen a primary health care provider by exit

93% accessed counseling while being served

Permanent Connections



91% report a connection to one or more caring adult at exit

82% report a connection to at least one supportive peer at exit

82% report positive community connections outside of the program at exit

Stable Housing



Education & Employment

93% are attending school or employed at exit

LOCATIONS AT EXIT:

- 88% family/friends
- 3% medical/treatment setting
- 2% transitional housing
- 2% foster care
- 3% emergency shelter
- 2% unknown

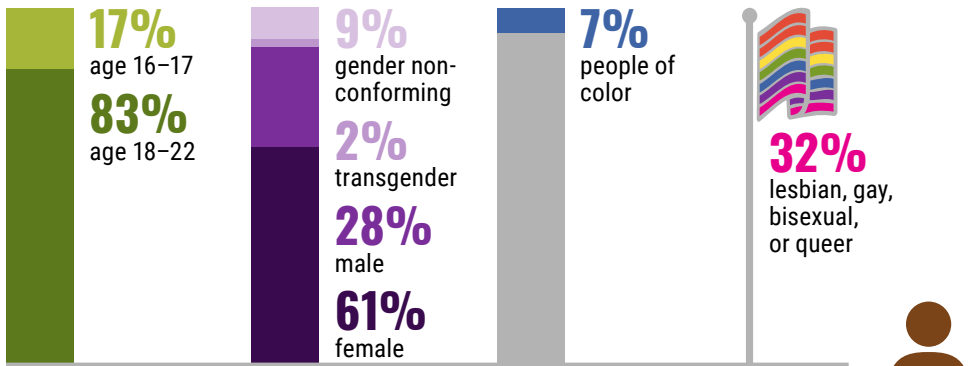
INDEPENDENT LIVING SUPPORTS

54
youth served

WHO WE'VE SERVED IN YHDP PROJECTS

The Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program began in January 2020 (see front page). Since then...

WHO WE'RE SERVING



26 youth-led households received **Rapid Rehousing** vouchers

→ **46** people made up these households, including **13** children under the age of 5

5 youth-led households were housed through the **Transitional Housing-Rapid Rehousing Joint Component Project**

→ **8** people made up these households, including **2** children under the age of 5

86 youth and **6** of their children were provided with **Housing Navigation** services

→ **62%** exited services into **permanent housing** (including renting their own apartments and staying with family/friends on a permanent basis)

→ **15%** exited services into **temporary housing** (including transitional housing, residential projects, and staying with family/friends on a temporary basis)

AT TIME OF ENTRY



54% staying with family or friends
24% in other transitional housing
17% in a shelter or on the streets
6% in foster care



30% pregnant or parenting
4% currently involved with DCF



50% domestic violence victim or survivor



63% with past DCF involvement

HOW WE'RE DOING

Social & Emotional Well-being



97% have health insurance at exit

71% have seen a primary health care provider by exit

82% accessed life skills counseling while being served

Permanent Connections



76% report a connection to one or more caring adult at exit

71% report a connection to at least one supportive peer at exit

Education & Employment



66% are attending school or have a diploma/GED at exit

68% are employed or looking for work

Stable Housing



79% of exits were to safe locations

LOCATIONS AT EXIT:

37% family/friends

37% independent living

5% other transitional housing program

18% emergency shelter or streets

3% unknown

CAPACITY

In FY20 VCRHYP had:

- **51 transitional housing units**
- **21 year-round emergency shelter beds**
- **27 rental subsidy vouchers**

In FY21 we are expanding our capacity by adding **15 short-term (up to 6 months) rental subsidies** through our new Diversion project!

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM



MAGGIE MERRIAM

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our Board of Directors is made up of leaders from each member agency. The Board works together to make the crucial decisions that improve youth programs throughout Vermont.

CONNIE SANDAHL
Northeast Kingdom Youth Services
St. Johnsbury

JEFF HUNSBERGER
Lamoille Family Center
Morrisville

AMY JOHNSON
Northwestern Counseling & Support Services
St. Albans

DONNA BAILEY
Addison County Parent Child Center
Middlebury

JACKIE HANLON
Windsor County Youth Services
Ludlow

STEPHANIE BOWEN
Northeast Kingdom Community Action
Newport

WILL TOWNE
Spectrum Youth & Family Services
Burlington

RUSSELL BRADBURY-CARLIN
Youth Services, Inc.
Brattleboro

KREIG PINKHAM
Washington County Youth Service Bureau *
Montpelier

**VCRHYP contracts with the Washington County Youth Service Bureau to act as the Coalition's Fiscal Agent.*

Report design by Dana Dwinell-Yardley: ddydesign.com

LETTER FROM VCRHYP'S BOARD CHAIR



Resilience is, among other things, the ability to adapt to change. This past year has been a year that has demonstrated the resilience of the Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs, its member agencies, and the youth that those agencies serve.

The Covid-19 pandemic up-ended the already precarious lives of homeless and runaway young people in ways that we will likely be assessing for years to come. It also, in different ways, up-ended the work-systems of the agencies that support these youth. It impacted the individual people who make up these agencies.

And yet, we all found ways to adapt. Each VCRHYP member agency, in its own way, turned-on-a-dime and was able to continue serving the youth they are committed to support. Agencies leaned into virtual communications – which in some cases actually led to a greater ability to support youth – while others found ways to do in-person work that was safe. The resilience of these agencies means many of us are looking at ways to take what actually worked better during the pandemic and retain those practices.

This past year also saw VCRHYP itself contend with additional transitions when their director, Bethany Pombar, stepped down to pursue a new career. Fortunately, the staff and board of VCRHYP, were able to lean into the brave new world of virtual interviewing and hired a new director, Maggie Merriam.

Adaptation in the face of crisis. Creative flexibility in times of great transitions. These are key elements of resilience. And, VCRHYP and its member agencies demonstrated their collective ability to be resilient this past year and will continue to as we move forward into the future.

*Russell Bradbury-Carlin, VCRHYP Board Chair
Executive Director, Youth Services Inc.*

FINANCES

As a result of COVID, VCRHYP's financial audit was delayed. FY20 financial information will be posted to our website at a later date.



FUNDERS: US Administration for Children and Families – Family and Youth Services Bureau, US Department of Housing and Urban Development, Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness, Vermont Department for Children and Families

DONORS: Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Kuntz, Whilte Light Foundation, Allen Sherman & Marion Nelson, Terry Harlow, and John Chest