



VERMONT COALITION
OF RUNAWAY & HOMELESS YOUTH PROGRAMS

Transitional Living Program - Request for Proposals

The Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs (VCRHYP) seeks proposals from public and/or nonprofit entities to act as a subcontractor for our Transitional Living Program (TLP) in the Rutland County area for FFY21 and FFY22. Funding passed to the selected subcontractor has been awarded to VCRHYP by the Family & Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) of the Administration for Children & Families under the Department for Health and Human Services. The selected subcontractor will be eligible to continue subcontracting with VCRHYP beyond FFY22 provided they are in good standing and VCRHYP receives sufficient funding levels from FYSB in future grant cycles.

Note: VCRHYP is also [seeking proposals for our Basic Center Program](#) in the Rutland County area and encourage interested applicants to apply for both projects.

Brief project description: Project supports runaway and homeless youth, ages 16 to under 22, with transitional shelter and case management services to assist them in reaching self-sufficient, independent living.

Annual funding availability: \$42,106

Annual match requirement: \$5,409

Annual target: a minimum of 3 transitional shelter beds

Applicants should review the project overview contained in this document and then complete the following:

- Transitional Living Program Application
- TLP Budget & Justification Worksheet

Questions about the application process or requests for technical assistance in developing your application should be directed to Bethany Pombar at bpombar@vcrhyp.org.

Bidder's meetings will be held on June 17, 1:00-2:00pm and July 8, 11:00am-12:00pm. Contact bpombar@vcrhyp.org to register.

Completed applications and budget worksheets are due to the grant review team, via Ari Kisler (akisler@vcrhyp.org), by 4pm on July 31, 2020. Selected proposals will be notified by September 1, 2020.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROJECT GOAL & VISION

Goal: Help runaway and homeless youth, ages 16 to under 22, establish sustainable living and well-being for themselves, and, if applicable, their dependent children.

Vision: Implement, enhance, and support effective strategies for successful transition to sustainable living for runaway and homeless youth, ages 16 to under 22 and, if applicable, their dependent children.

PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Youth are eligible to be served by the project if they:

- are between the ages of 16 to under 22 at entry; and
- are not in the legal custody of the child welfare/juvenile justice system; and
- have run away¹, been pushed out of the home, or are otherwise homeless²; or
- have threatened to run away or are at risk of being pushed out of the home; and
- have no safe alternative living arrangement.

Youth may be pregnant and/ or parenting, and/ or living alone or with a partner.

Projects must clearly document a youth's eligibility for the program, including documenting how it was determined that the youth was at risk of being pushed out of the home, running away, or becoming homeless. Documentation may include referral forms, intake paperwork, and/or contact notes.

PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Consistent with the statutory mandates set forth in the [Runaway and Homeless Youth Act](#) (RHYA), the regulatory requirements set forth in the [RHY Rule](#), and in alignment with [VCRHYP's Program Standards](#), TLP projects provide the following components:

1) Transitional Shelter: Projects provide safe and stable housing throughout a continuous period not to exceed 540 days, or in exceptional circumstances, 635 days. *Note: Youth who have not reached 18 years of age on the last day of a 635-day stay in transitional shelter may remain in the program until their 18th birthday.*

Annual target: a minimum of 3 transitional shelter beds

¹ Defined as: An individual who is less than 18 years of age and who absents themselves from home or place of legal residence without the permission of a parent or legal guardian.

² Defined as: An individual for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative and who has no other safe alternative living arrangement.

Transitional shelter models: Transitional shelter is provided through beds located in congregate care shelters, host homes, or supervised apartments.

- Congregate care shelter: A shelter type, not family home, that combines living quarters and restroom facilities with centralized dining services shared living spaces, and access to social and recreational activities.
 - Congregate care shelters must accommodate no fewer than 4 and not more than 20 youth in a single structure.
- Host home: A family or single adult home or domicile, other than that of a parent or permanent legal guardian, that provides shelter to youth.
 - When recruiting/ selecting host home providers, projects must:
 - Conduct in-depth interviews with candidates
 - Check personal references
 - Conduct required background checks (see pg 7 for list of requirements)
 - Inspect homes to ensure living space is adequate, clean, and safe
- Supervised apartment: A type of shelter setting using building(s) with separate residential units, master-leased or owned by an agency, where client supervision is provided on site or on call 24 hours a day.

Requirements for transitional shelter:

- Projects provide direct on-site or on-call supervision at each shelter facility that is not a host home.
 - In host home settings, the host home provider supervises the youth, with regular and ongoing support and coordination from project staff.
- Staff are available on-site or on-call 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week to support crisis needs of youth in shelter.
- A supervision plan is developed and documented for any 16- or 17-year-old housed in the project. The plan must include:
 - How frequently in-person supervision will occur
 - How a youth will reach supervising case managers or on-call staff 24/7
 - Other necessary contact information or plans to ensure safety and security
- A staff-to-youth ratio of less than 1:10 is maintained to ensure that all youth receive adequate supervision and services.
- Transportation to the shelter is available, as needed by youth, and barriers to entry are low enough that it is easily accessible by youth.

- Staff are prepared and trained to interact with youth victims of trafficking or other similar traumatic experiences.

2) Basic Life Skills Resources and Counseling: Projects have a plan or curricula that supports every youth, either in group or individual settings, in developing fundamental basic life skills.

Requirements for basic life skills resources and counseling:

- Basic life skills include: money management, budgeting, consumer education, use of credit; interpersonal skill building; educational advancement; job attainment skills; healthy relationships; mental and physical health care; individual and/or group counseling and parent/child counseling; and recreation and leisure activities
- Projects ensure youth are engaged in educational advancement, job attainment skills, or work activities while in the program.

3) Case Management: Projects identify and assess the youth's needs and, as appropriate, arrange, coordinate, monitor, evaluate, and advocate for a package of services to meet those needs.

Requirements for case management:

- Projects implement standardized methods to assess eligibility and the services required to meet the immediate needs of youth.
 - Screening tools should be evidence-based or evidence-informed and able to identify the unique needs of runaway and homeless youth, such as: physical health, potential victimization, behavioral health, connection to family, safety, access to resources, issue of neglect or abuse, and other risk and protective factors.
 - Screening should guide identification, assistance, and referrals for the delivery of appropriate services.
 - Projects complete periodic ongoing assessment to ensure interventions are meeting a youth's needs.
 - Projects screen all youth for human trafficking and sexual exploitation while they are in the program.
- Case managers develop, with every youth receiving services, a written service plan based on the youth's goals that includes evidence-informed strategies to assist with the trajectory of achieving sustainable living.
 - Plans are developed within 30 business days a youth's entry into the program and should address stable housing, employment, education, permanent connections, social and emotional wellbeing, and basic life skills development needs.

- Plans should highlight support or activities required to achieve the desired goals, wants, and needs of the youth.
 - Projects should do everything they can to support the choices made by youth, including in the services that they receive. Plans should be created with youth input and reflect youth voice.
 - Plans should ensure youth have access to important documents and paperwork (e.g. birth certificate, social security care, identification care, medical reports, credit reports)
 - Plans are updated at least every 6 months the youth is in the program.
- Case managers meet with youth at least weekly and document these meetings in case notes.
- Projects work with their local CoC to ensure that referrals are available to other housing resources, including adult mainstream housing and youth housing.
 - As appropriate, youth are assessed for the Coordinated Entry system.

Note: at this time referrals to TLPs do not need to come from the Coordinated Entry system, but this is likely to change in the future.
- Projects have a suitable referral plan, based on an assessment of needs, to ensure youth have access to additional services outside of the program while being served and after program exit.
 - Service linkages should include, but are not limited to: social services; law enforcement; educational services and schools (including McKinney-Vento liaisons and access to FAFSA resources); vocational training and employment training services; welfare programs; legal services; anti-trafficking agencies or services for victims of human trafficking; health care programs, including health insurance options; affordable child care; child education programs; mental health care providers; substance abuse treatment centers; juvenile justice programs; child welfare; sexual assault services
- Projects ensure youth have safe and appropriate exits when leaving the program.
 - Safe and appropriate exits are exits to: the private residence of a parent, guardian, another adult relative, or another adult that has the youth's best interest in mind and can provide a stable arrangement; another residential program if the youth's transition is consistent with the youth's needs; independent living if consistent with the youth's needs and abilities.
 - Safe and appropriate exits are NOT exits to: the street or place not meant for habitation; a locked correctional institute or detention center if the youth became involved in activities that lead to this exit after

entering the project; another residential program if the youth's transition is inconsistent with youth's needs; an unknown or unspecified other living situation.

4) Aftercare Services: Projects provide additional services beyond the period of residential stay that offer continuous and supportive follow-up to youth served by the program, including: encouraging youth to follow-up on referrals; making additional referrals, if needed; reassuring youth that additional supports are available; assessing if stable housing is still in place; gathering data and feedback about each youth's progress.

Requirements for aftercare services:

- Individual aftercare plans are developed with and provided to youth in exit counseling or before, and include:
 - The youth's housing status at exit
 - Appropriate referrals for needed services (including health care and health insurance coverage)
 - Method and frequency of aftercare services to be provided
- Aftercare services are provided for at least 3 months after a youth exits the program.
 - Projects follow up with youth frequently within the first 30 days after exit, then gradually reduce frequency as youth transition to full independence.
- Follow-up contacts are conducted with youth at 6 months and 12 months after exit.

5) Outreach: Projects perform outreach to identify and connect with eligible youth to participate in the program and to coordinate activities with other organizations serving the same or similar client populations, such as child welfare, juvenile justice, schools, and CoCs.

6) Gateway Services: Projects provide basic need items and services to youth not currently enrolled in the program, including: food, drink, clothing, personal safety information, transportation, and hygiene products. Through provision of gateway services, potential participants become aware of availability of services and begin to build a relationship with the shelter provider. Gateway services can be provided through collaboration with other local homeless service providers, churches, health care workers, or other local resources.

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

Consistent with the statutory mandates set forth in the [Runaway and Homeless Youth Act](#) (RHYA), the regulatory requirements set forth in the [RHY Rule](#), and in alignment with [VCRHYP's Program Standards](#), TLP projects ensure the following requirements are met:

1) Background Checks: Projects must ensure required background checks are completed on all employees, contractors, volunteers, and consultants who have regular and unsupervised private contact with youth, as well as on all adults residing in or operating host homes. Required background checks include:

- State or tribal criminal history records, including fingerprint checks
- Sex offender registry check
- FBI criminal history records, including fingerprint checks
- Child abuse and neglect registry check
- As appropriate to job functions, verification of educational credentials, employment experiences, driving records (for those who will transport youth), and professional licensing records

2) Emergency Preparedness Plans: Projects must have a plan for routine preventative maintenance of facilities, as well as preparedness, response, and recovery efforts for each location (including supervised apartment and host homes).

- The plan should contain:
 - A list and location of all emergency equipment located at each location
 - Evacuation plans for each location, which designates the site of an alternative location
 - Strategies for addressing security, food, medical supplies, and notification of the youth's legal guardian, as appropriate.
 - Instructions regarding the process of informing program leadership and the VCRHYP administrative team when an evacuation or disaster occurs
 - Instructions for completing an incident report
- For projects that use host homes or supervised apartments, plans also include:
 - Information on emergency/ first aid equipment that must be available at each area housing youth
 - Communication plans to contact the TLP case manager in the event of an emergency
 - Site-specific evacuation plans
 - Time frames in which TLP case managers must conduct a face-to-face check of youth
- Youth and host home providers review emergency plans and the location of emergency equipment upon assuming residence.

- TLP case managers check equipment to ensure proper working order on a regular basis

3) Staff Training: Projects must ensure that all paid and volunteer workers are trained on the Core Competencies of Youth Workers necessary to carry out the objectives and activities of the project.

- The Core Competencies of Youth Workers are: professionalism, applied positive youth development approach, cultural and human diversity, applied human development, relationship and communication, development practice methods.
- Training topics shall include, but are not limited to: positive youth development, trauma-informed care, evidence-informed practices, street outreach intervention, human trafficking prevention and intervention, harm reduction, assessment and case management, worker safety, understanding the diversity and culture of life on the street, safe and ethical practices, and community resources for well-being and self-sufficiency.
 - Host home providers should, at a minimum, be trained on substance abuse, trauma-informed care, positive youth development and setting/maintaining personal boundaries.
- Procedures must be established for the training of project staff in all confidentiality requirements.

4) Staff Supervision: Projects provide adequate supervision of all staff.

- Projects have written procedures regarding employee supervision and annual evaluations.
- Case supervisors review current cases and individual service plans on a monthly basis to ensure quality/ coordinated services.

5) Governance and Fiscal Controls: Organizations must have a governance structure, fiscal control measures, and accountability procedures.

6) Confidentiality: Projects may not disclose records maintained on individual youth without the consent of the youth and parent or legal guardian (if under 18), with the exception of disclosing records to a government agency involved in the disposition of criminal charges and disclosing de-identified records to an agency for compiling statistical records.

- Projects must ensure that all confidential, sensitive information and records will be properly handled and safeguarded.
- Youth served by a TLP project shall have the right to review their records, to correct a record or file a statement of disagreement, and to be apprised of the individuals

who have reviewed their records.

7) Technical Assistance, Monitoring, and Training: Projects agree to receive and participate in technical assistance, monitoring, and training as recommended by VCRHYP and federal staff.

- TLP staff attend statewide grantee meetings hosted by VCRHYP.
- New TLP staff are connected with VCRHYP for orientation and training.

8) Child Welfare Collaboration: Projects develop and implement a written policy for addressing youth who have run away from foster care placement or correctional institutions, in accordance with federal, state, or local laws or regulations that apply to these situations.

- Projects also take steps to ensure that youth who are or should be under the legal jurisdiction of the juvenile justice or child welfare systems obtain and receive services from those systems until such time as they are released from the jurisdiction of those systems.
 - *Note: Projects may serve youth connected with the child welfare/juvenile justice system, so long as those youth are not in the legal custody of those systems and otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for TLPs.*

PROJECT FRAMEWORK

Projects operate in alignment with the following service philosophies:

- **Positive Youth Development:** Projects use and integrate into their operations the principles of positive youth development, including healthy messages, safe and structured places, adult role models, skill development, and opportunities to serve others.
- **Trauma-Informed:** Projects design activities in such a way that prevents re-traumatization. Services respond to behavioral problems as maladaptive coping mechanisms in order to help a youth reframe their life narrative from one of victim to resilient survivor by creating a low anxiety atmosphere characterized by high levels of trust.
- **Evidence-Informed Practices:** Projects incorporate practices with evidence of effectiveness.
- **Social Support and Relationship Capacity Building:** Projects include strategies for helping youth build protective factors such as connections with schools, employment, health care, legal services, appropriate family members, and other caring adults.
- **Understanding Experiences:** Projects address how youth frame what has happened to them in the past and help youth positively shape their beliefs about the future.

- **Developmentally Appropriate:** Projects are attuned to the developmental impact of negative experiences
- **Coping Strategies:** Projects help youth transform maladaptive coping methods into healthier, more productive strategies.

PROJECT PERFORMANCE & REPORTING

VCRHYP tracks project performance through HMIS data and biannual programmatic reports. Projects are required to participate in VCRHYP’s centralized data entry process, which consists of case managers completing TLP-specific paperwork and submitting it to VCRHYP for entry into HMIS on the project’s behalf. Projects are also required to participate in site monitoring visits by VCRHYP and FYSB.

Core Outcome Areas

Through the provision of transitional shelter and services indicators of improvements include, but are not limited to:

1. **Safe and Stable Housing:** Youth and their dependent children (if applicable) will transition to a safe and stable housing that appropriately matches their level of needs after leaving a TLP.
2. **Education or Employment:** Youth will connect to schools or post-secondary or vocational training programs. Vocational training will assist youth to improve interviewing skills, enhance job skills, and learn how to search for employment.
3. **Permanent Connections:** Youth will experience ongoing attachments to families, communities, schools, and other social networks.
4. **Social and Emotional Well-being:** Youth will connect to system of care providers to assist with physical health, substance abuse, mental health, personal safety (e.g., identify potential trafficking situations), and sexual risk behaviors they may face.

Annual Objectives

- Minimum of 3 youth receive transitional shelter and are provided with basic life skills resources/counseling, and case management services
- 100% of youth receive evidence-based assessments and screening within 30 days of intake
- 100% of youth are screened for human trafficking and sexual exploitation

- 100% of youth have an individualized service plan developed
- 80% of youth are provided with educational or employment support services
- 75% of youth receive referrals to other community services
- 100% of youth have an aftercare plan developed before program exit
- 75% of youth engage in aftercare services for at least 3 months
- 50% of youth are contacted for follow up 6 months after exit
- 33% of youth are contacted for follow up 12 months after exit

Performance Measures

Performance Measure	Target
Safe and Stable Housing	
Youth exit to a safe and stable destination.	90%
Youth consider their exit destination to be safe.	80%
Youth successfully contacted 3 months after exit report remaining stably housed.	75%
Youth successfully contacted 6 months after exit report remaining stably housed.	70%
Youth successfully contacted 12 months after exit report remaining stably housed.	60%
Education and Employment	
Youth exiting the program are employed or looking for work at exit.	75%
Youth exiting the program have achieved one or more educational or vocational goal by exit.	85%
Youth exiting the program are attending school or have a high school diploma or GED.	66%
Permanent Connections	
Youth exiting the program report connections to at least one supportive adult, other than program staff, to whom they can go for advice or emotional support.	80%
Youth exiting the program report connections to at least one supportive friend.	80%
Social and Emotional Well-being	

The average composite score of general health, mental health, and dental health status will be better at exit from the program than at entry.	100%
Youth exiting the program have permanent positive community connections outside of the program.	80%
Youth exiting the program have had an annual check-up with a doctor within the last year.	75%
Youth exiting the program have health insurance.	90%
Youth exiting the program report their mental health status is excellent, very good, or good.	75%

Reporting

Projects are required to submit the following reports to VCRHYP on a bi-annual basis in April and October:

- Financial Report: Includes an account of the money received from VCRHYP during the reporting period and how it was allocated by the project, an account of the amount and origin of funds used to meet the project’s required match, and any remaining unspent funds.
- Program Implementation Report: Includes a narrative report on the project’s accomplishments, barriers, and future plans.

Site Monitoring

VCRHYP conducts an in-depth site monitoring visit with each project at least once per grant cycle. Additionally, VCRHYP conducts annual performance measure reviews and may require under-performing sites to develop a corrective action plan or participate in additional training/ technical assistance.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Additional information about VCRHYP and TLP can be found through the following links:

- [VCRHYP Orientation Manual for Member Agencies and New Employees](#)
- [FYSB Transitional Living Program Fact Sheet](#)