



The Connection

Community-based Services, Advocacy
and Research for Connecticut

The Start Program

Rapid Rehousing for Young Adults

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Program History

- Started in 2011 as a very small pilot program serving youth that have aged out of the foster care system and had become homeless
- Funded by state Department of Children & Families (no HUD/Continuum of Care funding)
- Didn't start out as RRH. Got there through youth feedback and data. Housing First.
- Expanded funding through DCF in 2014 (can serve all homeless youth age 18-24; system involvement no longer a requirement)

Eligibility

- Age 18-24
- Single and parenting youth. No couples (but we have made exceptions)
- Homeless/Unstably Housed youth- direct from shelter, unsheltered, unsafe couch surfing, etc.
- No income requirements – most have no income at entry.
- No imminent risk of incarceration
- Take highest scorers on the Next Step Tool / TAY Triage Tool from the By Name List/Waitlist

**Program works with an expanded definition of homelessness (McKinney-Vento definition) so there are two waitlists for our services.*

Housing Model

- Scattered-site, throughout the entire state *<audience laughter because CT is a really small state>*
- Realistically able to afford within 1 year. (Rental assistance can go up to 24 months in duration)
- Graduated Tenant rental assistance scale. Flexible though.
- Financial assistance- Security deposits, rental assistance (graduated scale), furniture, some flex funds
- Roommates? Sure, why not
 - ✓ Have to be chosen by the youth, not forced by the program
 - ✓ Both people have to be on the lease (ideally separate leases)
 - ✓ Roommate doesn't have to be part of our program

**DISCLAIMER: Roommates are a complete nightmare to manage and will result in very difficult programmatic situations that almost solely arise between the hours of 10pm-2am every other day (weekends included) which will subsequently result in frequent homicidal ideation from program staff, program management, neighbors, and landlords.*

Who we admit

**past fiscal year data*

- Most are unsafe-doubled-up, in shelter, with recent histories of being unsheltered
- Avg Next Step Tool score: 9.3
- % without any income: 90%
- Female 53% / Male 40% / Transgender 7%
- 48% African American / 36% Hispanic / Caucasian 34%
- 24% LGTBO+
- 86% have a mental health diagnosis
- 54% have a history of being in foster care
- CT Minimum wage: \$10.10/hr Avg 1br FMR: \$971-\$1,539/month

Data / Outcomes

Since program inception in 2011

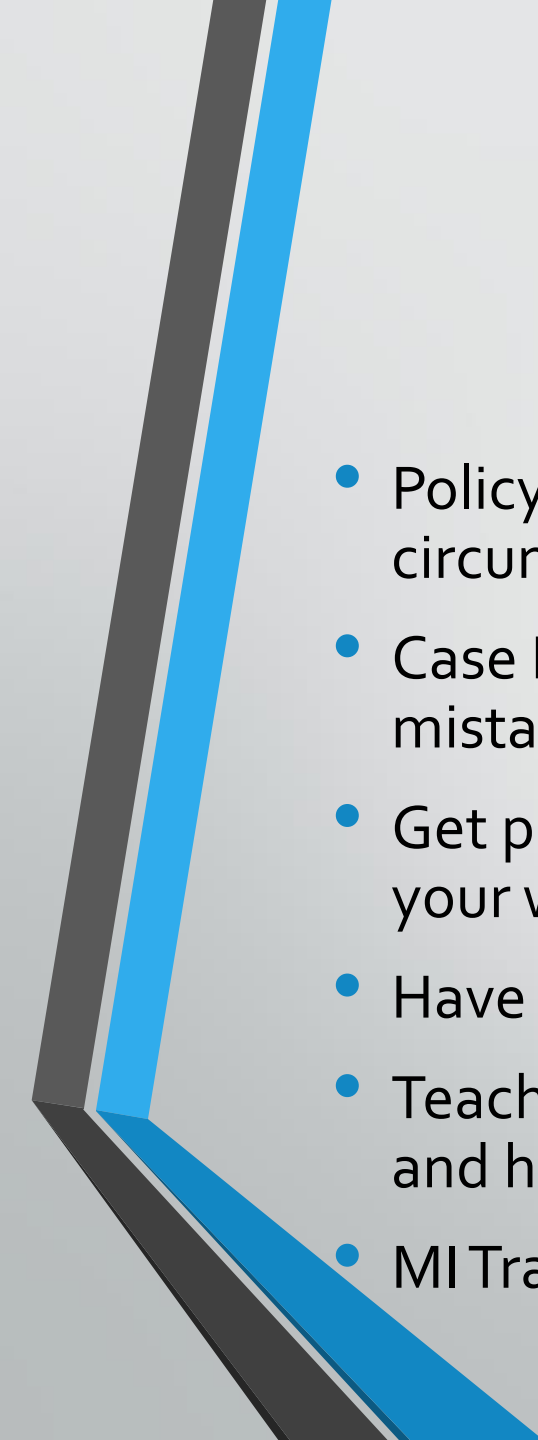
- **Discharge to stable, permanent housing: 92%**
**Most (60%) discharge to shared housing/roommates.*
- **Move in to permanent housing within 60 days of admission (with RA): 86%**
- **Avg length of subsidy: *17 months**
**Non-parenting youth avg is 12 months*
- **Employed within 3 months of program admission: 92%**
- **Returns to homelessness: 2.3% (per HMIS)**
- **3rd Party evaluation in progress now**

Lesson Learned #1

“You’re setting them up
to fail”



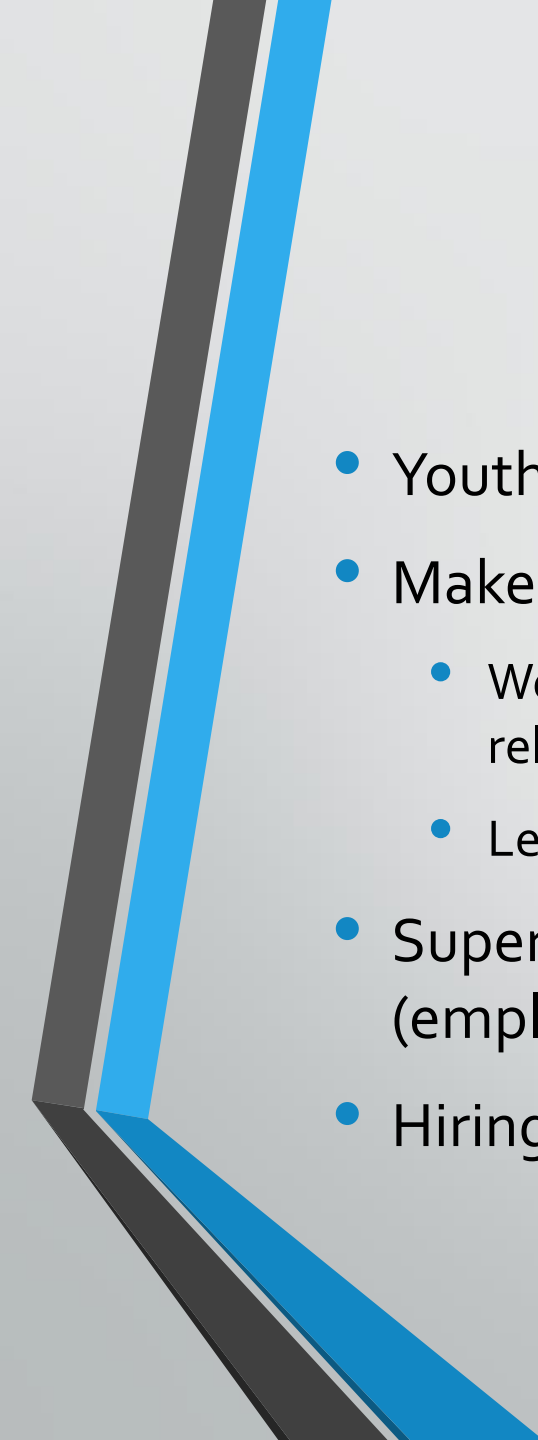
...so plan just plan for it then

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- Policy/Practice on how many times you'll re-house a youth. Under what circumstances would you discharge after the first time?
 - Case Manager staff training on managing verbal and non-verbal reactions to mistakes. (*practice, practice, practice*)
 - Get previous youth's stories from early pitfalls they hit and make it part of your welcome materials for new clients.
 - Have them set their "personal apartment rules" prior to moving in.
 - Teach landlords and property managers Trauma Informed Care principles and how best to communicate with a youth when there's an issue.
 - MI Training...for youth in the program

Lesson Learned #2

Its the "Who"



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- Youth input on initial sessions and how they should look – first impressions
 - Make relationship quality the PRIMARY outcome measure
 - Weekly survey client fills out, 0-10 rating scale that measures how they feel about the relationship and work with their Case Manager
 - Less a satisfaction survey and more a supervision tool.
 - Supervision practices – focus on relationship; not funder outcomes (employment, etc)
 - Hiring practices – get youth involved, ideally by attending the interviews



For More Information, Questions, Comments:

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