

**SALT LAKE
YOUTH HOUSING
NEEDS REPORT**

SEPTEMBER 2024

This report was made possible by the Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness made up of the Salt Lake County (SLCo) Youth Action Board, and Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness Steering Committee. Thank you for your work to make homelessness for youth and young adults (YYA) rare, and if it occurs, brief and non-recurring.



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EVERY DAY IN THE SALT LAKE VALLEY, THERE ARE YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS WHO GO **WITHOUT A STABLE PLACE TO CALL HOME.**

Salt Lake Valley faces an urgent crisis in youth homelessness. According to annual unduplicated data from HMIS, 647 youth and young adults (YYA) experienced homelessness in 2023. An additional 5,984 are at risk of homelessness throughout the year according to McKinney Vento data. Despite innovative solutions from community-based organizations, the need far exceeds current resources.

Although creative approaches have yielded some success—such as negotiated rents and donated resources—these solutions are not sustainable long-term. This Needs Assessment reveals significant disparities among various racial and gender groups, underscoring the necessity for a culturally responsive approach in addressing youth homelessness.

To bridge this gap, Salt Lake Valley must add 197 permanent supportive housing units, 259 Rapid Re-Housing units, and 32 Transitional Housing units specifically for youth. It is imperative that the homeless response system as a whole and direct service providers implement a multi-sector strategy that leverages diverse expertise and ensures a culturally responsive service delivery that meets the needs of YYA. This comprehensive approach is essential to effectively address and mitigate youth homelessness in Salt Lake Valley.

Addressing this critical gap in housing and services requires a unified community effort with YYA to implement sustainable, culturally responsive solutions that meet the needs of YYA.

BACKGROUND

The Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness is actively working to make homelessness for youth and young adults (YYA) rare, and if it occurs, brief and non-recurring. With the expiration of emergency COVID funds looming, the sunset of a youth Rapid Rehousing Program, and underutilization of other public funding, there is a sense of urgency to explore sustainable funding sources to support YYA in the community.

This Needs Assessment is based on 2023 data from HUD's Stella P module ("Stella"), which reflects annual unduplicated data from HMIS. This data shows that 647 YYA were entered into HMIS over the course of the year. In addition, 5,984 youth were at risk of experiencing homelessness in SLV throughout the year.¹ The current system inventory of youth-dedicated beds including Transitional Housing, Rapid Rehousing, and Permanent Supportive Housing programs is 67. Of those dedicated beds only 38 become newly available through turnover throughout the year due to high program utilization rates, reflecting a shortfall of 616 youth-dedicated housing interventions to address the youth need in SLV.

The Needs Assessment concludes that Salt Lake Valley (SLV) must address racial disparities for Black, Indigenous and People of Color who are over-represented in the homeless response system. It calls for an investment in one-time capital cost of roughly \$34.1 million and an average of \$12 million annually to create the supportive housing necessary to adequately address homelessness for YYA, an effective evidence-based intervention which has a 100% utilization rate in SLV.

In addition to supportive housing, to address youth housing and services needs collectively, service providers in SLV must adopt a multi-sector approach that leverages the expertise and resources of diverse stakeholders. This approach should prioritize inclusion, responsiveness, and cultural humility, ensuring that the unique needs of populations like the LGBTQIA2S+ community are addressed. By collaborating across sectors, including government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community groups, SLV can develop a flexible, youth-focused system capable of providing tailored support to individuals with varying service needs. Tackling youth homelessness in SLV requires a coordinated effort that transcends traditional boundaries and fosters collaboration among stakeholders. By embracing a multi-sector approach, SLV can create a more equitable and responsive system that effectively supports YYA during a critical transitional period to promote a growth-mindset.

Investments in housing and services must be made within a youth-centric service delivery system that includes a range of interventions such as:

- Front Porch culturally responsive prevention and diversion resources.
- Crisis & Short-Term Housing and Services that address crisis response; along with

¹ Based on 2021/22 school year McKinney Vento data.

- Adequate Long-Term Housing Interventions and Tenancy Support Services to address the need.

As a recent awardee of HUD's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP), the SLV community is in a prime position to effectively impact the trajectory of youth homelessness response. The Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness, with activation from the Youth Steering Committee commissioned CSH to complete an analysis of the housing and tenant support service needs of YYA to further understand and identify housing needs by intervention; determine the unmet housing and tenancy support service needs; and identify areas where system improvements can be made to support YYA.

CSH worked with partners and stakeholders throughout the SLV community over a seven-month period toward shared goals to complete the regional needs assessment. A strength of this project has been the level of engagement both with young people with lived experience of homelessness and with local community stakeholders who were all focused on understanding the unmet housing and service needs of YYA in the community.

While HUD's investment of \$2.77 million from 2024 - 2026 will contribute significantly to filling the financial gap in youth-dedicated services and housing, it is only a portion of the financial investment required to strategically implement the activities outlined in the Community's Coordinated Plan (CCP) to HUD. The CCP, coupled with this report, provides a strategic framework with a set of priorities that have been established by local partners and most importantly, by youth and young adults most impacted to help the community improve system coordination amongst youth-serving providers and inform future investment planning discussions.

METHODOLOGY

The project design included a regional system-modelling process to help the community understand not just how many young people are at risk of experiencing homelessness, but how the community can create a more optimal housing and services system for youth.

The methodology for this assessment included four main steps:

1. Set standard definitions and identify special populations.
2. Facilitate focus groups and recognize existing community engagement efforts and data sources.
3. Conduct equity analysis of race and other marginalized identities.
4. Review and analyze available data.

This section provides an overview of the activities above and the results.

STEP 1. SET STANDARD DEFINITIONS

CSH worked with the Youth Steering Committee and Youth Action Board to set a standard definition for homelessness. Figure 1 outlines the definition of youth homelessness in Salt Lake Valley.

FIGURE 1

Defining Youth Homelessness

Age

Youth: Defined as individuals less than or equal to **17** years of age

Young Adults: Defined as individuals **18-24** years of age

NOT accompanied by a family member age 25+ **and** who resides in one of the following places (in the list to the right).

Residing in one of the following:

An unsheltered location: on the streets, in a car, or in an abandoned building, a temporary emergency shelter or a transitional housing program dedicated to serving people experiencing homelessness.

Staying in a doubled-up situation, where they **must leave within 14 days** **and** have no subsequent place to sleep/reside and no resources to obtain another place.

Youth experiencing one of the situations described to the left by themselves, meaning unaccompanied by children of their own, are referred to as **unaccompanied homeless youth** (often referred to as transitioned age youth – TAY).

If a youth (under 18, or ages 18-24) is experiencing one of the situations described to the left **and** are accompanied by children of their own, they are referred to as **homeless parenting youth**.

The assessment also focused on special populations of youth experiencing homelessness to encourage conversation during the planning and implementation phases of the youth-dedicated program design. These special populations included:

- Black Indigenous People of Color+ (BIPOC+)
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual or Agender, and Two-Spirit, Gender non-conforming (LGBTQIA2S+)
- Pregnant and Parenting
- Unaccompanied Youth under the age of 18
- Undocumented/Asylum Seeking
- Victims of Sexual Trafficking, exploitation, and domestic violence
- Youth exiting Department of Child Family Services (foster care)
- Youth exiting Juvenile Justice Youth Services (JJYS)



STEP 2. FACILITATE FOCUS GROUPS AND RECOGNIZE EXISTING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

- FOCUS GROUPS

Youth Experiencing Homelessness (YEH) and Community Organizations Supporting Them

In December 2023, CSH, along with the Salt Lake County (SLCo) Youth Action Board, Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness Steering Committee, and Homebase, facilitated intensive Community Focus Groups. These focus groups were designed to identify the housing, education, employment, and social/emotional well-being needs of special needs populations within the youth homelessness system.

Focus groups were developed to center the voices of YEH and community organizations supporting YEH. The focus groups were scheduled to be as accessible to YEH as possible. For example, the focus groups at The Road Home were hosted when pregnant and parenting YEH would be at the shelter or when youth in transitional housing would be home.

A special thank you goes to the staff at The Road Home who supported the focus group process by assisting as interpreters to ensure the needs assessment process was culturally and linguistically accommodating. Each focus group was conducted by CSH, YAB, and/or Homebase, and were, at minimum, 90 minutes in duration.

Focus groups were hosted at a variety of locations across the county, including the Office of Homelessness and Criminal Justice Reform Mayor's Administration, The Road Home, Volunteers of America Youth Resource Center, Housing Connect Bud Baily Apartments, and Salt Lake County Youth Services Milestone Transitional Living Program. Each focus group used common questions for YEH and/or formerly homeless youth. Additionally, provider questions were standardized with minor adjustments to reflect the population of youth the staff serve.

Throughout the focus groups, several key themes emerged as a need for sheltered YEH. Below is a summary of the needs identified by sheltered youth and youth-serving shelter/supportive housing providers.

YEH's Barriers to Accessing Housing:

- Applications for housing require documentation and criteria YEH do not meet. For example, source of income, length of time employed, deposits, application fees, furniture etc.
- There are certain organizations YEH are not comfortable visiting because of locations and/or a lack of alignment with their religious beliefs.

YEH Necessities or “Ideal” Living Environments:

- An apartment
- Opportunity to live independently
- In unit laundry facility
- An apartment “where my partner is welcome”
- An apartment close to work
- A shared apartment
- Housing that does not require documentation
- A three-bedroom apartment for storage, music equipment (or other hobby spaces), and a bedroom.

YEH's barriers when accessing health care and/or treatment:

- Lack of gender-affirming care
- “Black clients are dramatically underserved in the community, for example, access to inclusive mental health treatment or things like hair care products”
- Lack of insurance for youth aging out of foster care after age 26
- Assistance obtaining services for vision and dental
- Availability of mental health services – long wait list for initial appointments and emergency medication management

YEH barriers to accessing employment and/or employment resources:

- Availability of clothes for interviews
- Access to the computer lab
- Intensive assistance with obtaining a job
- Resume development
- Employers that accept populations with special needs

LGBTQIA2S+

People who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, intersexual, and/or 2- spirit statistically have a higher risk of experiencing some form of housing instability, if not literal homelessness. Additionally, the National Network for Youth reported that 40% of youth experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQ+, despite only representing 9.5% of the general U.S. population². This stark disparity sheds light on one of the many contributions to youth homelessness in the U.S.

A key takeaway from the LGBTQIA2S+ focus group was the importance of safety and culturally responsive spaces in Salt Lake County. While focus group facilitators utilized a set of questions for each group, two needs stood out most: social/emotional wellbeing and safety.

² [LGBTQ+ Youth Homelessness - National Network for Youth \(nn4youth.org\)](https://nn4youth.org/)

Youth identified access barriers to:

- Proper healthcare referrals, resources, and benefits, including resources specific to the population, such as Utah Pride Center, UTAH AIDS Foundation, and Transgender Education Advocates of Utah

Youth identified needing:

- Service providers who are trained in cultural humility and/or competence
- Patient advocates who understand the needs of the LGBTQIA2S+ population, especially when admitted to the hospital
- Resident advocates for YEH that reside at the Volunteers of America Youth Resource Center, The Road Home, Salt Lake County Youth Services Milestone Transitional Living Program, and other YEH service organizations
- Gender-affirming clothing, *“something like this will boost confidence for things like housing and job interviews”*
- Safe spaces for LGBTQIA2S+ youth in general. Youth in the community often feel *“tolerated”* until they are not by local business owners

Pregnant and Parenting Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Throughout 2023, 92 pregnant and/or parenting youth experienced homelessness. Evidence finds that bearing a child during a girl’s/woman’s younger years is associated with long-term difficulties for the mother and the child, such as being more likely to be born prematurely, having low birth weight, and a higher risk for infant mortality. Utah Department of Health’s 2022 teen birth rate data report reflects in Salt Lake per 1,000 cis-gendered young women aged 15-19, 12.1 live births occur, an 8.2 rate increase compared to the State of Utah³.

CSH hosted focus groups at The Road Home with pregnant and parenting youth who were primarily English speaking and Spanish speaking. CSH also met with The Road Home staff including the McKinney-Vento liaison and themes from the pregnant and parenting youth and service providers identified the following needs:

Pregnant and Parenting Youth – English Speaking

Pregnant and Parenting YEH and Staff identified barriers for them to obtain housing.

- Access to timely pre-tenancy support services like deposits, rental history/landlord mitigation, and fair housing
- Access to vouchers and landlords willing to accept vouchers, “stigma”

YEH identified barriers to accessing employment and/or employment resources.

- Availability of clothes for interviews

• ³ [Utah Department of Health](#) Maintained By: Conduent Healthy Communities Institute (Methodology) [Healthy Salt Lake :: Indicators :: Teen Birth Rate: 15-19 :: County : Salt Lake](#)

- Access to the computer lab
- Intensive assistance with obtaining a job
- Resume development
- Employers that accept populations with special needs

Pregnant and Parenting Youth – Spanish Speaking

Understanding the unique challenges faced by Spanish-speaking parenting youth, particularly those who are asylum seekers or undocumented immigrants is an important process to assessing the needs of YEH in the community. This focus group captures a diverse range of experiences among these young parents, who often encounter complex barriers to securing stable housing, finding employment, and accessing essential services.

During the focus group, interpreters were used to gather input from Spanish speaking youth. Two essential themes ensued: housing and employment.

YEH's Barriers to Accessing Housing:

- Accessible housing and childcare to ensure they can work and provide for their families
- Due to lack of income, they cannot obtain housing
- Importance of economic stability yet grappling with the reality of the barriers that accompany being undocumented in the U.S.
- Immediate benefits of shared housing, such as *“help watching each other’s kids, splitting bills, and just family”*

YEH's Barriers to Employment:

- Participants also stated employment was their most essential need. However, their undocumented status significantly impacts the types of jobs and wage amount they can consider and ultimately take on.
- Participants reported a lack of integrity in compensation practices due to *“working under the table,”* often not being paid for up to 60 days at a time.

Tenants of Supportive Housing

During site visits, CSH engaged with tenants of Rapid Rehousing and Supportive Housing programs in Salt Lake County at Housing Connect Bud Bailey Apartments. Tenants are young adults who’ve exited homelessness and are navigating their way to self-sufficiency.

Tenants identified two key themes to sustaining their tenancy – safe housing and intentional assistance with helping them transition out of homelessness into stable housing.

RRH and SH tenants identified the following barriers for them to obtain housing.

- Community prioritization presents as a barrier to housing. For example, if

someone does not meet the status or is unable to prove chronic homelessness, they are not prioritized for certain housing assistance.

- Safe and habitable homes and/or apartments. For example, YEH do not feel like their homes are always “move-in ready.”
- Landlords and property managers are not always consistent with addressing tenant concerns. Tenants are afraid of retaliations when encouraged to contact code enforcement.
- Tenant choice (of housing placement) is limited and sometimes non-existent.

RRH and SH tenants identified the following barriers to sustaining tenancy.

- Feelings of loneliness once housed, tenants reported they would benefit from more social support and opportunities for fellowship via recovery-oriented services.
- Assistance with developing life skills like budget management, paying bills, making payment arrangements, communicating their needs to service providers, etc.
- Better understanding of tenants and their needs. Some tenants vocalized wanting more case management, while others encouraged peer or big brother/sister programs to balance power dynamics.
- Access to food and transportation.

While focus group participants commended the community's efforts in responding to adult homelessness, they couldn't overlook the adult-centric nature of the current coordinated response system. Consequently, they reflected that youth often find themselves in competition for housing opportunities with adults who have longer histories of homelessness and/or disabling conditions. Participants also shared their observation of a notable decline in housing programs specifically dedicated to youth over the past five (5) years.

Focus group members also acknowledged that operating in isolation across systems and delivering services solely at the program level is insufficient to adequately support youth experiencing homelessness during this critical transitional phase of their lives. Robust youth programs and positive cross-system partnerships exist, yet participants underscored their belief that these efforts fall short of meeting the demands of the youth population.



- EXISTING ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS & DATA SOURCES

Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness Under Age 18

This section focuses on existing strategies and initiatives to foster meaningful connections and support for this subpopulation, primarily served by the Salt Lake County Division of Youth Services' (DYS) Runaway and Homeless (RHY) Basic Center Program (BCP).

The following information provides a comprehensive overview of how the Division approaches the provision of services for these youths, detailing the methods employed to ensure their safety, well-being, and inclusion within the community.

By exploring these practices, we aim to highlight the essential role of community engagement in enhancing the overall support system for unaccompanied youth and improving their outcomes.

The RHY and BCP consists of the following services:

1. Safe and appropriate shelter for youth,
2. Individual, family, and group counseling, as appropriate,
3. Outreach,
4. Working with youth to stay connected with their school and other education services available to them (McKinney-Vento), and
5. Ensure the safe return of youth and reunite them with their families.
6. Confidentiality is assured and maintained.
7. Record keeping, RHYMIS and/or UHMIS
8. Program Success and Improvement, Emergency Preparedness and Program Sustainability are also assured.

Services are firmly grounded in the Harm Reduction, Positive Youth Development and Trauma Informed Care framework because DYS shares Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB's) goal of helping adolescents develop self-assurance and obtain skills that help them create a sustainable life, while in a safe living environment with attachments to caring adults.

The priority population for these engagement efforts consists of youth who are eight (8) up to 18 years of age and who reside in Salt Lake County (including all municipalities within). The DYS also serves youth who seek safe shelter from out of the county or state.

DYS outcomes include meeting basic and immediate needs of RHY; food, clothing, and short-term shelter services; referrals for medical assistance; and individual and group counseling. DYS goals are to reunite RHY and families when possible and appropriate and offer after care to maximize the reunification process and minimize future RHY incidents.

According to HMIS data, the Salt Lake County Division of Youth Services Basic Center Program served 240 unduplicated youth (62 of whom returned for additional

services) that were runaway or homeless from October 2021 to September 2023.

Sheltered youth experiencing homelessness in Salt Lake County are primarily served at Salt Lake County Youth Services Basic Center, Volunteers of America Youth Resource Center, near downtown Salt Lake City with participants including:

- YEH,
- LGBTQIA2s+ YEH, and
- VOA Shelter Staff

Youth Exiting Institutional Settings

Recognizing the critical importance of supporting youth transitioning out of institutional settings, the Needs Assessment explores alternative data sources and methods to understand this population's unique needs and challenges faced based on publicly available data. The report strives to provide a comprehensive overview of quantitative data to elevate the needs of youth exiting institutional care and ensure their needs are addressed to support reintegration into the community.

Consistent findings across the country demonstrate that youth exiting both foster care and juvenile justice settings are at increased risk of experiencing homelessness.⁴ ([Link 1](#), [Link 2](#))

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) collects information on youth in foster care, including sex, race, ethnicity, date of birth, and foster care status. It also collects information about the outcomes of those youth who have aged out of foster care. Youth aging out of foster care are at higher risk than those in the general population for experiencing homelessness, poverty (impacted by employment opportunities due to lower rates of high school diplomas/GED and minimal numbers of young adults receiving vocation or higher education), incarceration, and pregnancy.

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) provides an outcome data snapshot for Utah fiscal year 2017-2021⁵. In this report, eighty-six youth (age 19 years old) participated in a survey that addressed: education, employment, housing, incarceration, health insurance and parenting. Thirty-two of the young adults were in foster care and fifty-four were not in care.

Key outcomes among the results of this survey reveal that:

- 26% of the youth surveyed reported experiencing homelessness in the past two years.
- 13% reported that they had been incarcerated in the past two (2) years.

⁴https://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/YOUTH_web.pdf & https://www.csh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/DATAREFERENCES_web.pdf

⁵ [Outcomes Data Snapshot: Utah \(hhs.gov\)](https://www.hhs.gov/outcomes-data-snapshot-utah)

According to the Utah Department of Corrections' 2023 Inmate Population Profile⁶, among the 5,665 male individuals incarcerated in Utah, 23 fell within the 18-19 age bracket, constituting 0.4% of the total male incarcerated population. Similarly, among the 462 female individuals incarcerated in the same period, only one belonged to the 18-19 age group, representing 0.2% of the total female incarcerated population in Utah.

HMIS data further reveals the interrelated nature of foster care, juvenile justice, and homelessness. In 2023:

- 7% of Adult Only 18-24 Households entered the homeless system from institutional settings
- 6% of youth under the age of 18 exited shelter/transitional housing into a group home or carceral setting

Due to the use of annual, unduplicated data from HMIS in the Needs Assessment, counts of youth in foster care or juvenile justice settings were not added to the assessment base population numbers. Those exiting into homelessness are reflected in the data, assuming they have had contact with HMIS over the course of a year.

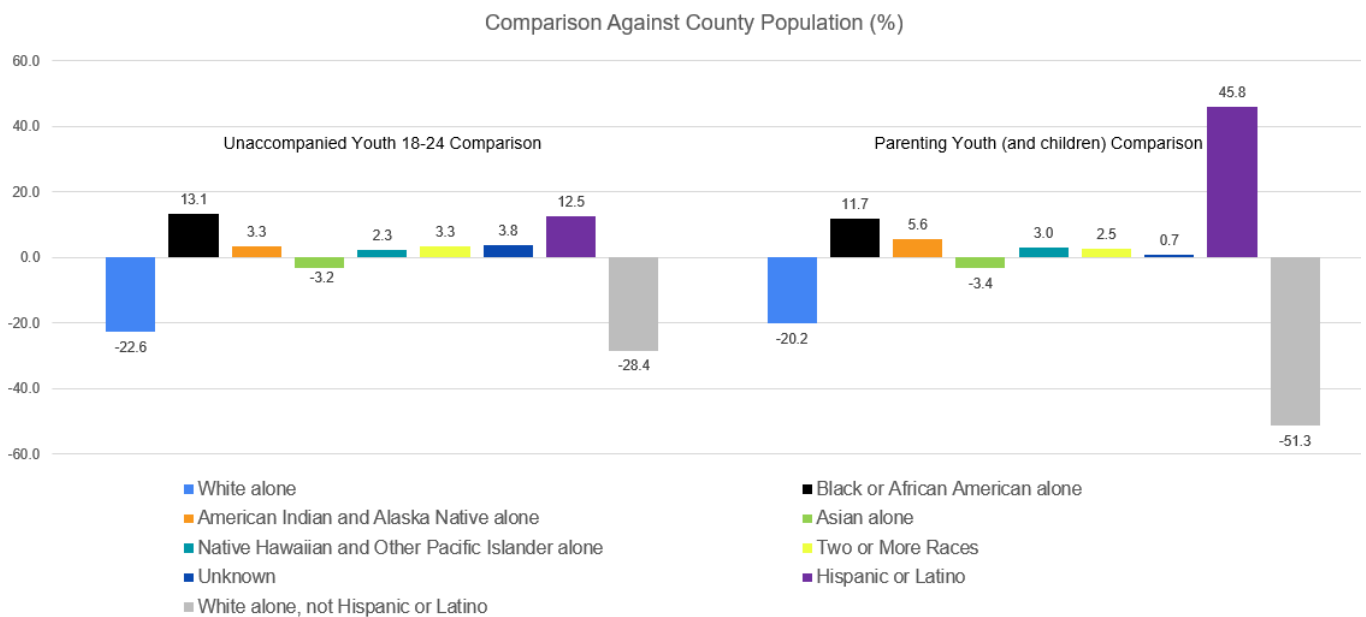
⁶ [991073.pdf \(utah.gov\)](#)

STEP 3. CONDUCT EQUITY ANALYSIS OF RACE AND OTHER MARGINALIZED IDENTITIES

CSH sought to apply its Racial Disparities and Disproportionality Index (RDDI) tool to SLV to identify the existence of disparities in the community’s YYA experiencing homelessness. In doing so, CSH leveraged the community’s demographic data to assess overrepresentation of BIPOC youth within the homelessness response system.

As shown in Figure 2, there is an overrepresentation of BIPOC youth experiencing homelessness in SLV. The data in this section indicates that within the homelessness response system, certain groups are disproportionately overrepresented compared to other racial groups. The values reflected in the chart can be interpreted as the relative risk of SLV’s youth in each group to experience homelessness compared to their peers. These findings are intended to be used to foster community conversations, leverage the experiences of youth directly impacted by homelessness, and assist with developing systems change recommendations intended to improve intervention design, delivery strategies and local policies to reduce racial disparities across systems.

FIGURE 2

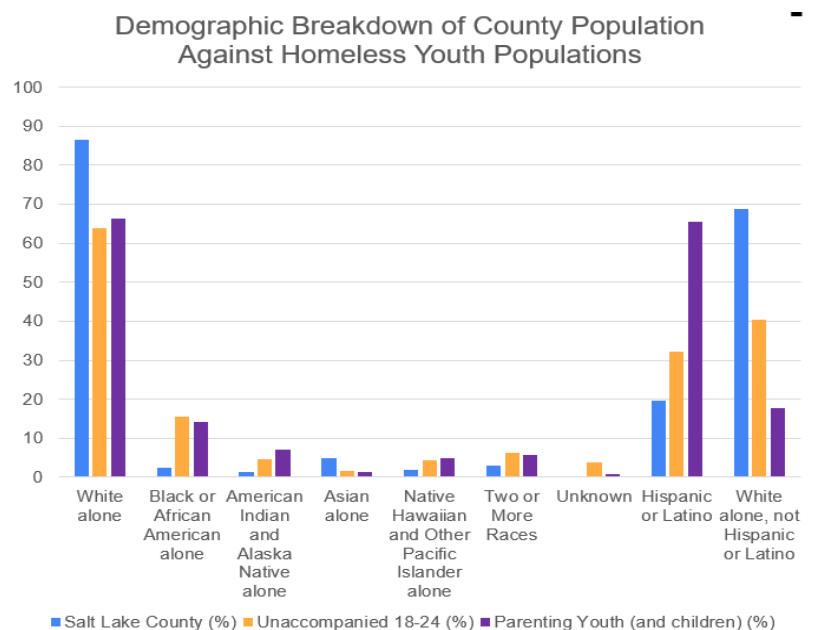


*Homeless data from HMIS / Stella with comparison county data from the US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey

Race, ethnicity, and gender-identity continue to have an impact on where youth live, work, and feel safe in communities across the United States. As a result, studies have shown homeless response systems are disproportionately represented by Black and brown Americans. Figure 3 reflects three (3) populations in SLV; the general population, Unaccompanied Youth (TAY), and Parenting Youth (including their children). When reviewing the demographic sub-groups, the following key findings are apparent. Youth 18 – 24 who identify as Hispanic or Latino represent only 19% of the SLV population yet 65% of the people in parenting youth homeless households and 32% in unaccompanied populations. Demographic data in Stella is consistent with US Census Bureau standards. Where an individual identifies as only one race they are counted in that category, and when they identify as multiple races, they are reflected only in the “Multiple Races” or “Two or More Races” category.

FIGURE 3

- Youth aged 18–24 who identify as Black, African American, or African make up just 2% of the SLV population, yet they represent 15% of the unaccompanied homeless population and 14% of the parenting population.
- Compared to all other racial groups, White alone make up 87% of the SLV population, Asian alone less than 5%, and White, not Hispanic or Latino 69%. These groups are underrepresented among unaccompanied homeless youth and parenting youth.

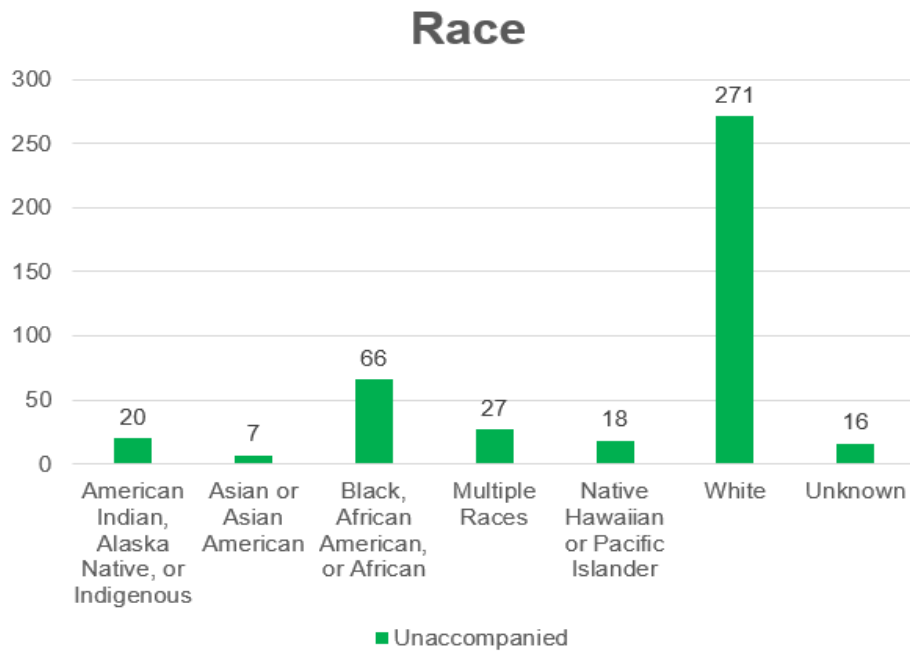


*Homeless data from HMIS / Stella with comparison county data from the US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey

Over time, historical disparities in health and housing practices, such as Redlining and the Tuskegee Syphilis Study, have resulted in significant health and housing challenges, disproportionately affecting BIPOC communities and leading to diminished quality of life. In addressing these disparities, CSH utilizes a system modeling approach that prioritizes an examination of youth-specific populations, including an exploration of their racial and ethnic identities. Figure 4 presents data from Stella pertaining to Unaccompanied Youth aged 18-24, who were exclusively served in emergency shelters and transitional housing pathways in 2023.

FIGURE 4

**Unaccompanied Youth 18-24 in
ES and TH, Race**



Data from Stella for Salt Lake City and Valley Continuum of Care, reflective of youth served in ES and TH pathways

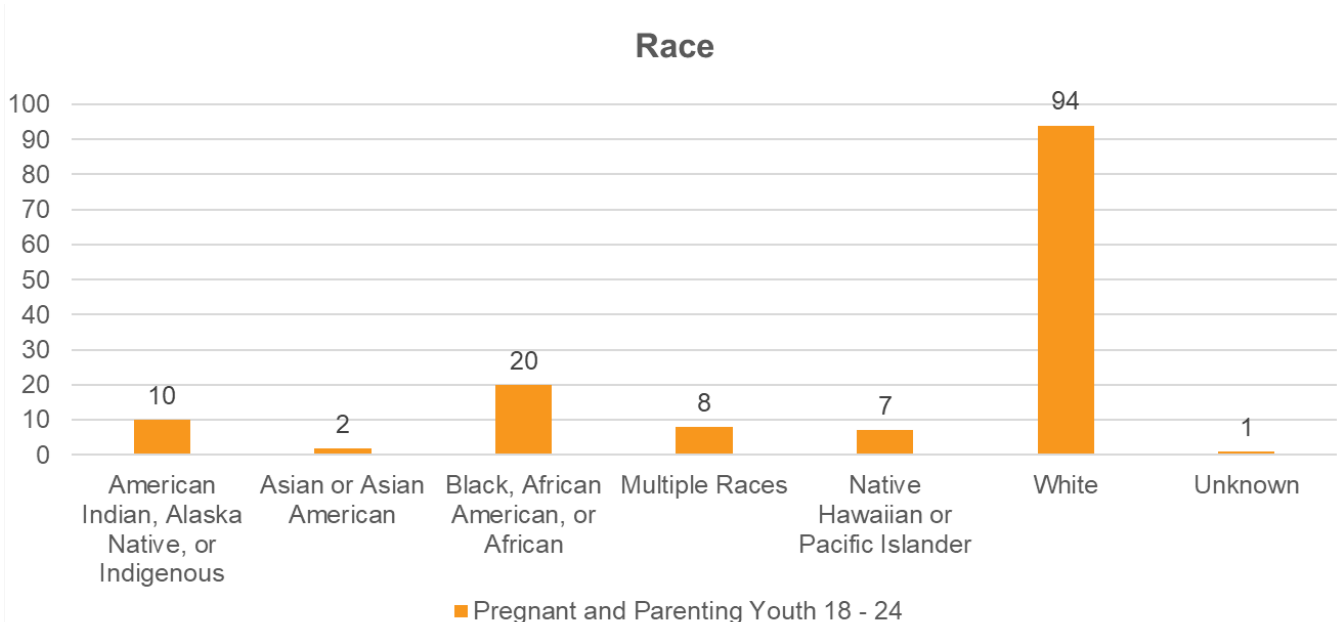
Figure 5 provides demographic data for parenting youth aged 18-24, encompassing information regarding both the youth themselves and their children. Gender identity and sexual orientation are recognized as significant factors contributing to homelessness among youth and young adults. When delivering housing and tenancy support services to this demographic, it is essential to acknowledge the impact of gender identity, sexual orientation, and other barriers to accessing and maintaining housing, which often stem from heteronormative norms and behaviors.

The data reveals a broad spectrum of gender identities among Unaccompanied Youth, including Man (boy), Woman (girl), Transgender, and Gender Non-binary, as defined by HUD. According to data sourced from Stella 2.0, approximately 11 percent of unaccompanied youth self-identify as transgender or having multiple gender identities (gender expansive).

In contrast, the percentage of Parenting Youth who identify themselves or their children as Transgender or having multiple genders is significantly lower, accounting for less than 1% of the population. This analysis underscores the importance of understanding and addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by individuals with diverse gender identities within the context of homelessness and housing support services.

FIGURE 5

Homeless Youth Demographic Breakdown Pregnant and Parenting Youth 18-24



Data from Stella for Salt Lake City and Valley Continuum of Care, reflective of Pregnant and Parenting Youth, and children in those households

- McKinney-Vento, Utah State Board of Education (2023 Defats) Salt Lake District Local Education Agency (LEA)

After reviewing the data, CSH created a system model for YYA in SLV utilizing the findings above and resources from Stella M, a tool provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to allow communities to analyze their data to better address needs. The model identifies the availability of various living situations, including the front porch, crisis response, and long-term housing interventions are reflected in the model and illustrates how youth are flowing through the homeless response system.

The system model includes:

- **Program Models:** The programs needed to make up the system that can address youth homelessness and the percentage of different types of programs that the system will need to respond to what young people are asking for.
- **System Map & Pathways:** The ways that young people use programs and move through them to reach housing stability including the portion of young people who will use each pathway to reach housing stability and the average length of time that young people will spend in each program on their pathway to housing stability.

Program Models

For this needs assessment, the community defined the following program models currently in existence. Figures 6 and 7 highlight the various models and providers operating in each program model.

FIGURE 6

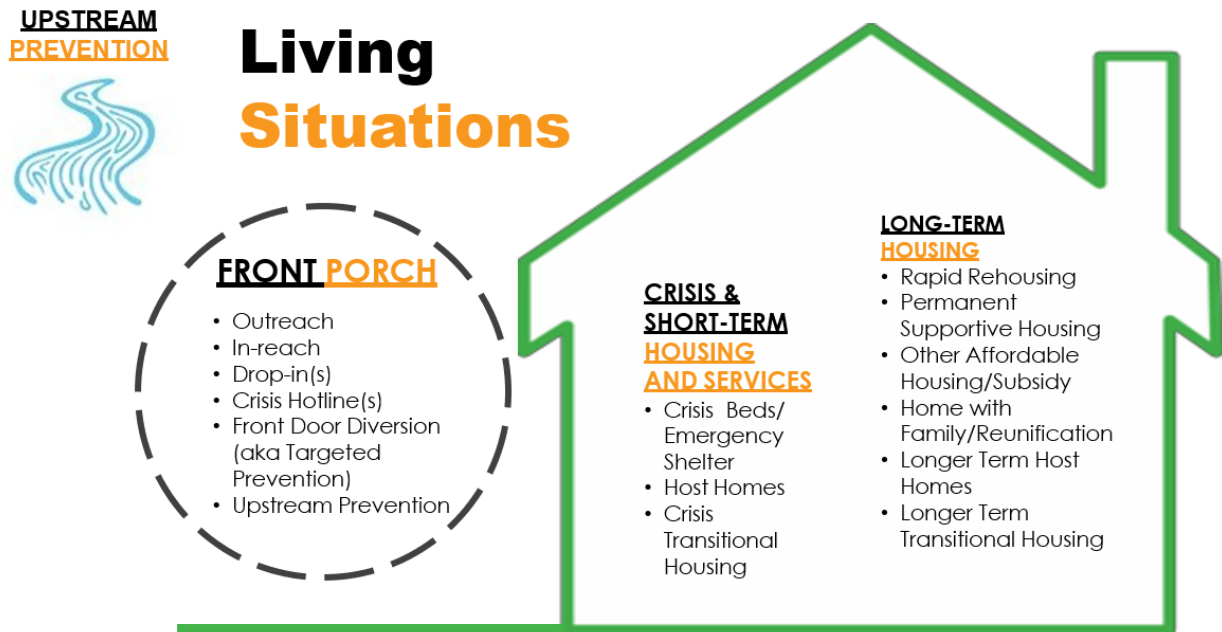
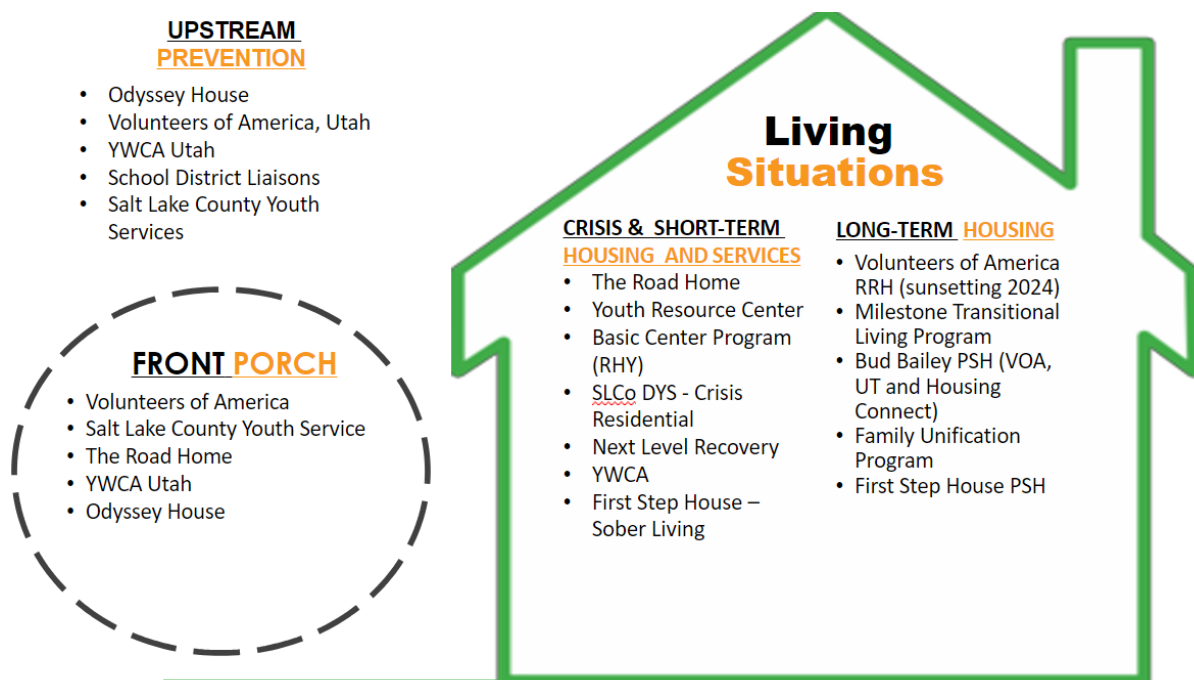


FIGURE 7

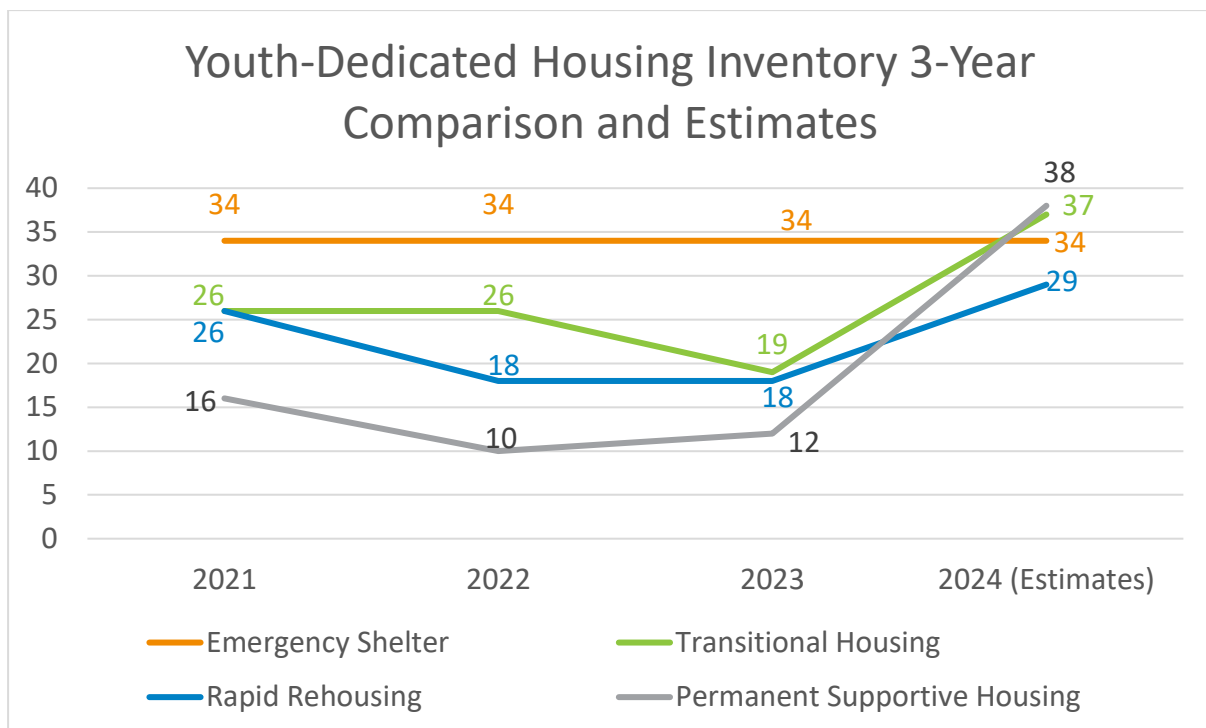


Housing Inventory and Utilization by Program Type

CSH reviewed the different program models outlined in the housing inventory chart. The table below includes the total number of beds and utilization at a point in time from the 2023 HIC data and utilization and is adjusted with community input to reflect a lower number of emergency shelter beds due to anticipated funding reductions and inventory changes.

	Living Situation			
	Crisis Housing		Long Term Housing	
	Emergency Shelter (ES)	Transitional Housing (TH)	Rapid Rehousing (RRH) Host Homes	Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)
Total Beds	30	19	18	12
Point in Time	27	17	18	12
Total Utilization	90%	89%	100%	100%

CSH reviewed the housing inventory chart of available beds. The graph below highlights the youth-dedicated housing inventory between 2021 – 2023 and is adjusted to reflect new Transitional Housing units that have come online since the 2023 HIC was conducted, as of August 2024.



“Front Porch” Interventions

In addition to the housing inventory shown above, critical services are offered through the Volunteers of America, Utah’s Youth Resource Center, and the Connie Crosby Family Resource Center to assist youth experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. These institutions implement a comprehensive approach to diversion and housing problem solving for single, pregnant and parenting youth facing homelessness. The

community's diversion and housing problem solving practices are designed to prevent homelessness and provide immediate support to single, pregnant and parenting youth in crisis. Diversion is a key strategy employed by local organizations, focusing on helping individuals and families avoid entering the shelter system or experiencing unsheltered homelessness. When an individual or family is at risk of homelessness, staff meet with them as quickly as possible to explore all available options outside of shelter. This client-driven approach aims to find safe, alternative housing solutions immediately. Staff offer various forms of practical assistance to support diversion efforts. These include:

- Assisting in negotiating returns to previous housing situations
- Offering bus tickets, train tickets, and gas gift cards to facilitate transportation to alternative housing options
- Providing funds for families/singles to relocate to another state where they have supportive family members and a permanent housing option
- Exploring options for apartments, homes, or shared housing arrangements
- Facilitating returns to family members who can provide housing

Through these comprehensive diversion and housing problem-solving practices, the Connie Crosby Family Resource Center and the Youth Resource Center strive to provide immediate, effective interventions for single, pregnant and parenting youth facing homelessness as described below.

Diversion: Housing problem-solving efforts that take place prior to a household entering a shelter or other literal homeless situations.

Housing Problem Solving: A person-centered, strengths-based approach to support households experiencing or at risk of literal homelessness to identify choices and solutions to quickly end their housing crisis, through the use of creative problem-solving conversations and connection to resources. It is a short-term intervention focused on identifying immediate, safe housing arrangements through conflict resolution, mediation, and flexible services that seeks to reconnect households with their support systems. These services may be coupled with minimal financial assistance when needed.

In calendar year 2023, the VOA supported 340 unique individuals. An expansion to the VOA Youth Resource Center's resources in October 2024 will include the addition of YHDP Rapid Rehousing and a YHDP Permanent Supportive Housing Program. This will expand RRH from 18 to 29 vouchers (with 5 set aside for families), and PSH from 12 to 38 units. In addition, an expansion to the Milestone Transitional Living program has added 18 Transitional Housing beds, bringing the total available TH beds up to 37.

Intervention	Existing Stock	Annual Turnover Rate	Utilization Rate	Available Annually
Emergency Shelter for Youth	34	8.07%	90%	247
Transitional Housing for Youth	37	59.6%	89%	20

As part of the modeling, CSH reviews current available places to stay and estimates how many beds may be available annually. Based on the data provided, approximately 247 beds for emergency shelter and 20 beds for transitional housing become available annually.

CSH also reviewed the availability of permanent housing options including rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing. Based on the review of the data, approximately 18 rapid rehousing options and less than one supportive housing unit are available annually.

Availability of Permanent Housing

Annual availability of temporary places to stay was derived by multiplying the existing stock by the annual turnover reported in the AHAR.

Intervention	Existing Stock	Annual Turnover Rate	Utilization Rate	# Available Annually
Rapid Rehousing for Youth	18	N/A	100%	18
Permanent Supportive Housing for Youth	12	3%	100%	0.36

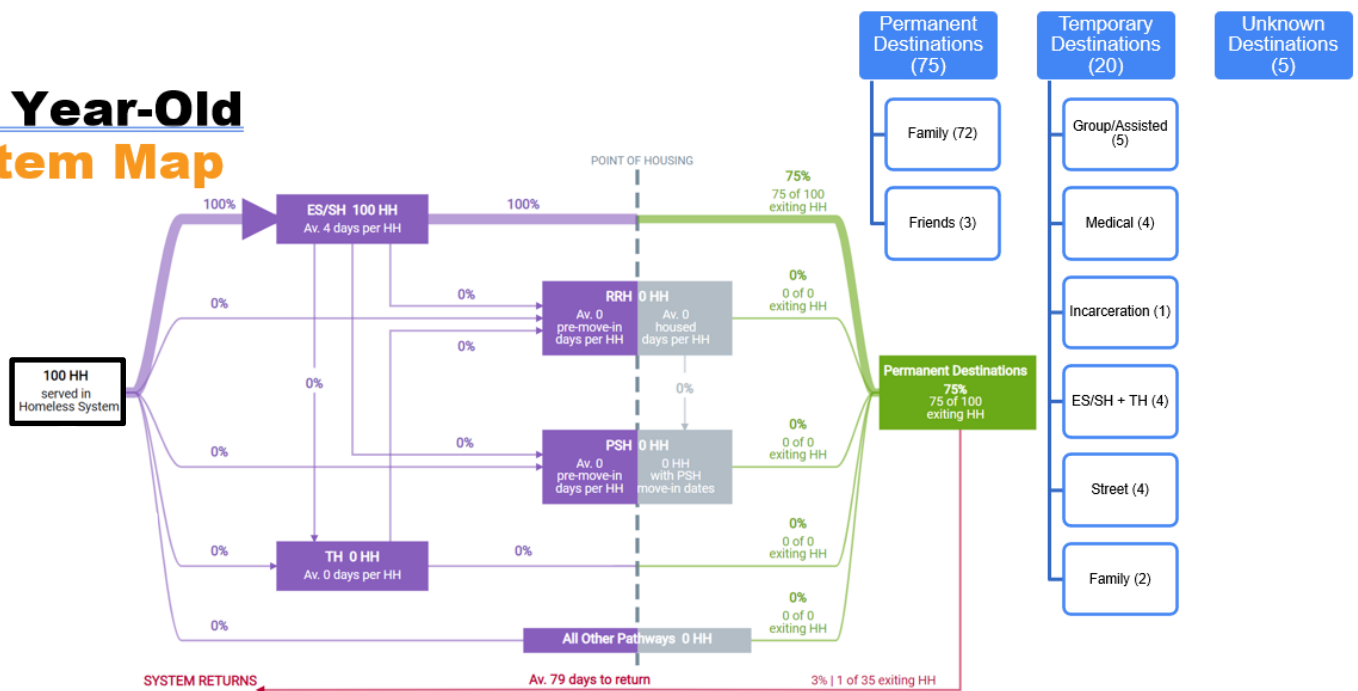
System Map

In addition to understanding the inventory available in the system and its utilization, CSH reviews how households utilize the interventions including length of stay and exits. This is based on available data from HUD.

Figure 8 illustrates how young people under 18 are currently interacting with the homeless response system.

FIGURE 8

<18 Year-Old System Map



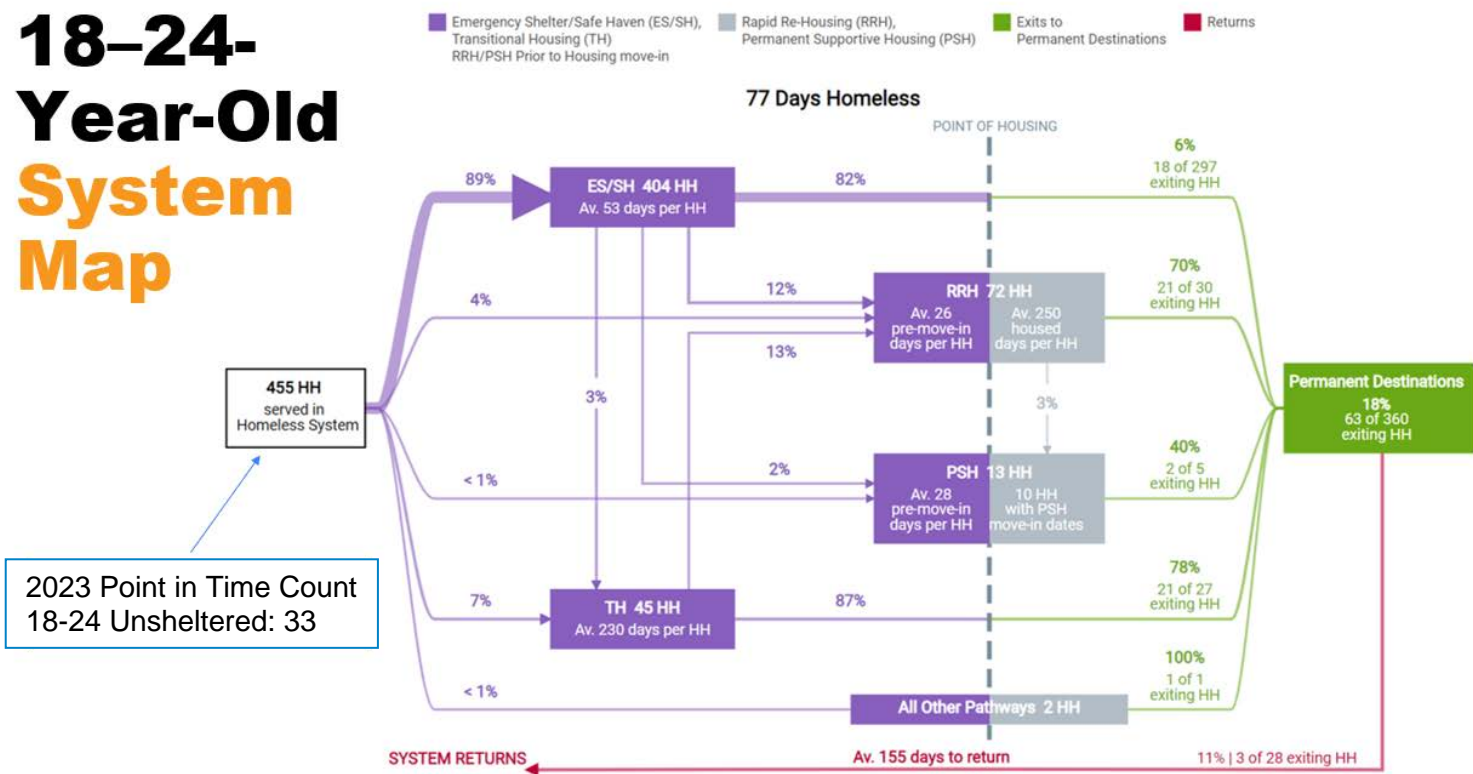
Based on the available HMIS data, approximately 100 homeless households under 18 are served in the homeless system. On average, they spend approximately four (4) days in emergency shelter and 75% of the 100 households exit to permanent destinations. Most of those exiting to permanent destinations went to family (72 out of 100). On average if someone returns to the system, they return 79 days after exit.

For youth experiencing homelessness that are 18-24, the system shows approximately 455 households in the system map. On average, 18-24 youth spend 77 days homeless before they exit the system. The average length of stay in emergency shelter is approximately 53 days, while transitional housing stays are 230 days or almost 8 months. Only 18% of those exiting the homeless system are leaving for permanent destinations, including other housing programs, family, or friends. RRH and TH programs have higher exits to permanent destinations than shelter, which has only a 6% placement into permanent destinations.

Figure 9 outlines the pathways for 18–24-year-olds who are homeless and how they are served by the homeless system.

FIGURE 9

18-24- Year-Old System Map



NEEDS ASSESSMENT

After reviewing all the inputs from the focus groups and existing engagement strategies, the equity analysis, existing data sources, the flow of youth through the system, and available inventory, CSH created the following needs assessment recommendations.

In total, we estimate a minimum of 488 additional supportive housing apartments, rapid rehousing subsidies, and transitional housing beds, and 124 prevention/diversion slots are needed to meet the total need of young adults.

Supportive Housing, Rapid Rehousing, and Transitional Housing

One hundred, ninety-seven (197) units of permanent supportive housing are needed to meet the needs of young adults currently experiencing homelessness. This estimate addresses the entire gap because PSH is permanent housing, and the community’s utilization of PSH is exceptionally high. The estimated need includes 40% of unaccompanied youth 18-24 years of age experiencing homelessness, 16% of parenting youth households 18-24 years of age experiencing homelessness, and 0% of youth under 18 experiencing homelessness.

An additional 259 rapid rehousing slots are needed to address homelessness for youth 18-24.

Population	Homeless Population	National Assumption (PSH)	PSH Need	RRH Need
18-24 Unaccompanied Youth	455	40%	182	216
18-24 Parenting Youth Households	92	16%	15	43
<18 Child Only Households	100	0*	N/A	N/A
Total	647	-	197	259

*Considerations for <18 Child Only HH, which are not eligible for PSH
 Estimated rates of need by homeless populations based on national research and trends used in CSH’s National Needs Assessment

Thirty-two (32) transitional housing beds are needed to meet the temporary needs of youth 18-24 years of age who are experiencing homelessness in the system. The following chart summarizes the existing inventory and gap for these three interventions.

Intervention	Current Inventory	Annual Need	Gap
Permanent Supportive Housing	12	197	197
Rapid Rehousing	18	277	259
Transitional Housing	37	26	32

Self-Resolution, Diversion, and Prevention

There is a percentage of households that can self-resolve or access prevention or diversion to end their episode of homelessness. By assessing the prior living situations from which youth households enter into homelessness, estimates are developed to assess the share of youth that can be expected to self-resolve, or whose homelessness could be ended through self-resolution support, prevention, or a temporary stay. Based on these assumptions, an additional 124 prevention/diversion slots are needed.

Intervention	18-24 Unaccompanied Youth	18-24 Parenting Youth Households
Percent of youth that will self-resolve (receive Emergency shelter only and exit directly to a permanent destination)	4%	8%
Percent of parenting youth entering homeless system from a permanent living situation	29%	60%
Percent of youth exiting from Transitional Housing to permanent destinations	94%	100%

Estimated Costs to Address the Gaps

Based on the needs outlined above, CSH estimates that an annual investment of \$11.9M is needed to address the gap in interventions to help youth end their homelessness. As illustrated in the chart below, this estimate accounts for the annual operating and service costs for supportive housing, rapid rehousing, transitional housing, and prevention/diversion. (It does not include ongoing support for existing interventions or the cost of shelter.)

Intervention	Unit Gap	Operating Cost		Service Cost		Total
		Annual Rent per Unit	Annual Total Rent	Service Cost per Unit	Total Service Cost	
Permanent Supportive Housing	197	\$13,452	\$2.7M	\$8,000	\$1.6M	\$4.2M
Rapid Rehousing	259	\$13,452	\$3.5M	\$7,507	\$1.9M	\$5.4M
Transitional Housing	32	\$4,775	\$152,800	\$12,380	\$396,160	\$548,960
Prevention / Diversion	124	\$13,605	\$1.7M	-	-	\$1.7M
Total Cost						\$11.9M

*Source: VOA Youth Rapid Rehousing Program Budget, Milestone Expansion Budget, Housing Connect

In addition to these annual costs, CSH estimates that 50% of the supportive housing to be created would require new construction or rehabilitation of existing apartments at an average cost of \$344,250, based on data from Housing connect. To create 99 of the 197 apartments needed, an additional \$34M in one-time capital investment would be necessary.

OPPORTUNITIES

As Salt Lake Valley grapples with the complex challenges surrounding homelessness, there is a growing recognition of the need to rebalance the existing systems to be more youth-centric, particularly concerning housing, tenancy support services, and homeless system improvements. This section outlines a series of recommendations aimed at fostering a more equitable and responsive environment for youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in the region. By prioritizing the unique needs and experiences of this demographic group, the community can work towards creating a more inclusive and effective support system that ensures every young person has access to stable housing and the necessary resources to thrive.



Housing

- 1. Increase Awareness of Youth Homelessness:** Increasing awareness of the issue of youth homelessness and educating community members and elected officials is paramount to effecting meaningful change. By fostering a deeper understanding of the root causes and challenges faced by youth experiencing homelessness, the community can cultivate empathy, build support networks, and galvanize action towards implementing sustainable solutions. Education and awareness campaigns can help dispel misconceptions, reduce stigma, and garner public support for policies and initiatives aimed at addressing youth homelessness. Engaging elected officials through targeted advocacy efforts can lead to the allocation of resources, the implementation of youth-centric policies, and the establishment of comprehensive support systems to prevent and end youth homelessness in the community.
- 2. Create More Supportive Housing and Rapid Rehousing:** SLV's housing programs for YEH have proven to be successful once youth are housed. While the community still sees some returns to homelessness, it has a 100% utilization rate in PSH and RRH projects, with an annual need of 197 PSH units and 277 RRH beds. SLV should create 197 PSH units, and 259 RRH beds to address the need for permanent housing. As SLV strives to decrease returns to homelessness and positive housing outcomes, the CoC should intentionally collaborate with Housing Connect and youth-serving nonprofits to increase the systems housing inventory.
- 3. Invest in Diversion/Prevention, and Short-term Interventions:** Thirty-two (32) additional Transitional Living beds are needed to address the community's need. Additionally, SLV should expect to serve 124 youth through diversion/prevention programming.
- 4. Increase Access to Whole-Person Care Tenancy Support Services:** Leverage YHDP to increase/scale the number of formalized partnerships to expand the access, consistency, and availability of services to implement a whole-person care approach to providing YEH with pre-tenancy and tenancy sustaining support services.

Tenancy Support

A significant amount of youth participating in focus groups reported needing social and emotional support along their tenancy journey. Housed young adults reported periods of loneliness during their transition from a shelter or transitional living program into more permanent housing, like RRH. While they enjoy the sense of independence, they sometimes can feel isolated living on their own. YEH residing in shelters also identified inequities in power dynamics between staff and residents, as well as limited staffing capacities to expand (or be creative) with programming to help get housing and promote positive well-being. Below are recommendations for youth-serving programs and systems to better serve youth in SLV based on their experiences.

- **Integrate Youth into Decision Making:** Empower youth voice and decision-making by incorporating the feedback of YEH into all youth serving CoC projects and local programs. This could include requiring policies/procedures for incorporating youth voices, including youth on interview panels, developing/implementing an on-site YAB, creating Affinity Groups, and creating tenant councils for PSH/RRH/Transitional Living residents into CoC programming.
- **Standardize Case Management:** Develop a standardized case-management approach for pre-tenancy and tenancy support services for YEH that promotes [Positive Youth Development](#). This service provision approach should include healthy staff/youth ratios, youth-centered planning, housing-focused engagement, therapy, life skill development (budgeting, food preparation, community navigation), safety, and/or prevention planning.
- **Improve Access to Services:** Improve YEH's access to healthcare, including but not limited to, affirming services for youth with non-traditional gender identities, sexual orientation, and disabling conditions (mental health, substance use, learning disorders, etc.) Access can include formalized and informal partnerships, with a preference given to MOU-driven partnerships. SLV can accomplish this by using Support Services Only funds and/or building a more robust referral system to the Fourth Street Clinic and Valley Behavioral Health.
- **Focus on Cross Sector Collaboration:** Develop and sustain deeper relationships with intentional cross-systems collaboration, like the Department of Workforce Services (DWS), Juvenile Justice Youth Services (JJYS), and foster-care liaisons. YEH (sheltered and housed) reported they could benefit from more support when working with DWS, to help elevate their voice and choice about the types of employment opportunities offered and explored, ensure consistency with DWS staff, and other solutions to garner sustainable employment.

- **Increase Employment Opportunities:** Increase access to technology via Wi-Fi, computers, tablets, and other educational/employment resources. Expand staff, shelter residence, RRH/PSH, and transitional housing residence education on FAFSA and other educational grant opportunities for YEH. Embedded employment and education support within youth services. Develop partnerships with local higher education systems, while leveraging the current McKinney Vento liaisons, to promote youth empowerment and economic development.

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ABOUT CSH

CSH (Corporation for Supportive Housing) advances affordable and accessible housing aligned with services by advocating for effective policies and funding, equitably investing in communities, and strengthening the supportive housing field. Since our founding in 1991, CSH has been the only national nonprofit intermediary focused solely on increasing the availability of supportive housing. Over the course of our work, we have created more than 467,600 units of affordable and supportive housing and distributed over \$1.5 billion in loans and grants. Our workforce is central to accomplishing this work. We employ approximately 170 people across 30 states and U.S. Territories. As an intermediary, we do not directly develop or operate housing but center our approach on collaboration with a wide range of people, partners, and sectors. For more information, visit [csh.org](https://www.csh.org).