

Findings at a Glance

A Youth Homelessness System Assessment for New York City

A coordinated system-level response centered on equity is needed to prevent and end youth homelessness in New York City.

Youth homelessness is on the rise in New York City, where over 4,500 youth were identified as sleeping in shelters or on the streets, according to the City's 2018 point-in-time count. Data shows youth of color, LGBTQ youth, and parenting youth face homelessness at disproportionately high rates. To address this challenge, last June, the administration launched a youth homelessness taskforce with representatives from the City, nonprofit service providers, advocates, and youth with lived experience of homelessness, for a 6 month planning process.

In September 2018, the City further commissioned Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago to conduct a youth homelessness system assessment to bolster the analysis and planning processes of the taskforce. The resulting assessment and system map reflect interviews and focus groups with 53 youth with lived experience and 45 stakeholders with various roles in the system, in addition to surveys of service providers and a review of administrative data. The report presents insights into the full range of existing services, from prevention and crisis response to stable housing, the system capacity and gaps in capacity, as well as youths' experiences and challenges going through the system. Based on findings, Chapin Hall provides recommendations for the City.

Successes & Opportunities

The City has invested significant resources to improve services for youth experiencing homeless, with a growing emphasis on a Citywide coordinated response.

- These services include additional drop-in centers, crisis services and shelters, as well as transitional and supportive housing programs.

There are opportunities to further strengthen the current system and remove gaps in services for youth experiencing homelessness.

- The City would benefit from additional investments in prevention and early intervention programs, long-term stable housing, and extending aftercare services following exits from shelters and housing programs.
- Youth often expressed a desire for more consistent information and support on navigating the system and achieving long-term housing stability.

Based on the assessment findings, the report provides the following recommendations for the City:

- Identify a City agency or office responsible for coordinating a collaborative, interagency system response to youth homelessness.
- Move beyond crisis response by further expanding prevention efforts and supporting young people's sustainable exit from homelessness.
- Develop common processes and screening and assessment tools for youth-specific coordinated entry and ongoing coordination of care.
- Develop a system-level theory of change for preventing and ending youth homelessness that centers on outcomes, lived experience and equity, to help create a mechanism to monitor progress at the system level.

Further Reading: [Youth Homelessness System Assessment / System Map](#)