The U.S. Department of
Housing and Urban Development
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Review of the LGBTQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative Planning Phase

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Executive Summary

Research and anecdotal evidence on the percentage of youth experiencing homelessness who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender or who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity (LGBTQ) indicate that they are greatly overrepresented among the population of youth experiencing homelessness. Available survey data show that LGBTQ youth represent up to 40% of the approximately 550,000 unaccompanied, single youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in the United States.[1,2] Research suggests that bias, rejection, and violence associated with coming out as LGBT, or questioning one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity, contribute to this significant disparity.

Importantly, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), which coordinates the federal response to homelessness across 19 federal agencies, has set a goal and provided guidance for ending homelessness among youth by 2020.[3] Given this federal goal, *knowing more about what works for preventing LGBTQ youth homelessness and intervening early when it occurs to avoid chronic youth homelessness, how it works, why it works, and what can be done to make prevention and early intervention efforts more effective is important.*

To address this critical need for understanding effective communitywide strategies for preventing LGBTQ youth homelessness, in the summer of 2014 the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) launched the LGBTQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative ("initiative"). HUD initiated this effort in collaboration with four federal partners—the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Justice, and USICH—and in partnership with True Colors Fund,[4] a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending homelessness among youth who are LGBTQ. The initiative's two objectives included (1) facilitating better local collaboration between stakeholders working with youth and (2) informing national strategies for preventing homelessness among LGBTQ youth. Using various criteria, HUD and its partners selected two communities—Hamilton County (Cincinnati), Ohio; Harris County (Houston), Texas—to recruit for participation as pilot sites.

Although neither of the pilot communities received new federal funding to develop their plans, both received technical assistance (TA) to build their capacity to successfully develop and carry out their local plans. HUD TA led by American Institutes for Research® (AIR®) and True Colors Fund provided distance and on-site TA. In addition, AIR conducted a review of the planning

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[1] Ray, 2006.
[2] National Alliance to End Homelessness, n.d.
[3] USICH, 2013, 2015.
[4] www.truecolorsfund.org

phase that was intended to (1) document how the two communities carried out the planning for their local LGBTQ homelessness prevention initiative, including their processes, tools, and resources used; (2) identify strengths and assets for and challenges to the planning process; and (3) identify lessons learned.

AIR compiled planning phase-related findings after surveying and interviewing key stakeholders involved in each community's planning process and reviewing key planning documents (e.g., written plans, meeting notes). Their findings are reported in this document along with recommendations intended to inform replication of similar LGBTQ youth homelessness prevention planning in communities nationwide. Importantly, the findings illustrate that, while challenging, communitywide planning to address LGBTQ youth homelessness is possible with buy-in, resources, and a collective willingness to invest time in a planning process. Key findings from the planning phase review include the following:

- **Plan Features.** Each community produced ambitious, multifaceted plans that align with the USICH Framework for Ending Youth Homelessness and incorporate multiple systems serving and issues affecting LGBTQ youth. The communities organized their plans around a hierarchy of a shared vision, a small set of broad goals, and a series of specific objectives required to meet each goal. Review of the plans indicates that their outcomes cluster around 14 priority areas:

  1. Child welfare
  2. Community collaboration
  3. Culturally competent policies, programs, and practices
  4. Data
  5. Education
  6. Employment
  7. Family and community awareness/supports
  8. Funding
  9. Health and health care
  10. Housing
  11. Juvenile justice and law enforcement
  12. Screening and assessment
  13. Social-emotional well-being
  14. Youth involvement and satisfaction with services

- **Stakeholder Perceptions about Plans.** Local leads and steering committee members believe that the planning process produced the right set of strategies to prevent and intervene early to address LGBTQ youth homelessness and were satisfied with the plans their communities produced.

- **Importance of Timelines.** Using a condensed timeline was challenging but important for achieving the communities' written plans, and each community used this timeline to map out planning phase activities.

- **Importance of Needs Assessment.** Local leads and steering committee members in the two communities shared strong agreement that the needs assessment each community carried out provided valuable information that they then used to inform development of their local plans. Both communities strongly agreed that similar planning processes begin with a needs assessment.

- **Perceived Value of Logic Models.** Each community developed a logic model with a clear vision statement for their initiative. Although a few stakeholders remained uncertain about the usefulness of the logic models moving into the implementation phase, most considered this a valuable tool as part of the planning process.

- **Engagement.** Both communities described strong levels of participation from various stakeholder groups, with some challenges and gaps in involvement from particular groups such as representatives outside the urban core of each community.

- **Time Commitment.** Although opinions varied about the time and investment needed for each role, both local leads and steering committee members reported a substantial time commitment—approximately 1,300 hours in Cincinnati and 1,500 hours in Houston combined for leads and steering committee members—as part of their participation in the planning process from April to September 2014.

- **Leadership.** In selecting organizations and individuals to lead this planning process, stakeholders from both communities described the importance of selecting those with expertise providing services to the LGBT community and those at-risk of or currently experiencing homelessness. Established community networks enabled local leads to adapt quickly to the fast pace and requisite early stakeholder engagement. Stakeholders also identified having dedicated staff within the lead organization to facilitate the planning phase process as important for success.

- **Stakeholder Investment.** The steering committees faced some challenges associated with attrition, overcommitment of members, and locating the "right" expertise for participation. Nevertheless, almost all steering committee members who completed the survey reported that the time commitment for serving on the steering committee was reasonable and as expected.

- **Subcommittees.** Subcommittees played an important role in the initiative planning phase, although disagreement occurred about whether the roles and time commitment for subcommittee chair roles were clear and reasonable.

- **Importance of Technical Assistance.** Stakeholders valued external TA as an important ongoing asset that had a critical role in shaping each community's plan.

- **Concerns About Sustainability.** HUD expected the initiative to jumpstart each community's work on LGBTQ youth homelessness and to last as long as needed; however, stakeholders shared concerns that the large scope of their plans presented a challenge to their local initiative's sustainability.

The report concludes with recommendations intended to inform the planning of similar initiatives in other communities. These include the following:

- Begin with data and an assessment of needs and resources;

- Begin with a shared vision and clear goals for the initiative;

- Consider a convening or facilitator approach for those driving the planning process to ensure shared accountability and neutral decision making;

- Build accountability into the planning process;

- Dedicate staff to the planning process or consider a longer planning period;

- Begin with commitment from organizations, and be strategic about partner selection and engagement;

- Conduct targeted outreach to groups that may be difficult to engage in the planning process, and consider creative and proactive approaches for engaging planning partners and other community stakeholders;

- Set clear expectations for participants' roles and decision making;

- Plan with implementation and sustainability in mind;

- Prioritize the infrastructure for the planning process; and

- Access national resources, information emerging from this initiative, and external TA where available.

Moving forward, in 2016 under HUD's direction, AIR will conduct a review of each community's implementation of their local plans. This review will examine how the communities are progressing in implementing their plans. Importantly, AIR will examine the local initiatives' early intervention and prevention efforts to address LGBTQ youth homelessness—*what early results are evident*? In addition, AIR will work with HUD and its partners to translate planning phase review findings into resources for the field.

Introduction

Research and anecdotal evidence on the percentage of youth experiencing homelessness who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender or who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity (LGBTQ) indicate that they are greatly overrepresented among the population of youth experiencing homelessness.[5] Available survey data show that LGBTQ youth represent up to 40% of youth experiencing homelessness in the United States. This overrepresentation is striking when compared to the estimated 7% of the general youth population that LGBTQ youth comprise.[6] Research suggests that bias, rejection, and violence associated with coming out as LGBT, or questioning one's sexual orientation and/or gender identity, contribute to this significant disparity.[7] While homeless, LGBTQ youth are at greater risk than non-LGBTQ youth for traumatic experiences, including victimization, engaging in survival sex that often results in sexual assault, and school failure.[8]

Homelessness crisis services organizations and youth-serving systems (e.g., schools, child welfare and juvenile justice agencies) serve a critical role in identifying and serving youth who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness. However, these providers may lack the ability to serve LGBTQ youth in a culturally competent and developmentally appropriate manner. This lack of capacity is problematic given the overrepresentation of LGBTQ youth among youth struggling with homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness. Importantly, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), which coordinates and catalyzes the federal response to homelessness across 19 federal agencies, has set a goal and provided guidance for ending homelessness among youth by 2020.[9] Given this federal goal, ***knowing more about what works for preventing LGBTQ youth homelessness and intervening early when it occurs to avoid chronic youth homelessness,[10] how it works, why it works, and what can be done to make prevention and early intervention efforts more effective is important***.

To address this critical need for understanding effective communitywide strategies for preventing LGBTQ youth homelessness, in the summer of 2014 the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) launched the LGBTQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative ("initiative"). HUD initiated this effort in collaboration with four federal partners—the U.S.

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[5] Choi, Wilson, Shelton, & Gates, 2015; Durso & Gates, 2012; Ray, 2006

[6] Mallory, Sears, Hasenbush, & Susman, 2014.

[7] Choi, Wilson, Shelton, & Gates, 2015; Durso & Gates, 2012; Poirier, Murphy, Shelton, & Costello, 2013; Ray, 2006

[8] Kenney, Fisher, Grandin, Hanson, & Winn, 2012

[9] USICH, 2013, 2015

[10] Chronic homelessness is the same for adults and youth. "To be considered chronically homeless, a person must have a disability and have been living in a place not meant for human habitation, in an emergency shelter, or a safe haven for the last 12 months continuously or on at least four occasions in the last three years where those occasions cumulatively total at least 12 months." (Oliva, 2015.)

Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Department of Justice, and USICH—and in partnership with True Colors Fund,[11] a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending homelessness among youth who are LGBTQ. The initiative's two objectives included (1) facilitating better local collaboration between stakeholders working with youth and (2) informing national strategies for preventing homelessness among LGBTQ youth. Using various criteria, HUD and its partners selected two communities—Hamilton County (Cincinnati), Ohio; Harris County (Houston), Texas—to recruit for participation as pilot sites. Selection criteria included factors that the partners considered important to the initiative's success in the pilot communities, such as whether there were existing efforts and an infrastructure to serve LGBTQ youth on the ground level and whether the community had a high-functioning Continuum of Care (CoC). HUD and its partners asked the two pilot communities to participate in a strategic planning process beginning in March 2014 and culminating in a written plan to reduce and prevent homelessness for LGBTQ youth at risk of, or experiencing, nonchronic homelessness. The communities were asked to complete their plans by the end of September 2014 and then move forward with implementing their communitywide strategies.

Although neither of the pilot communities received new federal funding to develop their plans, both received in-kind technical assistance (TA) to build their capacity to successfully develop and carry out their local plans. HUD TA led by American Institutes for Research (AIR) and True Colors Fund provided distance and on-site TA. This included facilitating community forums and other activities; sharing best practices and strategies to address LGBTQ youth homelessness; crafting social marketing strategies to build awareness about the initiatives and LGBTQ youth homelessness; informing discussions about plan priorities and activities; and providing tools for and feedback on draft plans (the report provides more detail about the TA team's role). In addition, AIR conducted a review of the planning phase that was intended to accomplish the following:

1. Document how the two communities carried out the planning for their local LGBTQ homelessness prevention initiative, including their processes, tools, and resources used;

2. Identify strengths and/or assets for and challenges to the planning process; and

3. Identify lessons learned.

Ultimately, HUD tasked AIR with conducting a review that would inform similar planning efforts in other communities. AIR used both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the planning process in each community. Through a survey of and interviews with key stakeholders involved in each community's planning process, and a scan of key documents (e.g., written plans, meeting notes), the review's findings are intended to inform replication of LGBTQ youth homelessness prevention planning in other communities. To some extent, the planning phase

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[11] www.truecolorsfund.org

review is intended to also produce information that can inform implementation of each community's local plan. This information will contribute to the federal partners' and the youth homelessness field's understanding of community change and the benefits of initiatives to prevent homelessness for not only LGBTQ youth but also youth generally.

Planning Phase Review Questions and Methods

In consultation with HUD, AIR established questions for this review focused on the core areas listed in Exhibit 1. AIR identified these areas as critical components of the planning process based on the initiative's guidance document and the approaches of the two communities. The core review questions corresponding to these areas were as follows:

> **Exhibit 1: Areas of Focus for the Planning Phase Review**
>
> - Plan priorities
> - Planning approaches
> - Local infrastructure
> - Technical assistance
> - Lessons learned

1. How did the communities approach local plan development? In particular:
   - What needs assessment activities did the communities conduct, and how was the information that emerged from these assessments documented and used to inform planning?
   - How did the communities approach the development of a local initiative logic model, and what did their local logic models address?
   - What planning timeline did the communities follow?
   - In what ways were community stakeholders from diverse backgrounds engaged in the planning process, and how did the communities develop core partnerships?

2. What strategies do the local plans incorporate? To what extent do the plans address funding and sustainability?

3. What roles did local infrastructure—leads, steering committees, and subcommittees—have in developing their local plans? How did they champion their local initiative?

4. What technical assistance supported the two communities in their plan development?

5. What lessons learned and recommendations did local stakeholders have for future planning efforts such as this one? In particular:
   - What strengths and assets supported local plan development?
   - Conversely, what barriers and challenges hindered local plan development?

AIR began data collection in early April 2015. Appendix C provides additional detail about the review methods and participants, and Appendix D includes the survey administered using SurveyMonkey to better understand how both communities engaged in planning phase activities. AIR also conducted 18 interviews in person or by phone, with local leads (3 Cincinnati, 4 Houston) and steering committee members (6 Cincinnati, 5 Houston) from April to June 2015

(see Appendix E for the interview questions). Additionally, AIR reviewed documents and incorporated reflections from the TA work provided to the two communities.

To minimize bias among interviewees, AIR staff who were not involved in delivering TA to the communities conducted all interviews and maintained control of individual transcripts. The interviewer explained to each participant how confidentiality would be maintained. To facilitate analysis of interview data, AIR obtained permission from interviewees to record interviews. We then transcribed and coded all interviews using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis program. We developed a coding structure based on the review purpose and coded interview data thematically. We then ran queries to analyze data, generate findings, and extract quotations to illustrate key findings. Importantly, this review identified challenges, strengths and assets, and lessons learned to inform recommendations for other communities embarking on a similar, communitywide planning process to prevent and end LGBTQ youth homelessness. We provide these recommendations at the end of this report.

Findings

Overall Community Approaches to and Results of the Planning Process

After accepting the offer to participate in the initiative, the stakeholders from each community identified a local lead organization for the initiative to serve as a point of contact for the federal partners. In Cincinnati (Hamilton County), the pilot community leads included Lighthouse Youth Services, Inc., an agency dedicated to providing the best services to children, youth, and families in need, and Strategies to End Homelessness in Cincinnati (Hamilton County), the lead agency for the local HUD-funded CoC. In Houston (Harris County), the leads included the Montrose Center, an LGBT community organization, and the Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County, the lead agency for local HUD-funded CoC. Both communities agreed to implement and sustain their plans beginning in fall 2014. As part of this planning phase, these local leads leveraged community input and involvement to design and conduct a local needs assessment, create a local initiative logic model, and develop a local implementation timeline. In each community, a steering committee and subcommittees also were established to facilitate planning. Lastly, both sites received intensive TA that included on-site, capacity-building support; online resources; and distance TA, which supported all facets of local planning.

In collaboration with HUD and its partners, AIR developed an initiative logic model (see Appendix A-1) summarizing the initiative's vision and approach to achieving its intended outcomes, which AIR then shared with each community to guide their local planning. Each community then developed a local initiative logic model (see Appendix A-A2 for the Hamilton County logic model and Appendix A-A3 for the Harris County logic model). In addition, the initiative guidance document that each community received (see Appendix B) outlined HUD's

and its partners' expectations for the initiative, including how the two communities approach the goal of preventing LGBTQ youth homelessness. The guidance document is grounded in the types of practices that are important to effectively carrying out communitywide change initiatives (e.g., understanding local need, engaging stakeholders, leveraging funding to sustain efforts). As the guidance document notes, the partners were interested in understanding how mainstream resources could support these prevention efforts. Each community was also asked to integrate the strategies into their community's consolidated plan,[12] which is a HUD requirement as part of its Community Planning and Development formula block grant programs. The consolidated plan is designed to support states and local jurisdictions with assessing their affordable housing and community development needs and market conditions, and making data-driven, place-based investment decisions.

In collaboration with the local CoC lead agency, each community was expected to (1) determine their target population (including who was considered "at risk," while being mindful of the requirements of any specific federal grant program funds that are part of their collaborative efforts); (2) include appropriate partners such as runaway and homeless youth programs, local education agencies, local law enforcement, homeless or formerly homeless LGBTQ youth, and family members in planning and implementing their local initiative; and (3) apply USICH's Unaccompanied Youth Intervention Model described in the USICH Framework to End Youth Homelessness,[13] which includes a focus on risk and protective factors as well as overall alignment around four core outcomes: stable housing, permanent connections, well-being, and education or employment.

During the planning phase, both communities engaged in parallel community organizing activities. These included (1) assessing their community's understanding of and commitment to ending LGBTQ youth homelessness; (2) identifying key stakeholders that represent youth and youth-serving agencies from multiple perspectives as well as their priorities and perspectives related to issues of LGBTQ youth homelessness; (3) strategically engaging these stakeholders through various modes of outreach; (4) organizing a local workgroup or committee that includes the stakeholders they identified, along with youth and family members; (5) developing a local timeline and action plan; (6) coordinating the local initiative plan with development of their community's annual, consolidated plan for addressing homelessness; and (7) building in time to plan over a 6-month period. HUD and its partners expected these activities to lead to written plans for the local initiatives, with local support for the strategies and resources committed to carrying them out.

As part of their local plans, the communities were expected to include a focus on both LGBTQ youth homelessness prevention and intervention. Prevention activities engage stakeholders before youth experience homelessness, to support stakeholders when youth experience precursors to a

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[12] https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/consolidated-plan/?_sm_au_=iVV7qLkR46D7H0PM
[13] Available at http://usich.gov/population/youth/a_framework_for_ending_youth_homelessness_2012/

crisis. Intervention activities engage stakeholders during crisis for the purpose of addressing a specific and time-sensitive situation for individuals or families. To prevent LGBTQ youth homelessness at the local level, the plans needed to (1) define the population of focus (e.g., what is required to be considered "at-risk" for homelessness); (2) develop an assessment methodology to identify youth who are LGBTQ and "at-risk"; (3) coordinate federal and local resources (including foundations and funders) to access the supports necessary to implement the initiative and to reach the target population; and (4) identify examples of promising program models and best practices from around the country that can be implemented locally. In summary, the initiative guidance document delineated expectations and an approach for both communities to follow as they embarked on their strategic planning process.

Plan Content

Both community plans[14] address the USICH core outcome areas—stable housing, education and employment, social and emotional well-being, and permanent connections—but incorporate objectives and tactics that differ from each other and outcomes that are intended not only to prevent LGBTQ youth homelessness and intervene early when it occurs but also to improve LGBTQ youth well-being. Cincinnati's plan for its initiative, which it named "Safe and Supported," is organized around eight broader goals that collectively include 20 objectives intended to achieve its vision.[15] Houston branded its initiative "NEST" and organized its plan around eight priority outcome areas, which include 61 objectives to achieve its vision. Exhibit 2 displays the vision statements of each community's initiative. Review of the plans indicates that the plan outcomes[16] cluster around 14 priority areas:

> **Exhibit 2: Vision Statements From Pilot Community Plans**
>
> **Cincinnati:**
> Hamilton County will be a community that is safe and secure for youth who identify as LGBTQ. These young people will have access to stable housing, health care, education, employment, and emotional connections that ensure they thrive. Youth in Hamilton County are proud of their LGBTQ identity, and community members support them. Every youth has a home.
>
> **Houston:**
> In Harris County, Texas, homelessness among LGBTQ youth ends by 2020, and LGBTQ youth at risk of, or experiencing, episodic homelessness achieve positive outcomes.

1. Child welfare
2. Community collaboration
3. Culturally competent policies, programs, and practices
4. Data
5. Education
6. Employment
7. Family and community awareness/supports
8. Funding
9. Health and health care
10. Housing
11. Juvenile justice and law enforcement
12. Screening and assessment
13. Social-emotional well-being
14. Youth involvement and satisfaction with services

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[14] Each community's complete plan is available on the HUD Exchange website at https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-youth.

[15] See Appendix sections A-A2 and A-A3 for each community's logic model.

[16] The community plans did not operationalize these outcomes further (e.g., percentage or numerical change in the number of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness).

These priority areas include the broader systems and stakeholders that the two communities were asked to involve in their planning process (e.g., child welfare, juvenile justice). The priority areas also address the USICH core outcome areas for ending youth homelessness (e.g., education and employment) and strategies emphasized in the initiative's guidance document (e.g., use of data, youth involvement). Despite the intensity of the planning process, both community plans aimed to establish a vision, goals, and approaches that could be sustained as the plans are implemented. At the onset of the planning process, each community conducted an assessment of local needs, local strengths and assets, and opportunities to prevent LGBTQ youth homelessness. The TA team collaborated with the two communities to conduct on-site and remote needs assessment activities that included community forums (with approximately 130 participants across the two communities), interviews of local stakeholders, analysis of quantitative data on LGBTQ youth homelessness where available, and reviews of relevant documents. Both communities also involved LGBTQ youth in gathering additional information about their experiences and local needs and strengths. With input from the local leads, the TA team analyzed available data to identify themes pertaining to each community's strengths, needs, and opportunities and shared findings with communities to guide and target their planning process. The two communities also developed logic models (see Appendix sections A-A2 and A-A3), aligned with the initiative logic model, to guide their local initiatives. The logic models summarized each community's vision, key activities, and intended results and outcomes.

In addition, the initiative guidance document detailed goals and expectations for the local initiatives to identify key stakeholders, including those working with youth, and to facilitate better collaboration among them as part of their strategic planning process. During the planning phase, local leads identified and engaged various community stakeholders through community forums about the initiative and LGBTQ youth homelessness and through formal roles on steering committees and subcommittees. Each community established a steering committee with approximately 14 core members. The communities also took different approaches to structuring the planning process as they put in place subcommittees at the onset of the planning process. Cincinnati established six subcommittees: cultural competency and training, data and evaluation, finance, housing, resource sharing and awareness building, and school and community spaces. Houston established 12 subcommittees: advocacy, child welfare, employment skills, funding, legal and criminal justice, physical and behavioral health, policies and practices, research and data, resources, schools, shelter and housing, and training and education. The subcommittees in each community met regularly at different intervals (e.g., biweekly), with subcommittee chairs responsible for participating in and sharing progress and results as part of the steering committees that met regularly. The TA team also created an online community using Groupsite.com, providing initiative materials and national resources in a centralized location. Each pilot community also had a private section of the website to share meeting agendas and minutes, and to communicate with each other.

Appendix F further illustrates the activities and intended results of the two plans. For example, the two pilot community plans include activities that are intended to:

1. Facilitate greater community awareness of issues contributing to LGBTQ youth homelessness and local efforts to address these issues (e.g., through community forums).

2. Facilitate greater local collaboration and systems change among stakeholders to bridge gaps through expanded communication and sharing of best practices.

3. Improve the quality and use of data on sexual orientation and gender identity.

4. Improve understanding about risk and protective factors for homelessness as well as related tools for screening and assessing youth.

5. Improve the quality of interventions to prevent LGBTQ youth homelessness.

6. Develop and disseminate new resources (e.g., resource guides) and implement programs (e.g., mentoring, family conflict resolution) to address particular youth needs.

7. Foster more affirming experiences for LGBTQ youth in the systems and among the providers that serve them through ongoing policy change, professional development, and resource sharing.

8. Increase the numbers of LGBTQ youth with identity-affirming placements made through the child welfare system.

9. Obtain funding and in-kind resources to support initiative activities.

10. Document the initiative's progress, outcomes, and lessons learned to support quality improvement and enhance impact locally, and inform replication efforts in other communities.

The following findings explore stakeholder perspectives on plan priorities and then the planning process and activities in more detail, including issues related to the timeline, needs assessment, logic model, and community involvement. We then discuss the local infrastructure that supported the planning process. We end this findings section with a discussion of community perspectives on the TA they received and sustainability. Throughout this report, we integrate data from interviews, surveys, and documents (written plans, meeting notes). Where survey data are described, the reader is referred to specific tables or figures in Appendix G where complete survey findings can be found. Collectively, the findings illustrate how the two communities responded to the invitation from HUD and its partners to participate in this initiative—ultimately producing communitywide plans for addressing LGBTQ youth homelessness. The findings can inform how other communities might approach efforts to develop communitywide plans for preventing LGBTQ youth homelessness.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Plan Priorities

Survey and interview data indicated that local leads and steering committee members think their plans include the right strategies to prevent and intervene early to address LGBTQ youth homelessness and that they were satisfied with the plans their communities produced. Findings include the following:

- A majority of local leads and steering committee members from both communities "agreed" that their community's plan has the right strategies to prevent LGBTQ youth homelessness. Responses were similar when they were asked about whether their community's plan has the right strategies to intervene early when LGBTQ youth experience homelessness in the community (see Exhibit 3 for combined results, by community; Tables G1 and G2 in Appendix G provide disaggregated results).

Exhibit 3: Our Community Has the Right Strategies to Prevent LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in Our Community, Local Lead and Steering Committee Member Survey Responses

Cincinnati:

Houston:

Strongly Agree
Agree
Unsure
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
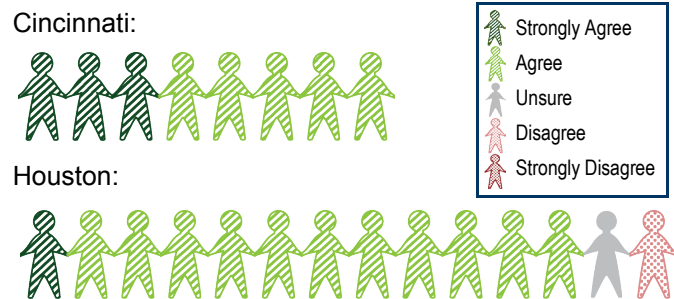
- Steering committee members also largely reported being "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the content of their local plans, although one Houston respondent was "somewhat dissatisfied" (see Exhibit 4 for combined results, by community; see Table G3 for disaggregated results).

- Interviewees also commented about their satisfaction with their community plans. For example, one local lead from Cincinnati shared that "*What excites me most is seeing the momentum that we've built and knowing that we have strategies that are grounded in our community and that we really believe are going to work and already we've seen some pretty big system changes and community investment, and it just feels like the tide is turning and this is a really important area to focus on.*"

Exhibit 4: To What Extent Are You Satisfied With the Content of Your Local Plan, Steering Committee Member Survey Responses

Cincinnati:

Houston:

Very Satisfied
Somewhat Satisfied
Unsure
Somewhat Dissatisfied
Very Dissatisfied
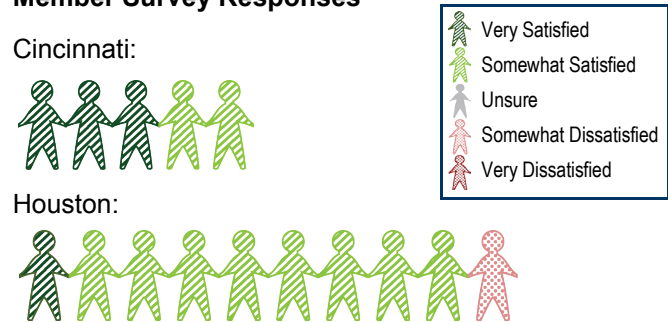
Planning Phase Process and Activities

This section synthesizes findings from these key components of the planning process, first with the timeline and then a discussion about

the time commitment as reported by the local leads and steering committee members (sometimes together referred to as "stakeholders" in this section). Following this, we summarize findings related to the assessment of local needs and strengths as perceived by stakeholders in each community, the logic models that each community developed, and the extent of community involvement in each community's planning process. As one local lead shared in describing the planning process overall, the planning phase "*Was a 6-month intensive planning process starting with the needs assessment, really involving our community through a lot of stakeholder forums, breaking into teams, coming up with our key strategies and our core areas . . . . And then coming up with this community plan that we could all have consensus on at the end of our 6 months.*" In both communities, cross-systems collaboration and leadership were important to carrying out these activities successfully. Some similarities and differences are evident in the planning approaches of the two pilot communities, though. Throughout this section, we draw attention to key assets and challenges to the planning process.

Timeline. Survey and interview data indicate that using a condensed timeline was challenging but important for achieving the communities' written plans, and each community used this timeline to map out planning phase activities. Findings show that each community leveraged the agreed-upon 6-month initiative timeline to guide and move the planning process forward expeditiously, and stakeholders generally viewed the timeline positively. Because both communities had committed to HUD and the partners to participate in the initiative—and the 6-month planning process was one of the terms of their involvement— both communities were steadfast in their commitment to achieving this milestone. They also accessed substantial TA along the way (described further in the TA section of these findings). Highlights from the data include the following:

- Half of the local leads (2 Cincinnati, 2 Houston) and most steering committee members (7 Cincinnati, 9 Houston) responded in the survey that the ways in which their local initiative spaced out activities during the 6-month planning process helped to guide their work (see Table G5). Most survey respondents also "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the overall planning phase timeline was closely followed (see Table G6). As one local lead shared, "*I think the timeline really was a strong suggestion from the technical assistance team, which made sense for us, and when we mapped out the key activities that had to happen, and when we had 6 months and kind of working backwards, it just set it for us.*" Another steering committee member noted that the timeline "*felt quick in many ways. I understand the need for that. I think if you drag things out too long, you lose your momentum and your interest sometimes, and even your personnel occasionally.*"

- Other interviewees also touched on how the 6-month planning process was beneficial in several important ways. For example, one interviewee commented, "*I think there was always the challenge of it being unfunded, so I actually think that 6 months was plenty. If it was, like, you do this thing for 2 years or 1 year, it may have not been as successful, but because it was such a short, time-limited thing, we could really put our time and resources into it*." Another interviewee noted, "*I think 6 months is about right because you've got to get everyone to the table, you've got to develop a preliminary plan, everybody has to revise it, and then it gets revised, and then it gets revised again. And people have to make agreements, and they have to talk to each other and decide who's going to do what, and all of that takes a bunch of time. Some people will say, 'Oh, I can't make this decision; I have to ask my boss,' and you have that delay. Six months is good*."

Although the short turnaround for the planning process led both communities to stay focused and maintain momentum, **at the same time some stakeholders raised concerns about whether 6 months was enough time to develop plans with sufficient quality.** For example, some stakeholders referred to the timeline as "*intense*" and "*fast and furious*." Highlights from the data include:

- Whereas two Cincinnati local leads "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that 6 months was enough time to plan the initiative, three Houston leads "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" with this statement. Similarly, although just over half of the steering committee members in both communities "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that 6 months was sufficient for a quality plan, in both Cincinnati ($n = 3$) and Houston ($n = 4$) some steering committee members "disagreed" or were "unsure" (see Exhibit 5 for combined results by community; see Table G4 for disaggregated results).

  Exhibit 5: Six Months Was Enough Time to Develop a Quality Community Plan to Prevent LGBTQ Youth Homelessness, Local Lead and Steering Committee Member Survey Responses

  Cincinnati:

  Houston:

  Strongly Agree
  Agree
  Unsure
  Disagree
  Strongly Disagree
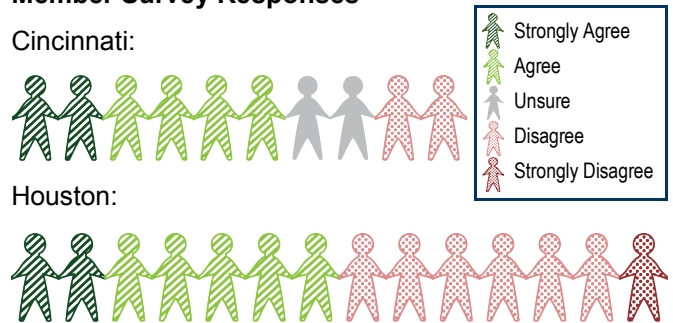
- Interviewees reflected these concerns and the tension between maintaining a constrained timeline and the ability to produce a quality plan. For example, one local lead talked in depth about this challenge:

Local Lead Quote

I would say there's always [the philosophy that] at every stage we could have gone deeper, especially [with] needs assessment, we could have gotten more information, more data, more interviews. And I think at the end, when we had written the plan and were structuring it, even after we submitted it, we still made, like, two more revisions because it just wasn't quite there . . . . At the end, it got really shortened in terms of really proofing it, making sure that we had all of the strategies in place that we would want. We definitely see it as a living document, so we've already made changes. I think it was fine, but towards the end, we kind of lost our ability to have among our steering committee real, in-depth discussions about certain elements because at the end it was like, "Okay, is this good enough? Can we approve it? Can we submit it?" So it got rushed at the end.

- Steering committee members also reflected these perspectives. For example, one steering committee member further acknowledged the trade-offs of the 6-month timeline: "*Having the concentrated time to do what's really necessary to do really good, in-depth planning, [to] get people on board, I felt like I was never doing enough and [that] we should be doing more and should be quicker, and yet trying to figure out how to do that . . . [with] the people that were involved, all the other things that you had to do is really difficult. It felt quick in many ways.*"

Needs Assessment. Stakeholders in the two communities shared strong agreement that the needs assessment provided valuable information that they then used to inform development of their local plans. Both communities strongly agreed that similar planning processes begin with a needs assessment. Highlights from the data include the following:

- All seven local leads and a majority of steering committee members in both communities (5 Cincinnati, 7 Houston) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" on the survey that the needs assessment activities as part of the planning process provided valuable information. All seven local leads "agreed" or "strongly agreed" on the survey that other communities should begin their initiatives with a needs assessment as part of their planning process (see Exhibit 6 for combined results, by community; see Tables G7 and G8 for disaggregated

Exhibit 6: The Needs Assessment Activities (e.g., Interviews of Key Stakeholders, Community Forums) Provided Valuable Information, Local Lead and Steering Committee Member Survey Responses

Cincinnati:

Houston:

Strongly Agree
Agree
Unsure
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
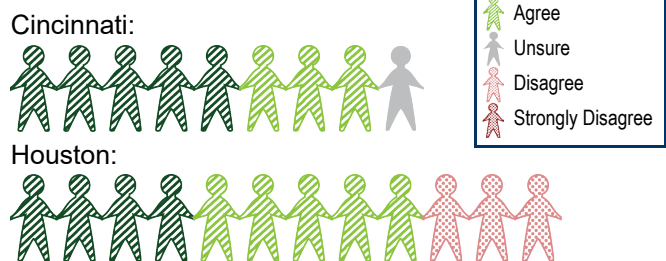
results). Additionally, although agreement was not as strong, survey respondents still tended to agree that the communities used their needs assessment findings to develop their plan strategies (see Table G9).

- During interviews, stakeholders in both communities pointed to the value of assessing local needs at the onset of the planning process. The needs assessment provided important insights on each community; both local needs and strengths led to discussions about the need for better quality data on LGBTQ youth homelessness and facilitated an approach that aligned with the larger initiative's goals. As one steering committee member shared, "*[N]eeds assessment drives everything that happens after that; otherwise you're just shooting in the dark . . . . I think it directs you towards what you need to focus on in your initial plan for the community.*" A local lead also shared that the needs assessment "*really helps determine your direction.*"

Several stakeholders also pointed to the need for less "*anecdotal*" and more quantitative data on LGBTQ youth homelessness in their community. As one steering committee shared, "*I think it's important to demonstrate the need . . . . People want to know, 'What is the size of the issue? What is the scope of the issue? How many people does this problem impact? What are the causes of this issue?' People want data. So a needs assessment helps you gather that data.*"

Logic Model. Although a few stakeholders remained uncertain about the usefulness of the logic models as the initiatives move forward, survey and interview data also suggest that developing a logic model[17] was a valuable tool as part of the planning process. Highlights from the data include the following:

- Almost all local leads and steering committee members "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that their logic models accurately represent their initiative (see Table G11). Stakeholders expressed slightly less certainty when they were asked about whether the logic models would be useful to their initiatives in the future, although 5 local leads and 11 steering committee members "agreed" or "strongly agreed" when asked this question on the survey (see Table G11). However, all seven local leads and a majority of steering committee members in both communities (6 Cincinnati, 7 Houston) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" on the survey that other communities should develop an initiative logic model when beginning a similar initiative (see Exhibit 7 for combined results, by community; see Table G12 for disaggregated results).

- During interviews, several stakeholders talked about the usefulness of their logic models. One local lead noted, "*I think the logic model is helpful if you come back to it and you tie your plan back to it and you really follow through with it.*" Another local lead commented, "*I think it helps to keep it really simple and to definitely explain to the community what this is and why it matters.*" A steering committee member also thought

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[17] Appendix A provides the overall initiative logic model and community logic models.

that having another community's initiative logic model would have been useful to their local planning "*because we were trying to chew off so many different topics and issues, as well as coalition building and support.*" A sample community logic model would have provided "*all the nuts and bolts that are needed, from all of the inputs to all of the outcomes.*"

Exhibit 7: I Recommend Developing an Initiative Logic Model When Beginning a Similar Planning Process in Another Community, Local Lead and Steering Committee Member Survey Responses

Cincinnati:

Houston:

Strongly Agree
Agree
Unsure
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
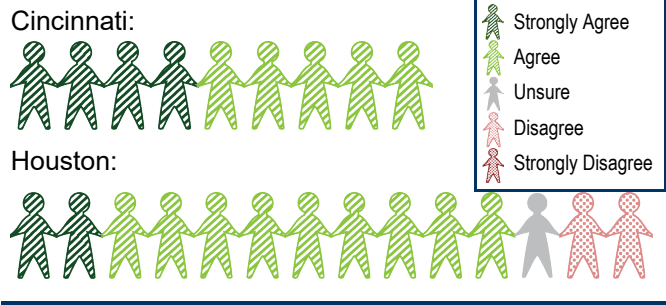
Community Involvement. **Both communities described strong levels of participation from various stakeholder groups, with some challenges/gaps in involvement from particular groups.** Each community brought together stakeholders from human service systems (e.g., schools, juvenile justice facilities, child welfare agencies); homelessness crisis services; and youth-serving organizations. Gaps in community involvement, however, included limited representation from youth, families, faith-based communities, and stakeholders outside the urban cores (i.e., communities outside Cincinnati and Houston in the two counties). Highlights from the data include the following:

- Overall, steering committee survey respondents strongly agreed that the right organizations participated in each community's planning process, although two respondents from Houston and one from Cincinnati "disagreed" or were "unsure" when asked about this on the survey (see Exhibit 8; see Table G14 for disaggregated results). Results were similar when respondents were asked whether the right individuals participated in the planning process (see Table G14).

Exhibit 8: The Right Organizations Participated in Our Initiative's Planning Process, Steering Committee Member Survey Responses

Cincinnati:

Houston:

Strongly Agree
Agree
Unsure
Disagree
Strongly Disagree

- Interviewees also commented that they had the right people who were involved in crafting the plans. For example, a local lead noted this: "*Off the top it just seems like the most useful part was having the right people around the table, people who had some expertise, experience with this population, and a commitment to really change things.*"

- Stakeholders noted that the youth voice in particular is important for similar planning initiatives, and youth were involved to some extent in each community's planning process. For example, one local lead explained, "*I think inclusion of youth voice is the*

most important, or adults that have experienced homelessness as youth that are maybe beyond this age set, but still have a life experience that would help inform the system." At the same time, stakeholders acknowledged the difficulty of engaging youth. As one steering committee member observed when talking about the steering committee and planning process, "*I would say [that] one challenge was engaging currently homeless and LGBT youth just by the nature of their situation and what we learned. We had set up this really nice structure that works well for nine-to-five adults, but less so for youth who are trying to go to school or trying to get a job or who are in crisis.*" Survey and interview findings also suggest that stakeholders thought youth should have been engaged in the planning process sooner.

- Some stakeholders were difficult to engage in the planning process, though. Some interviewees noted that it was especially difficult to engage LGBTQ organizations that are often led by volunteers (in particular in Cincinnati). The following quote illustrates this concern.

Local Lead Quote

Another challenge is that a lot of the LGBT organizations that are involved in this process are all volunteer-run, so those staff people are staff, but they're still volunteer, so they're doing this in addition to their 40-hour-a-week job. We definitely saw inconsistent participation from some of the partners that we want at the table every time and leading this work. That was absolutely a challenge, just to overcome some of those organizational constraints, and just for the individuals there were some barriers, like they needed to be at their other jobs, or even for LGBT individuals that wanted to participate, they didn't necessarily have the wealth to take 3 hours off of work to come. They needed to be at their job, so in that way I think it was a challenge to maintain participation from some of the people that we wanted in the room the whole time.

- Other stakeholders missing from the planning process included representatives from outside the urban cores of each community and the faith community. For example, interviewees shared these observations: "*I think we could have had more input from the faith community and faith leaders,*" and "*I think what we're missing—and this was sort of across the board—was participation, engagement, and data from outside of the city of Cincinnati, so within the county as a whole.*"

Local Infrastructure to Support the Planning Process

Several forms of infrastructure supported each community's planning phase. As previously described, each community had designated local leads and a central steering committee of core

stakeholders involved in plan development. Each steering committee also was charged with leading subcommittees to carry out more focused planning activities related to particular systems or topics (e.g., education and training). Feedback from both communities indicates that this infrastructure for the planning process was important for a successful planning process. **Although opinions varied about the time and investment needed for each role, both local leads and steering committee members reported a substantial time commitment— approximately 1,300 hours in Cincinnati and 1,500 hours in Houston[18]—as part of their participation in the planning process from April to September 2014.** Here we briefly present key findings by type of involvement: local lead, steering committee, subcommittee.[19]

Local Leads. In selecting organizations and individuals to lead this planning process, stakeholders from both communities described the importance of selecting those with expertise providing services to the LGBT community and those at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness. Co-leads with different areas of expertise brought complementary strengths, services, and community connections needed to develop comprehensive plans that could address the initiative's goals. As one local lead noted, "*I think having a co-lead agency was really supportive . . . . I brought the homelessness piece, [and] she brought the LGBT piece, which I think was really successful.*" As another local lead explained,

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Local Lead Quote

I guess with us, the homeless coalition, which is the continuum-of-care lead agency within [the county], and the [youth-serving organization] are both working closely together, and I think that's probably been what you would want as the best kind of marriage to set up the [initiative], because you've got the housing component, the HUD agency with all the data on the homelessness, the problem of homelessness within the community, and the direct services just towards homelessness of any type. And then you've got LGBTQ [expertise] . . . on the specific needs of that population that sometimes have different needs from the general population and can outreach to people needing services.

In addition, **local leads with established community networks were well positioned for the fast pace and early stakeholder engagement as part of the planning phase.** A local lead described the importance of one community organization's reputation and its role in getting the initiative off to a strong start: "*I know so many people. They introduced me to other people I needed to know. People trust me. . . . they know I do what I say. We've done a lot of work over*

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[18] These time commitment estimates do not account for steering committee members who did not complete the survey.

[19] Stakeholders other than the local leads who participated in interviews and the survey were involved in both the steering committee and the subcommittee.

the years introducing each other . . . . You have to have a reputation for being trustworthy. You have to have a reputation for showing up, and people have to have already seen you making connections. I think that helped so much."

Local lead experience with facilitating community events on issues related to the initiative facilitated their efforts to recruit steering committee members and engage stakeholders in the planning process at its onset. For example, as one local lead shared, "*We were fortunate in that we already had a youth summit for the last 4 or 5 years where different agencies were already coming together . . . . We already had a quarterly meeting. . . and we have different organizations in the community that serve homeless youth or LGBT youth, and so we already had those discussions in place.*"

Of particular note, the local lead role required significant time and resources. In addition to selecting local leads based on expertise, considerations of time and available resources to facilitate the initiative were important. Approximately half of the local leads tended to find that the time commitment exceeded what was expected and reasonable. Local leads reported varying levels of time commitment across the two communities during this period. Local leads described a planning phase process that was "*intense*" and that also required large amounts of staff time. For example, during interviews some local leads shared the following observations:

- "*The time commitment is immense. I am supposed to be 20 hours a week on this, and I'm about 35 . . . . I think people need to be aware of how resource intensive this is. One person doing it half time as part of their regular job isn't going to cut it. I would recommend a full-time position.*"

- "*I'd describe this planning process as fast and furious. It was 6 months starting immediately. You didn't get to set up for 3 months and then start, like you started. It was pretty time intensive.*"

- "*It was an enormous amount of work to coordinate and collate all that material . . . . So, I am wondering if one half-time person could have gotten that done. It comes back around to, if we're going to use this timeline we're going to need a full-time person.*"

In Cincinnati, local leads estimated an average total time commitment of 35 to 86 hours per month, by respondent, for a total of 1,086 hours across the 6 months (see Figures G1 and G3). In Houston, local leads estimated between 5 and 60 hours per month on average, for a total of 600 hours (see Figures G2 and G4). In addition, only two of the Cincinnati leads and one of the Houston leads "agreed" that the time commitment for leading the initiative was as expected (see Exhibit 9 for results by community; see Table G15 for disaggregated results), but several of the local leads raised concerns on the survey (see Table G16) and in interviews about whether this time commitment was reasonable given other commitments and demands. Despite these concerns, all local leads but one from Houston "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that their organizations supported their work on the initiative by providing adequate time to participate (see Table G19).

Exhibit 9: The Time Commitment for Leading This Initiative Was What I Expected, Local Lead Survey Responses

Cincinnati:

Houston:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
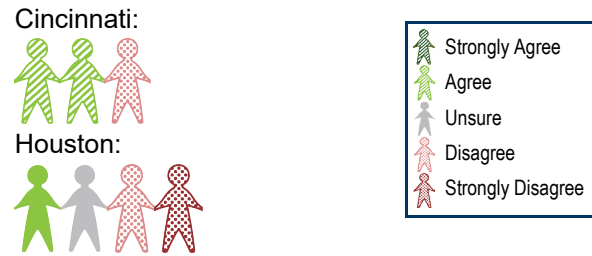
Steering Committees. The steering committees faced some challenges associated with attrition, overcommitment of members, and locating the "right" expertise for participation. As one steering committee shared, "*I think our original chair that we had, this person was serving as chair of two [sub]committees at the time. I think that probably was an overload. This person had a full, 40-hour job, and serving as the lead for two subcommittees, I think that was too much.*" Another steering committee members noted that "*from where I sit again, the biggest challenge has been just the time commitment. I think that's been hard for a lot of us.*" Two others shared that "*we're all full-time people and are at capacity as it is; yeah, it is hard,*" and "*yeah, it feels like a lot, and I think what happens is like with everything, you get two or three really involved people, and they end up doing all the work of their committee.*"

Nevertheless, many steering committee members who completed the survey reported that the time commitment for serving on the steering committee was reasonable and as expected. Like the local leads, steering committee members reported varying levels of time commitment for the planning process, and they tended to think the time commitment was as expected and reasonable. In Cincinnati, four steering committee members estimated a total time commitment of 207 hours (on average, between 5 and 17.5 hours per month, by respondent) across the 6 months (see Figures G5 and G7). In Houston, the estimate was 894 hours for the nine steering committee members who completed the survey; on average, between 6 and 50 hours per month, by respondent (see Figures G6 and G8). Most respondents "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that the time commitment for participating on the steering committee was as expected, although four of the nine steering committee members in Houston "disagreed" (see

Exhibit 10 for results by community; see Table G17 for disaggregated results). Almost all thought this time commitment was reasonable given other commitments and demands (see Table G18).

In addition, most steering committee members "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that their organizations supported their work on this initiative by providing adequate time to participate, although two respondents in Cincinnati were "unsure" (see Exhibit 11 for results by community; see Table G19 for disaggregated results).

Exhibit 10: The Time Commitment for Participating on the Steering Committee Was What I Expected, Steering Committee Member Survey Responses

Cincinnati:

Houston:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Subcommittees. *Subcommittees played an important role in the initiative planning phase, although there was disagreement about whether the roles and time commitment for subcommittee chair roles were clear and reasonable.* Survey findings indicated agreement in both communities that subcommittee members and subcommittee processes had an important role in local planning; at the same time, however, stakeholders raised concerns about the commitments and expectations for this role. Highlights from the data include the following:

Exhibit 11: My Organization Has Supported My Work on This Initiative by Providing Adequate Time for Me to Participate, Local Lead and Steering Committee Member Survey Responses

Cincinnati:

Houston:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

- Survey respondents "strongly agreed" that subcommittee meetings were (1) important to the planning process, (2) well structured, and (3) productive (see Tables G22, G23, and G24). Opinions were mixed, however, about whether the time commitment for serving as subcommittee chairs matched expectations, with approximately half of respondents in each community reporting that they "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" when asked this question (see Exhibit 12 for results by community; see Table G20 for disaggregated results). Similarly, there was disagreement that the time commitment expected of

Exhibit 12: The Time Commitment for Subcommittee Chairs Was What I Expected, Steering Committee Member Survey Responses

Cincinnati:

Houston:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
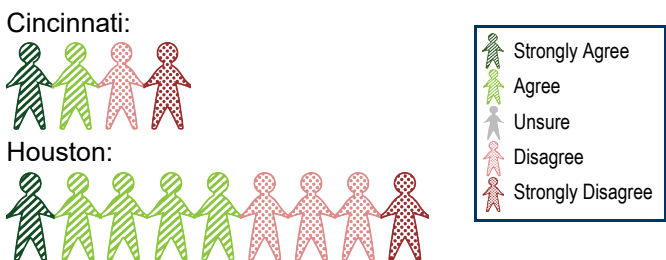
subcommittee chairs was reasonable; approximately half of respondents in each community disagreed that the time commitment for subcommittee chairs was reasonable (see Table G21). As one survey respondent shared, "*If I had really understood the time commitment, I would not have volunteered to chair a subcommittee.*" Another noted that "*it has been a huge challenge to pull a subcommittee together and find a consistent meeting time.*"

- Subcommittees faced challenges related to staffing and retention of members. As one local lead shared, "*Our subcommittees were probably the most challenging part because we had, like, eight of them, [and] the leads couldn't staff all of them, so we really relied on our steering committee members, and they had various degrees of success based on their skill level, and some of them completely floundered and just stopped meeting, and others were really successful.*" Another local lead noted the challenge of sustaining involvement after initial engagement of community organizations: "*Initially, when you come out and you're talking to the community about this initiative, and you're inviting everybody to come in, a lot of agencies will send representatives, and people will come to the initial meetings, find out what's going on, [and] a smaller number will actually sign up to join a subcommittee, and then an even smaller number, unfortunately, will actually be active participants in the committee.*"

- Some interviewees also expressed concerns about the ability to sustain the subcommittee work moving forward, given the scope of the activities outlined in the plans. As one interviewee commented, the plans are "*really ambitious in terms of committee work.*"

Technical Assistance

As part of the pilot, each community received intensive capacity-building supports throughout their planning phase. Survey and interview responses highlight the value of this support as well as the types of TA that were most meaningful to sites. The external TA also was seen as an important, ongoing asset that had a critical role in shaping each community's plan. The TA team members made themselves "*available and involved*" throughout the process, building relationships and offering resources, ideas, and feedback to inform local planning. Highlights from the data include the following:

- All local leads (*n* = 7) and all steering committee respondents (*n* = 12) "agreed" or "strongly agreed" on the survey that the TA received was a significant support for developing their community plan and that the TA team provided helpful guidance in developing the community plan (see Exhibit 13 for combined results by community; see Tables G25 and G26 for disaggregated results). For example, in open-ended comments, survey respondents reported that TA was "*ready at a moment's notice to be helpful with guidance, support, more information.*"

- Interviewees echoed these sentiments and described how the TA linked them with national resources and research, for example. As one steering committee member shared, "*When I look at the TA support, whether it was AIR or True Colors Fund, that was very helpful in the beginning for me understanding, okay, so where is this all coming from? I*

Exhibit 13: Overall, the TA We Received Was a Significant Support for Developing Our Community Plan, Local Lead and Steering Committee Member Survey Responses

Cincinnati:

Houston:

Legend:
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Unsure
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
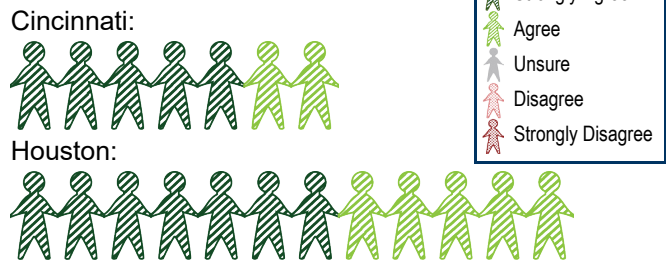
- *was excited about it, I was thrilled, but understanding the national landscape—and I was coming into this as someone who was not an expert at all, or even well in tuned [sic] with homelessness. So I couldn't have addressed a lot of those issues around homelessness, whether it was risk factors, protective factors, data, outcomes.*" Another interviewee commented that the TA team "*served as a cheerleader for this process. Their advice in terms of organization was really very helpful. Then I really felt like these are two really experienced people who can kind of guide us when we hit a rock.*"

- Interviewees offered a number of examples of ways in which TA support was useful, such as "*access to federal partner resources*" and "*in-person training/facilitation of community meetings, connection to resources, logic model, communications planning, cheerleading.*" Another interviewee noted that the "*TA assisted us with the structural pieces (needs assessment, focus groups, logic model, etc.) that were critical to the plan we created.*" One local lead also commented, for example, that the TA team provided "*a lot of resources, a lot of feedback on drafts that we came up with, so provided us with templates . . . . a lot of resource information.*" This information included, for example, a template for the logic model, which a local lead noted "*was very helpful because I did not have a template . . . . It was very concrete, so we filled it in*" with our local information. External TA also supported local buy-in, as illustrated in the following quote.

Local Lead Quote

[Having the TA team] here in person to do community forums lent some kind of authority to our work, that we're connected to something much bigger, and I think that was important for the history of our community around prioritizing LGBT youth and LGBT people to have this invitation come from federal partners and to be supported in that way, just visually, and having people in the room demonstrated that we were part of something bigger, and it wasn't one local agency's agenda—not that that's a bad thing, and it should be on every local agenda—but I think it helped kind of overcome some of the previous barriers to prioritizing this issue.

- Opinions were mixed about whether the Groupsite web-based portal for communicating about and sharing information related to the initiative was helpful. Although steering committee members tended to agree that Groupsite was helpful, local leads in Cincinnati "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" that Groupsite was helpful (see Exhibit 14 for combined results; see Table G27 for disaggregated results).

Exhibit 14: Groupsite Was Helpful for Communicating and Sharing Information to Support the Planning Process, Local Lead and Steering Committee Member Survey Responses

Cincinnati:

Houston:

Strongly Agree
Agree
Unsure
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
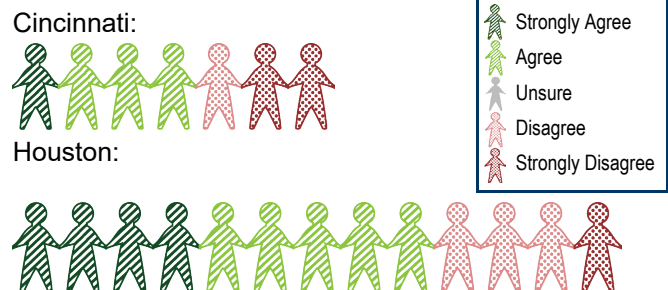
Sustainability

This initiative was meant to jumpstart the work on LGBTQ youth homelessness in each community and to last as long as needed to satisfy the goals of the communitywide plans, but not indefinitely. **Partly because of their large scope, however, stakeholders shared concerns about the sustainability of their plans.** Findings include the following:

- On the survey, opinions about whether communities can sustain their initiative plans effectively for the next 5 years varied widely, with some concerns evident. Half of the Cincinnati respondents were "unsure"; a majority of Houston respondents "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed," or were "unsure," when asked this question (see Exhibit 15 for combined results by community; see Table G28 for disaggregated results). Respondents shared several reasons for concerns about plan sustainability. Funding and resources to carry out the plans, achieve buy-in, and acquire partner engagement were key concerns that respondents shared. As one respondent noted, "*Too few agency members are willing to do the hard work at the subcommittee level*."

- A majority of local leads from both communities expressed uncertainty about whether their community could effectively sustain the initiative's plan for the next 5 years. All Cincinnati ($n = 3$) and several Houston leads ($n = 2$) responded that they were "unsure" about their plan's sustainability. The following quote illustrates one local lead's perspective about sustainability.

Exhibit 15: Our Community Will Be Able to Effectively Sustain Our Initiative's Plan for the Next 5 Years, Local Lead and Steering Committee Member Survey Responses

Cincinnati:

Houston:

Strongly Agree
Agree
Unsure
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
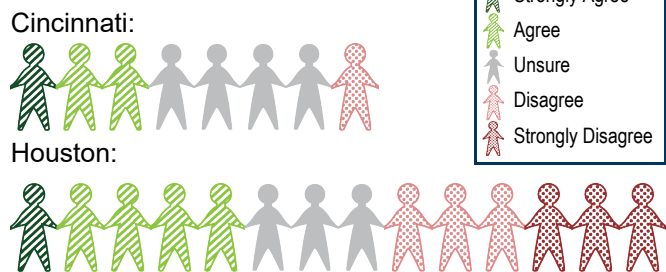
Local Lead Quote

I'm concerned about sustainability. We're very fortunate to get some seed funding to hire someone to run this initiative . . . . It's a 2-year grant. I don't know what we'll do after that. I think that keeping our community partners engaged, reengaging the LGBT population are very legitimate concerns for keeping this momentum going forward. It is clearly an issue our community cares about, it's just making sure that they feel the time they're putting into it is going to result in something

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Summary

Importantly, the findings illustrate that, although challenging, communitywide planning to address LGBTQ youth homelessness is possible with buy-in, resources, and a collective willingness to invest time in a planning process. Key findings from the planning phase review include the following:

- Each community produced ambitious, multifaceted plans that align with the USICH Framework for Ending Youth Homelessness and incorporate multiple systems serving and issues affecting LGBTQ youth. Cincinnati's plan for its initiative, which it named "Safe and Supported," is organized around eight broader goals that collectively include 20 objectives intended to achieve its vision. Houston branded its initiative "NEST" and organized its plan around eight priority outcome areas, which include 61 objectives to achieve its vision. Review of the plans indicates that the plan outcomes cluster around 14 priority areas.

- Local leads and steering committee members think their plans include the right strategies to prevent and intervene early to address LGBTQ youth homelessness and that they were satisfied with the plans their communities produced.

- Using a condensed timeline was challenging but important for achieving the communities' written plans, and each community used this timeline to map out planning phase activities.

- Local leads and steering committee members in the two communities shared strong agreement that the needs assessment each community carried out provided valuable information that they then used to inform development of their local plans. Both communities strongly agreed that similar planning processes should begin with a needs assessment.

- Each community developed a logic model with clear vision statements for their initiatives. Although a few stakeholders remained uncertain about the usefulness of the logic models to the initiatives moving forward, this was considered a valuable tool for the planning process.

- Both communities described strong levels of participation from various stakeholder groups, with some challenges with and gaps in involvement from particular groups such as representatives outside the urban core of each community.

- Although opinions varied about the time and investment needed for each role, both local leads and steering committee members reported a substantial time commitment—approximately 1,300 hours in Cincinnati and 1,500 hours in Houston—as part of their participation in the planning process from April to September 2014.

- In selecting organizations and individuals to lead this planning process, stakeholders from both communities described the importance of selecting those with expertise providing services to the LGBT community and those at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness. Local leads with established community networks were well positioned for the fast pace and early stakeholder engagement as part of the planning phase.

- The steering committees faced some challenges associated with attrition, overcommitment of members, and locating the "right" expertise for participation. Nevertheless, almost all steering committee members who completed the survey reported that the time commitment for serving on the steering committee was reasonable and as expected.

- Subcommittees played an important role in the initiative planning phase, although there was disagreement about whether the roles and time commitment for subcommittee chair roles were clear and reasonable.

- External TA was also seen as an important, ongoing asset that had a critical role in shaping each community's plan.

- Although this initiative was meant to jumpstart the work on LGBTQ youth homelessness in each community and to last as long as needed, stakeholders shared concerns about the sustainability of their plans partly because of the large scope of these plans.

This review is not without some limitations. Foremost, the findings are grounded in perspectives of a relatively small number of key stakeholders—local leads and steering committee members—involved in the planning process in each community. To minimize burden on the communities, the review did not include other stakeholders (e.g., subcommittee members) who may have had different perspectives about the planning process. Second, in both communities some steering community members did not participate in either interviews or surveys. Hence, their perspectives are missing from the findings. Lastly, a more expansive review could have included perspectives of community members involved in some of the events that each community hosted on LGBTQ youth homelessness. Due to resource limitations, this was not included. The review findings are not necessarily generalizable to other communities given varying local contexts (e.g., needs, assets, history of community organizing generally and to address LGBTQ youth homelessness specifically). However, this review nonetheless provides an important summary of how each of the two communities seized this opportunity to address LGBTQ youth homelessness in their communities and ultimately brought together diverse stakeholders to produce written plans. Significantly, although concerns about sustainability of the specific strategies in the plans are evident, this planning process in each community jumpstarted a broader community discussion about the needs of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness and strategies to prevent their homelessness, as well as to improve policies and practices for serving and supporting youth more broadly. For example, in Harris County, prevention of all youth homelessness is now a priority of the local Continuum of Care where at the time of the planning process, the community had been focused primarily on ending chronic homelessness and homelessness among veterans.

Recommendations

AIR's planning phase review documented that communitywide planning to address LGBTQ youth homelessness is possible and how the two pilot communities approached this planning. Interviewees and survey respondents reported various lessons learned, which the findings reflected. Stakeholders also shared a number of suggestions to inform similar planning initiatives in other communities. Furthermore, the literature related to community change to address LGBTQ youth homelessness has important implications for other communities embarking on similar planning efforts. For example, it is important that communities use the USICH Framework for Ending Youth Homelessness as a foundation for LGBTQ youth homelessness prevention efforts. Furthermore, it is important that these planning initiatives attend to issues including vision and mission with clear goals and intended outcomes that are linked to community capacity, and modifying priorities based on available resources and collaboration of

key partners. This section builds on the report's findings, synthesizing recommendations to inform similar planning initiatives in other communities.

Recommendation 1: Begin with data and an assessment of needs and resources. As a local lead shared in an interview, "*If there's a way that you can do a comprehensive needs assessment up front that's data driven, I think that adds credibility to your project, and I think [it] really helps determine your direction.*" A needs assessment should compile and—as needed—produce community data on LGBTQ youth homelessness. A needs assessment should also examine major gaps and key challenges contributing to LGBTQ youth homelessness in your community as well as strengths and resources that are or can serve these young people. In addition, a needs assessment should gauge the capacities of initial or potential partners, such as their expertise, resources, priorities, and barriers to contributing to not only the planning process but also implementation of local strategies. Take the time to learn from one other about needs and services, funding streams, and differing definitions (e.g., population of focus) that can affect access to services. As part of this assessment, also examine whether and how youth are identified as at risk for homelessness.

Recommendation 2: Begin with a shared vision and clear goals for the initiative. Both communities found that developing a logic model assisted them with framing the initiative locally and building consensus about goals and outcomes. Although adding activities to the logic model until the planning process has been completed may not be possible, forging ahead with a shared vision and goals will establish an agreed-upon direction. The overall initiative and the community logic models outlined in Appendix A, as well as the initiative guidance document presented in Appendix B, can assist in establishing this shared vision and goals.

Recommendation 3: Dedicate staff to the planning process or consider a longer planning period. To the greatest extent possible, ensure a dedicated, half-time or full-time position to facilitate the planning process. At the outset, identify funding for this role prior to engaging in planning phase activities. If additional funding for a staff person within the local lead organization cannot be located, the local lead organization should identify ways to maximize dedicated time for this role. If this is not feasible, consider a longer planning period (e.g., 9 months) to minimize demands on planning facilitators and other stakeholders. Keep the planning phase condensed, however (e.g., avoid extending the planning period to a year or longer). The 6-month timeline for this planning process motivated both communities to be focused and to carry out the planning process despite competing demands. Given that key stakeholders working to address youth homelessness generally or LGBTQ youth homelessness specifically are likely overstretched and underresourced, an opportune time to execute the planning process may not arise—and extending the process may lead to planning fatigue (e.g., "When will this end?"). An extended planning process also means that your community is taking longer to address the struggles of LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness.

Recommendation 4: Consider a convening or facilitator approach for those driving the planning process to ensure shared accountability and neutral decision making. Having

skilled facilitators who can drive the planning process and keep stakeholders engaged and accountable is important for the initiative. Organizations and individuals in these roles should also be respected in the community, and they should be highly effective communicators, strong collaborators, and familiar with community planning. These were important characteristics of individuals leading the planning process in the two pilot communities. Rather than ascribing a "lead agency" designation to the organization(s) overseeing the planning process, consider framing this opportunity as a facilitative role. This approach can enhance "*true collaboration and collective impact*," as one interviewee shared.

Recommendation 5: Build accountability into the planning process. In both communities, the invitation to participate in this initiative fostered local buy-in and commitment to successfully carry out the planning process (and to now implement their plans). This triggered a sense of accountability—and urgency—to addressing LGBTQ youth homelessness. Other communities can foster this sense of accountability and urgency by leveraging local leaders who are trusted and respected in their communities. For example, this could be a mayor's office or a collaborative of local funders that establish local LGBTQ youth homelessness prevention initiatives with overall initiative vision and goals. By doing so, planning processes in other communities will establish a course of action and maintain momentum in ways that may not be as feasible without a sense of accountability.

Recommendation 6: Begin by establishing strategic commitments with targeted partners. Ensure that leadership of systems and organizations interested in participating in the planning process are willing to make staff available to participate (ideally individuals with authority to make decisions on behalf of those systems and organizations). The terms of commitment and involvement should be clear (e.g., establish a charter and, if feasible, memorandum of understanding). Furthermore, ensure that participants as a whole represent a broad and diverse group of stakeholders and that they bring knowledge, skills, and experiences that can inform the planning process. Participants should include representatives from the local CoC; youth-serving systems (e.g., child welfare, juvenile justice, schools) and homelessness crisis services; LGBTQ organizations; funders; and the faith community, as well as youth and family members. Engaging different perspectives from within the LGBTQ community (e.g., be attentive to stakeholders addressing transgender issues and issues related to intersectionality, such as LGBTQ youth of color) if possible, is important.

Also, be sure to anticipate inevitable drop-off in community member participation and plan to engage additional stakeholders. Try to prevent this by focusing on what is driving stakeholders to get involved and how involvement in the planning process responds to their passions and furthers their goals. Maintaining participation from key stakeholders requires intentional relationship building throughout the planning process. As a local lead also shared, "*I would recommend that they really—from the very, very beginning—name the important partners to be at the table and make sure they have a plan to keep them there. I would say [to] overextend invitations. At some point we were like, 'Oh, we can't have too many people on the steering committee,' or, I don't*

know, 'Our room is limited to a hundred people,' but everyone had ideas on who[m] to invite."
Ensure that youth—especially LGBTQ youth who have experienced homelessness—are part of
the planning process, too. Families and families of LGBTQ youth could lend a valuable
perspective about how to reach these community members; therefore, they should be part of the
planning process from the beginning. This may necessitate, then, creative scheduling and
engagement strategies, such as meetings on evenings, on weekends, and by phone or through the
Internet. Ultimately, communities will need to find the right balance in the breadth of stakeholder
engagement because stakeholder engagement is resource intensive but also necessary to foster
local buy-in and to ensure local plans include the right strategies for addressing LGBTQ youth
homelessness given the local context.

**Recommendation 7: Consider creative and proactive approaches for engaging planning
partners and other community stakeholders.** These groups should include LGBTQ youth,
youth-serving agencies, and other underrepresented populations. Include youth from the
beginning, and keep the community (including the faith community) engaged throughout the
planning process (e.g., establish an e-mail listserv for communications). Also, regularly
gathering key stakeholders involved in the planning process to meet in person may be
challenging. Be proactive about addressing potential barriers to engaging stakeholders and strive
to build relationships among the participants. These barriers include, for example, attrition of
stakeholders participating on steering committees and subcommittees, stakeholder agendas that
may not align with the initiative, stakeholder inability to make decisions on behalf of their
agencies (which may require additional time and follow-up), and difficulty engaging community
organizations led by volunteers. Holding meetings during the workday also may be a barrier for
engaging parents, youth with experiences of homelessness, and others who are unable to carve
out time for participation with their employer. Consider blending in-person meetings with
conference calls, videoconference meetings, and e-mail communication. To address difficulty in
engaging diverse stakeholders, especially when they may be spread over a wide geographic area,
apply creative approaches such as public discussion boards and innovative technology for
gaining community input in addition to in-person community forums and meetings. This
technology could include, for example, Google Hangout sessions[20] through video and chats;
Texting Questions and Answers, which provides a number for people to text questions and
possibly receive feedback via text messaging service and can allow for targeted texts based on
any criteria; and VoiceThreads,[21] which enables users to participate in threaded asynchronous
discussions using audio, video, or text.

Recommendation 8: Set clear expectations for participants' roles and decision making.
Establish clear guidance about realistic expectations for each kind of role (facilitator, steering
committee, subcommittees). At the onset of the planning process, agree on time commitments
from each participant, and be ready to manage and prioritize that time well. It is critical that

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[20] https://hangouts.google.com
[21] http://voicethread.com

those facilitating and contributing to the planning process not only approach this work by focusing on the initiative's goals but also align the priorities of their respective organizations with these goals. This expectation should be part of participants' roles. In addition, establish expectations concerning how consensus is reached as decisions are made about what activities to include (or not) in community plans—and respect differences of perspective and the voice of each participant. Creating a process for prioritizing strategies is important so that particular stakeholder interests do not dominate the plan.

Recommendation 9: Plan with implementation and sustainability in mind. Both communities concluded the planning process with some concerns about their ability to sustain their plans. When bringing together stakeholders who are passionate about not only ending LGBTQ youth homelessness but also their own areas of expertise, it is important to balance the collective energy and individual interests with what is feasible given available resources. Be prepared to make tough decisions about what to include, or not, in your plans based on what you can feasibly implement and sustain. It may be advantageous to agree on fewer goals for the overall initiative, at least at first, and to have the resources and momentum to effectively plan to address these goals than to have too many priorities that could overburden the planning process. Think about what you can accomplish realistically through your strategic plan, and prioritize what will have the greatest benefit for preventing LGBTQ youth homelessness—and for intervening early when it occurs. Include systemic efforts that can decrease factors (e.g., bias) that place LGBTQ youth at risk for homelessness, but at the same time avoid "*overplanning*," as one stakeholder described it. Overplanning can result in the incorporation of too many activities in a written plan, which then becomes resource intensive to coordinate and communicate about— and, in turn, can contribute to stakeholder fatigue.

Wherever possible, include in the plans those organizations responsible for particular activities— and confirm organizational commitment to lead these activities. This can assist with solidifying buy-in and ensuring that activities have organizations (or individuals) who will "own" them and move them forward once planning ends. Also, although some activities may require new funding, find ways to infuse plan activities into existing work in your community. For example, although forums and trainings specific to LGBTQ youth and homelessness likely will be needed, also connect this work with other training already happening (e.g., organizational professional development activities). Lastly, it will be valuable to have early "wins" and to demonstrate success early in your plan implementation, so keep this in mind as you prioritize activities. These early wins, which you can accomplish by focusing on the easier-to-tackle issues and activities, can build stakeholder investment and engagement.

Recommendation 10: Prioritize the infrastructure for the planning process. Although subcommittees enable more focused conversations about particular systems, topics, and other issues, it is important to have the capacity to carry these out well. Subcommittees and related communication and decision making can be difficult to coordinate (especially during an intensive planning period). Obtaining sufficient membership to support all subcommittee work also can be

challenging. Keep this in mind as your local planning participants decide on how to best approach the planning process. Again, it is important to use a needs assessment and conversations with local stakeholders to decide on the right approach for organizing the infrastructure for the planning process (e.g., steering committee, subcommittees) and how the planning process proceeds (e.g., frequency and number of meetings) given a community's local context.

Recommendation 11: Access national resources, information emerging from this initiative, and external technical assistance (TA) where available. Resource sharing and TA were important components of the planning process in both communities. Accessing existing resources related to addressing youth homelessness (e.g., the USICH Framework or Ending Youth Homelessness and the recently released USICH Preventing and Ending Youth Homelessness: A Coordinated Community Response[22]) and related to LGBTQ youth homelessness (e.g., best practice guides) will allow communities to build off of what has already been developed. Review the guidance for this initiative (see Appendix B); pilot community local plans, which are available on HUD's Resources for Homeless Youth website[23]; and the community logic models (see Appendix A) for ideas about how to approach local planning. Visit HUD's website in the future for resources emerging from this initiative and access local resources whenever possible, including TA to facilitate the planning process. External TA providers can provide valuable insights and resources, serving as thought partners and building local capacity to carry out the planning process while also assisting with navigating stakeholder priorities. As one interviewee emphasized, TA "*helped us combine and make sure we were hitting all the key areas, whereas we were really in the weeds and people were really invested in their ideas and so they provided that higher view.*" Explore which outside organizations (e.g., local universities, professional TA providers) have the capacity to provide technical supports as part of a local planning effort.

Discussion

This report offers an important look into the experiences of key stakeholders and community members involved in planning an initiative to prevent and end LGBTQ youth homelessness. Planning decisions, findings, and recommendations presented here are unique to the mission-driven task and population of this first-of-its-kind initiative. However, they also reflect promising approaches and infrastructure suggestions cited in a sampling of literature examining how community change can be impactful (i.e., collaboration model designs, elements of successful community change initiatives). Such research and practitioner-identified insights can be used to anchor what was learned here, as well as provide guidance, suggestions, and frameworks that may be of use to other communities as they engage in similar initiatives in the future.

Practitioner Advice for Planning a Multisector Collaboration

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[22] http://usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Ending_Youth_Homelessness_Coordinated_Response.pdf
[23] https://www.hudexchange.info/homelessness-assistance/resources-for-homeless-youth

Practitioners that have been on the front lines of other community change initiatives have identified a number of critical ingredients present in planning a successful multisector collaboration such as the LGBTQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, for example, interviewed 36 key informants to better understand what successful collaborative efforts look like.[24] First, the study found that selecting the right leads was deemed essential to the future success of the collaborative. Having the right champions to facilitate the process and serve as internal and external advocates for the cause can make the difference between success and failure. Second, the collaboration should engender trust and respect among its members. Members should feel like their work is valued and that they are supported in their role in the collaborative. Third, agreement must be reached among members about the collaboration's vision, goal, and urgency of action. Mechanisms should be in place that give stakeholders the chance to have a voice in the decision-making process. Fourth, data should be collected and used to help guide the activities of the collaboration, including data that help the collaborative engage in continuous improvement efforts. Lastly, successful collaborations should find balance in opportunities presented to them—responding to resources, events, and challenges in intentional ways. Sustainable collaborations were able to move toward their goals using urgency as a prod but also protected against complications by moving too quickly or slowly. Overall, findings from the Annie E. Casey Foundation report highlighted the importance of creating intentional planning processes and structures with the right leads and support. The makeup of such a collaborative is essential—especially during the early design and decision-making planning phase.

Insights From Research About Ingredients of Successful Community Change Initiatives

In addition to practitioner advice, research on previous community change initiatives also has highlighted a number of similar ingredients needed for successful achievement of goals. For example, a study of 43 community change initiatives funded between 1990 and 2010 documented six practices that were present in each initiative that implemented and achieved its desired outcomes.[25] First, these initiatives aligned dimensions of mission, action, capacity, collaboration, and learning. Second, high-quality initiatives possessed a clearly defined mission and also articulated desired outcomes and the initiative's operating principles at the outset. Third, initiatives that worked across sectors were most successful when such efforts contained targeted programming for each sector rather than assuming that change would occur through "spillover" of efforts. Fourth, successful initiatives often linked goals with capacity—scaling up or down to reflect the initiative's ability to achieve. Fifth, high-performing initiatives used intermediaries to assist with building relationships, facilitating processes, and removing barriers. Lastly, continuous learning was viewed as a critical ingredient for successful change initiatives. Initiatives that recognized change as iterative and incorporated continuous evaluation were more likely to achieve goals. Findings from other community change efforts indicated such efforts can

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[24] Giloth, Hayes, & Libby 2014.
[25] Kubisch, Auspos, Brown, & Dewar, 2010.

be successful—especially when they are inclusive and responsive to diverse stakeholders and they allow for continuous learning among members to adapt and adjust to different needs as they arise.

The LGBTQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative

As documented in this report, both communities involved in planning the LGBTQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative possessed a number of suggested practices identified in the literature. For example, both "NEST" and "Safe and Supported" possessed strong leadership from local lead organizations with established track records in their communities. Both sites also had built-in ongoing opportunities for stakeholders to participate—with steering committees and subcommittees serving as a mechanism to contribute in ways that leveraged expertise and interests. Lastly, the time parameters for planning the initiative—6 months—appeared to provide a sense of urgency in both communities to move forward with identifying local goals with benchmarks to measure progress. The receipt of TA during this planning phase also helped to remove barriers and to assist sites with relationship building and process facilitation. Recommendations included in this report reflect each of these learned lessons and offer strong guidance for other communities that seek to engage in similar efforts.

Implications for Other Communities

This report offers an important road map for how other communities can think about designing and planning a multisector initiative to prevent and end LGBTQ youth homelessness. For those considering similar efforts, in-depth documentation contained here offers a number of learned lessons, recommendations, and action steps that can be followed. In addition, insight from a sampling of literature similarly highlights the importance of making planning phase decisions for leadership, governance, stakeholder involvement, vision, goals, use of data, and timelines. Ultimately, what has been learned here is that great care, resources, and commitment will be needed to plan and design future initiatives. The examples of efforts by "NEST" and "Safe and Support" demonstrate that change is possible and that your community also can address this issue effectively. The planning phase is an essential period as collaborations are formed and stakeholders begin to work together effectively to make change.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The review of the LGBTQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative 6-month planning phase set forth to (1) document how two communities carried out the planning for their local LGBTQ homelessness prevention initiative, (2) identify strengths and challenges to the planning process, and (3) identify lessons learned to develop recommendations that can inform future similar planning efforts. This report lays out how the two pilot communities—Hamilton County (Cincinnati), Ohio, and Harris County (Houston), Texas—approached the intensive planning

process. As the report shows, this communitywide planning is not easy, but with the right approach and commitment of resources communities can carry out this planning effectively. This report describes some of the challenges communities encountered as part of this LGBTQ youth organizing effort, as well as what went well. The recommendations, which are grounded in the review findings including lessons learned, are intended to inform similar planning in other communities.

Moving forward, in 2016 under HUD's direction, AIR will conduct a review of each community's implementation of their local plans. This review will examine how the communities are progressing in implementing their plans. Importantly, AIR will examine whether and how the local initiatives are preventing or intervening early to address LGBTQ youth homelessness—*what early results are evident*? In early 2016, AIR will submit to HUD a plan to frame an implementation phase review. In addition, AIR will work with HUD to translate planning phase review findings into resources for the field and to support HUD and its partners' priorities related to ending youth homelessness generally and LGBTQ youth homelessness in particular.

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Appendix A. Initiative and Community Logic Models

A1. Initiative Logic Model

Vision	Goals
Homelessness among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth ends by 2020 and LGBTQ youth at risk of, or experiencing, episodic homelessness achieve positive outcomes.	Expand federal and local knowledge and inform community-based strategies to: (1) Prevent homelessness for LGBTQ youth at risk of experiencing homelessness and (2) Intervene early to prevent episodic and chronic homelessness[26] among LGBTQ youth.

Objectives
(1) *Facilitate better local collaboration* between stakeholders working with youth to develop and implement a comprehensive community strategy to prevent homelessness among LGBTQ youth (2) *Improve identification of LGBTQ youth at risk* of or experiencing episodic homelessness through screening and assessment (3) *Identify, coordinate, and improve policies and interventions* to prevent LGBTQ youth homelessness (4) *Reduce homelessness among LGBTQ youth* and improve their outcomes in the areas of permanent connections, stable housing, education/employment, and well-being (5) *Inform national strategies* for preventing and ending homelessness among LGBTQ youth

Population	Inputs	Priority Activities	Outputs
Youth between the ages of 12 and 24, who are either at-risk of homelessness or who are or experiencing episodic homelessness.	• *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness* (including the USICH Framework to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness) • Existing knowledge, recommendation practices and interventions, and resources for preventing LGBTQ youth homelessness • Existing local capacities (e.g., infrastructure to collaborate) • Local funding • Local lead organizations, their partners, and other stakeholders • National partners workgroup (ED, HHS, HUD, OJJDP, TCF, USICH) • Technical assistance (TA) from HUD team and other federal agencies • Technology (Groupsite, email communication)	**Needs Assessment** • Assess local strengths, challenges/needs, and opportunities **Local Collaboration** • Identify and engage key stakeholders that represent youth, youth-serving agencies, organizations that serve persons experiencing homelessness (e.g., local continuum of care), and non-traditional partners • Facilitate structures for local leadership, collaboration, and coordination **Local Plan Development** • Develop a strategic plan based on needs assessment findings and current service gaps • Identify strategies that integrate/reconfigure cross-agency resources • Define community use of "at-risk" and map to eligibility of various programs • Ground the plan in evidence-based and recommended strategies • Ensure the plan addresses the array of housing and service needs necessary for the population **Local Plan Implementation**	**Needs Assessment** • Summary of needs assessment findings **Local Collaboration** • Meetings of steering committee and subcommittees **Local Plan Development** • Local strategic plan **Local Plan Implementation** • Implementation of plan strategies, such as: o Improved collection/use of data o Improved policies o Local awareness campaign o Development of new resources o Improved collaboration • Local initiative reports (October 1, 2014; October 1, 2015 **Technical Assistance** • Groupsite and other TA (e.g., facilitated meetings and planning process,

Local Context				
Community • Advocacy efforts and politics • Availability of and access to culturally competent services, programs, shelters, and housing • Availability of data (e.g., on the prevalence and characteristics of LGBTQ youth experiencing or at-risk of homelessness) • Collaboration in the community across youth-serving systems (e.g., behavioral health, child welfare, education, juvenile justice, law enforcement) and "turf" concerns • Community awareness of prevalence and causes of LGBTQ youth homelessness • Culture • Economic development and financial resources • Faith-based organizations • Funding • Geography (e.g., urban/rural, size) • Leadership	**Community (cont.)** • Social/family attitudes toward LGBTQ identity/expression (e.g., bias, discrimination, violence) **Programs** • Policies and expected practices • Cultural competency of staff • Availability of developmentally appropriate youth services • Leadership • Use and coordination of data **Youth** • Awareness of and willingness to access supports • "Coming out" status • Previous access to supports • Previous history in jails/prisons or group homes • Protective factors (e.g., employment, positive friends, school connection, supportive adults, survival skills) • Risk factors (e.g., emotional distress, family rejection, lack of			

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[26] Defined as either (1) unaccompanied homeless individuals with a disabling condition who have been continuously homeless for a year or more, OR (2) unaccompanied individuals with a disabling condition who have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

• LGBTQ advocacy and service organizations	stable housing, substance use, mental health challenges) • Socio-economic demographics		• Implement strategies for preventing LGBTQ youth at risk of homelessness and intervening early when it occurs	review of draft local logic models, sharing of resources to guide local planning)

National Context		
• Advocacy organizations and related efforts • Federal guidance and regulations • Federal support for addressing LGBTQ youth homelessness (e.g., USICH identification of LGBTQ youth as a population at risk)	• Federal support for this initiative • Legislation, such as Equal Access, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance, and Runaway and Homeless Youth Acts • Published research and recommended policies/practices	**Technical Assistance** • Plan and deliver technical assistance (TA) based on community needs **Evaluation** • Measure and document progress in achieving initiative outcomes • Develop a prevention/early intervention model for replication	**Evaluation** • Evaluation results • Model for replication

Outcomes and Impact		
Planning Outcomes (Months 1-6) • Expanded local partnerships • Coordination of existing funding and, where feasible, identification and dedication of new funding • Identification of community need(s)—(data) • Identification of evidence-based or promising practices • Identification and promotion of existing resources • Increased participant and community awareness of LGBTQ youth homelessness • Increased community engagement	**Intermediate Outcomes (Months 7-18)** • Increased awareness of LGBTQ youth homelessness, and youth homelessness generally, in two communities • Decreased risk factors and increased protective factors for LGBTQ youth • Expanded cross-system collaboration • Increased collection of accurate data on LGBTQ youth homelessness • Increased participation of diverse agencies and non-traditional partners in local efforts • Increased access to information and training • Increased community-wide capacity to identify, locate and serve LGBTQ youth experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness • Increased capacity and expanded quality of services for LGBTQ youth (e.g., improved cultural competency at agencies) • Improved youth satisfaction with services	**Long-Term Outcomes (Months 19+)** Continuation of intermediate outcomes plus: • Increased implementation of prevention and early intervention strategies (e.g., screening) • Increased community acceptance and adult support of issues LGBTQ youth experience • More positive school and agency environments for LGBTQ youth • Reductions in the number of LGBTQ youth becoming homeless • Recommended practices shared with other communities

A2. Hamilton County (Cincinnati), Ohio, Logic Model and Theory of Change

Vision	Goals
Hamilton County will be a community that is safe and secure for youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) or are questioning (Q) their gender identity or sexual orientation. These young people will have access to stable housing, health care, education, employment and emotional connections that ensure they thrive. Youth in Hamilton County are proud of their LGBTQ identity and community members support them. Every youth has a home.	(1) Prevent homelessness for LGBTQ youth (2) Intervene early to prevent chronic homelessness[27] among LGBTQ youth.

Objectives

(1**) Facilitate greater community awareness** of issues contributing to LGBTQ youth homelessness and the Initiative's efforts
(2) **Facilitate greater local collaboration** among stakeholders working with youth, including non-traditional partners such as youth-chosen spaces and local establishments.
(3) **Improve identification of LGBTQ youth at risk** of or experiencing episodic homelessness through screening and assessment
(4) **Identify, coordinate, and improve interventions** to prevent LGBTQ youth homelessness
(5) **Support LGBTQ youth outcomes** in the areas of permanent connections, stable housing, education/employment, and well-being
(6) **Evaluate initiative to inform regional and national strategies** for preventing homelessness among LGBTQ youth

Focus Population		Inputs	Priority Activities	Outputs
LGBTQ youth in Hamilton County ages 24 and under		• Initiative Planning Team (~30 members) including youth participants • Lighthouse Staff (2) • Strategies to End Homelessness staff (1) • Technical assistance (TA) team (3) and other federal TA • Groupsite • Coordination of existing funding • Exploring new funding	**Needs Assessment** • SWOT analysis **Local Collaboration** • Steering Committee meetings (monthly) • Community meetings (4) • More clearly defining CQI process (formal change management process) **Local Plan Development** • 6-month strategic planning process involving the systems and providers serving LGBTQ and homeless youth • Leadership Team meetings (bi-weekly) • Team meetings (bi-monthly) Awareness Building and Cultural Competence Housing and Transportation Options Social and Emotional Support Organizational Policy and Data Practices Practical Living / Life Skills Child Welfare (Overlap with *Youth At Risk of Homelessness* Grant) • Data collection: Administrative and Qualitative • TA site visits (4) • Identify funding sources • Local toolkit for corporate response • Development and advocacy of funding strategies **Local Plan Implementation**	**Needs Assessment** • Needs assessment findings **Local Plan Development** • Analysis of local data—report • Theory of change • Logic model • Strategic plan with recommendations in each of 6 team areas • Financial plan **Local Plan Implementation** • Outputs based on final local plan *TBD: Staff and foster parent training, new policies, new intake questions, new housing options, programs* *Evaluation of plan* *Toolkit for businesses* *Job opportunities and scholarships are available*
Contextual Factors	**Contextual Factors Cont.**			
Community context • Availability of and access to culturally competent services, programs, shelters, and housing • Availability of data • Economic development and financial resources • Geography • Leadership • Collaboration in the community across youth-serving systems (e.g., education, juvenile justice, law enforcement, mental health, faith-based) and "turf" concerns • Culture • Advocacy efforts and politics • Community awareness of prevalence and causes of LGBTQ youth homelessness • Social attitudes toward LGBTQ identity/expression • Faith (Broad-perspective) **Program context** • Policies and expected practices	**Client context** • Socioeconomic demographics (Age, Race, etc.) • Awareness of and willingness to access supports • Previous access to supports • Protective factors (e.g., employment, positive friends, school connection, supportive adults, survival skills) • Risk factors (e.g., emotional distress, family rejection, lack of stable housing, substance use, mental health challenges, physical factors) • Coming out status **Federal context** • HUD, DOE, HHS, DOJ support for the Initiative • DOE requiring diversity training for all school staff • McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act • USICH identified LGBTQ youth as being at high risk of homelessness			

[27] Chronic Homelessness is defined as: either (1) an unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has been continuously homeless for a year or more, OR (2) an unaccompanied individual with a disabling condition who has had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years

• Cultural competency of staff • Leadership • Use of data • Hamilton County and Cincinnati Shelter standards (2009)	• Legal protections for Gay Straight Alliances (Federal Equal Access Act)		• 2 years of implementation • Plan strategies and activities • Community Advisory Group • Local plan evaluation	

Outcomes and Impact		
Short-term Outcomes (Months 1-6)	**Intermediate Outcomes (Months 7-18)**	**Long-Term Outcomes (Months 19+)**
• Identification of community need(s)—(data) • Identification and promotion of existing resources • Increased participant and community awareness of LGBTQ youth homelessness • Increased community engagement • Identification of evidence-based or promising practices • Participation of LGBTQ homeless youth in planning • Identify funding sources • Baseline survey across services for evaluation (6-Month, 1-Year, etc.)	• Increased cultural competency at initiative partner agencies[28] measured by number of trainings and client satisfaction • Require LGBTQ competency training for foster parents and JFS workers • Increase the number of foster and adoptive families that support LGBTQ foster youth and increase matches between youth and these families • Improve LGBTQ client services and satisfaction at Sheakley Center measured by client surveys and/or focus groups?) • Implemented X% of low-cost/short-term recommendations • Begin implementation of more difficult recommendations (TBD) • Secure funding for recommendations • Benchmark, flag and have youth input in baseline survey	• Reductions in the number of LGBTQ youth who become homeless and increases in their social and emotional well-being, stable housing, permanent connections and education/employment • Increase the number of early interventions/stopping episodic homelessness • Improved community supports and resources for LGBTQ youth • Increased cross-system community collaboration • Increased community acceptance and adult support of LGBTQ youth • Increase positive school environment for LGBTQ youth through more inclusive policies, staff training, curriculum and GSAs • Baseline survey completed

Theory of Change

To prevent LGBTQ youth homelessness,

Start with a needs assessment, understanding of local community context, AND a collaborative planning process with stakeholders representing the community (including youth)

To identify and implement strategies that leverage local strengths and address gaps for preventing LGBTQ youth homelessness and address challenges contributing to LGBTQ youth homelessness

Through increased resources for youth, families, schools, communities and peer groups

Through cultural competence training and awareness building for families, schools, communities and peer groups

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[28]Lighthouse Youth Services; Strategies to End Homelessness; Caracole; GLSEN; The Partnership Center; Mayor Cranley's Office; Cincinnati Public Schools; Cincinnati Police Department; Planned Parenthood; Heartland Trans* Wellness Group; YWCA and Human Rights Campaign.

Through policies, procedural and systems changes.

So that we:

Build protective factors and reduce risk factors associated with LGBTQ youth homelessness such as:

(1) Improve social climate, including inclusivity of policies, effectiveness of resources, and support/acceptance of LGBTQ identity

(2) Nurture youth that are motivated by self-acceptance and belonging to a community to seek stable housing, education/employment, permanent connections and social and emotional well-being.

(3) Nurture a community that provides a safety net of stable housing, education/employment, permanent connections and social and emotional well-being opportunities so youth do not experience homelessness.

(4) Increase the ability of families to accept and support differences to create a safe space for youth and prevent episodes of homelessness

A3. Harris County (Houston), Texas, Logic Model

Vision	Goals
In Harris County, Texas, homelessness among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, & questioning (LGBTQ) youth ends by 2020 & LGBTQ youth at risk of, or experiencing, episodic homelessness achieve positive outcomes.	This community commits to a coordinated service delivery model that is data-driven & utilizes recognized best practices. The initiative will expand knowledge & inform strategies in Harris County to: (1) Prevent homelessness for LGBTQ youth at risk of experiencing homelessness & (2) Intervene early to prevent episodic and chronic homelessness[29] among LGBTQ youth.

Objectives

(1) **Facilitate better local collaboration** between stakeholders working with youth to develop & implement a comprehensive community strategy to prevent homelessness among LGBTQ youth
(2) **Improve identification of LGBTQ youth at risk** of or experiencing episodic homelessness through screening & assessment
(3) **Identify, coordinate, & improve policies & interventions** to prevent LGBTQ youth homelessness across systems (e.g., behavioral health, child welfare, education, health, juvenile justice, law enforcement)
(4) **Reduce homelessness among LGBTQ youth** & improve their outcomes in the areas of permanent connections, stable housing, education/employment, & well-being
(5) **Inform national strategies** for preventing & ending homelessness among LGBTQ youth

Population	Inputs	Priority Activities	Outputs
Youth between the ages of 12 & 24, who are either at-risk of homelessness or who are or experiencing episodic homelessness.	• *Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent & End Homelessness* (including the USICH Framework to Prevent & End Youth Homelessness) • Existing knowledge, recommendation practices & interventions, & resources for preventing LGBTQ youth homelessness • Existing local capacities (e.g., infrastructure to collaborate, technology) & system competencies • Local funding • Local lead organization (The Montrose Center), partners, & other stakeholders such as: best practice training experts, continuum of care, faith-based community, foster care, funding community, homeless service providers, juvenile justice, law enforcement, primary & behavioral health providers, school liaisons	**Needs Assessment** • Assess local strengths, challenges/needs, & opportunities • Collect data & identify population needs **Local Collaboration** • Identify & engage key stakeholders that represent youth, youth-serving agencies, organizations that serve persons experiencing homelessness (e.g., local continuum of care), & non-traditional partners (e.g., libraries) • Facilitate structures (e.g., Steering Committee and subcommittees) for local leadership, collaboration, & coordination **Local Plan Development** • Develop a strategic plan that is dynamic & flexible, based on needs assessment findings, current service gaps, & based on evidence-based & recommended strategies **Local Plan Implementation** • Implement strategies for preventing LGBTQ youth at risk of homelessness & intervening early when it occurs • Identify & obtain new resources • Align existing resources • Standardize models for best practices • Create performance dashboards • Implement communications strategies	**Needs Assessment** • Summary of needs assessment findings **Local Collaboration** • Meetings of steering committee & subcommittees **Local Plan Development** • Local strategic plan **Local Plan Implementation** • Implementation of plan strategies • Local initiative reports (October 1, 2014; October 1, 2015) **Evaluation** • Evaluation results

Local Context

Community
• Advocacy efforts & politics
• Availability of & access to culturally competent services, programs, shelters, & housing
• Collaboration in the community across youth-serving systems (e.g., behavioral health, child welfare, education, juvenile justice, law enforcement) & "turf" concerns
• Community awareness of prevalence & causes of LGBTQ youth homelessness
• Culture
• Economic development & financial resources
• Faith-based organizations
• Funding and funders
• Geography (e.g., urban/rural communities, size)
• Leadership

Programs
• Policies & expected practices
• Cultural competency of staff
• Availability of developmentally appropriate youth services
• Leadership
• Use & coordination of data

Youth
• Awareness of & willingness to access supports
• "Coming out" status
• Previous access to supports
• Previous history in jails/prisons or group homes
• Risk factors (e.g., emotional distress, family rejection, lack of stable housing, substance use, mental health challenges)
• Socio-economic demographics
• Strengths & protective factors (e.g., employment, positive friends, school connection, supportive adults, survival skills)

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[29] Defined as either (1) unaccompanied homeless individuals with a disabling condition who have been continuously homeless for a year or more, OR (2) unaccompanied individuals with a disabling condition who have had at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years.

• LGBTQ advocacy & service organizations • Social/family attitudes toward LGBTQ identity/expression (e.g., bias, discrimination, violence)	• Technical assistance (TA) from HUD team & other federal agencies	**Technical Assistance** • Utilize available TA **Evaluation** • Measure & document progress in achieving initiative goals

National Context	
• Advocacy organizations & related efforts • Federal guidance & regulations • Federal support for addressing LGBTQ youth homelessness (e.g., USICH identification of LGBTQ youth as a population at risk)	• Federal support for this initiative • Legislation, such as McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance, & Runaway & Homeless Youth Acts • Published research & recommended policies/practices

Outcomes & Impact

Planning Outcomes (Months 1-6)	**Intermediate Outcomes (Months 7-18)**	**Long-Term Outcomes (Months 19+)**
• Expanded local partnerships • Coordination of existing funding and, where feasible, identification & dedication of new funding • Identification of community need(s)—(data) • Identification of evidence-based or promising practices • Identification & promotion of existing resources • Identification of strategies to support and sustain initiative (e.g., funder resources) • Increased participant & community awareness of LGBTQ youth homelessness • Increased community engagement	• Increased collection of accurate data on LGBTQ youth homelessness • Every at-risk or homeless LGBTQ youth has a stabilization option • Every stakeholder has tools to assess & connect LGBTQ youth to prevention & early intervention services • Increased community awareness of LGBTQ youth homelessness & youth homelessness generally • Decreased risk factors & increased protective factors for LGBTQ youth • Expanded cross-system collaboration • Expanded alignment of community resources based on best practice & current need • Expanded availability of training for programs to ensure best practices are implemented • Increased participation of diverse agencies & non-traditional partners in local efforts • Increased capacity & expanded quality of services for LGBTQ youth (e.g., improved cultural competency at agencies) • Improved youth satisfaction with services	Continuation of intermediate outcomes plus: • Increased implementation of prevention & early intervention strategies (e.g., screening) • Increased community acceptance & adult support of issues LGBTQ youth experience • More positive school & agency environments for LGBTQ youth • Reductions in the number of LGBTQ youth becoming homeless • Successful practices shared with other communities

Appendix B. Initiative Guidance Document

Youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and those questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity (LGBTQ) are dramatically overrepresented in the homeless youth population, yet there are far too few systems and services designed to meet their needs. As communities like yours determine effective practices, inclusive polices, and the benefits of collaboration in improving outcomes for LGBTQ youth, federal agencies are seeking opportunities to develop and expand this work. As part of the LGBTQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative, you will have access to support from various federal agencies including the Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Education, Justice, the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) ("the federal partners", collectively), and True Colors Fund, a national nonprofit leader on ending LGBTQ youth homelessness, in a unique public-private endeavor. Each partner will provide technical assistance (TA) and access to staff to help you create a community collaboration that will improve outcomes in the areas of education/employment, permanent connections, housing, and health/well-being for LGBTQ youth at-risk of and experiencing homelessness.

This document provides information for implementing the *LGBTQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative*. The goal of this initiative is to better understand how to prevent homelessness among youth who are LGBTQ. This interagency initiative is intended to improve collaboration and expand efforts to prevent LGBTQ youth homelessness among Continuum of Care (CoC) providers, runaway and homeless youth (RHY) providers, local education agencies (LEAs), law enforcement, and other local stakeholders. Significantly, as a participating community, you will have the opportunity to provide national leadership for developing a comprehensive approach for preventing homelessness among LGBTQ youth.

This document begins with background information underlying the goals of this initiative and then provides guidelines for planning and implementation, TA and evaluation supports, expected data collection activities, timeline, and resources.

I. Initiative Goals

The *LGTBQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative's* goal is to help federal agencies and local communities learn more about implementing community-wide strategies for (1) preventing homelessness for LGBTQ youth at risk of becoming homeless and (2) intervening early to prevent chronic homelessness among LGBTQ youth. The federal partners will look to your community as a hub of expertise in efforts to prevent homelessness among LGBTQ youth. Furthermore, the initiative will assist the federal partners in developing national guidance and recommendations to improve their programs.

For this initiative, we ask that your community use the *Opening Doors* youth framework (see Appendix A for more information) along with best practices for developing and implementing culturally competent and developmentally appropriate interventions for LGBTQ youth. To carry out the initiative, you will engage in a creative collaborative process to align resources among CoC providers, RHY providers, local school districts, law enforcement, and other youth stakeholders. It will also be important to engage families to effectively prevent LGBTQ youth homelessness and intervene early when youth become homeless.

To assist communities in their strategic planning and implementation efforts, federally funded on-site and virtual TA (e.g., webinars, conference calls, and access to resources) will be provided. Lessons learned from the initiative will be shared nationally with community-level youth-specific homeless prevention providers to improve homeless prevention efforts across the country.

The objectives of the *LGBTQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative* are to:

- **Facilitate better local collaboration between stakeholders working with youth.** Your community will be supported in its efforts to develop and implement a comprehensive community strategy to prevent homelessness among LGBTQ youth who are at-risk for it or who are experiencing episodic (i.e., non-chronic) homelessness.

- **Inform national strategies for preventing homelessness among LGBTQ youth.** Your community will participate in a federally-sponsored cross-site evaluation of the initiative to identify promising practices and process challenges to inform future federal program guidance and policy.

The federal partners acknowledge that developing a comprehensive community-wide plan will be a long and challenging process, but, with the right approach and supports, can successfully yield positive outcomes. The *LGBTQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative* is asking your community to tackle new challenges and to answer new questions, including how to (1) identify LGBTQ youth, (2) identify youth at risk of or experiencing episodic (i.e., non-chronic) homelessness, (3) match the right assessment tools with the right assessors, (4) inventory available interventions and modify as needed to meet LGBTQ youth needs, and (5) align interventions with intended initiative outcomes.

With this in mind, the initiative expects the strategic planning process to take 4 to 6 months, and the implementation phase to include adjustments to that strategy along the way. Your community will be encouraged to experiment with procedures and practices and to communicate implementation challenges. Your community will also be asked to assess initiative outcomes by tracking them over the course of two years.

The federal partners will conduct two formal initiative evaluations that will focus on local planning and implementation, including how and how well communities are able to collaborate

across multiple sectors. Aggregate youth outcomes will be tracked; however, the primary focus of the evaluation will be community approaches, processes, barriers, successes, and lessons learned. The *LGBTQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative* will also use these evaluations to report limitations and develop methods to address identified challenges that could affect similar community efforts in the future. Communities will be asked to synthesize their approaches and lessons learned in two short annual reports that will be included in each evaluation. These reports, along with the evaluations, will provide valuable information to guide policies, programs, TA, and general resources needed to prevent homelessness among LGBTQ youth in the United States.

II. Planning and Implementation Guidance

HUD is interested in understanding how mainstream resources could be used to benefit LGBTQ youth homelessness prevention efforts. To inform local implementation and future federal guidance, your community-wide strategies should be anchored around your HUD Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program. Eligible cost categories in your ESG program include homelessness prevention, emergency shelter, and supportive services. Your community should also integrate the strategies into your consolidated plan, a HUD program requirement designed to help states and local jurisdictions to assess their affordable housing and community development needs and market conditions, and to make data-driven, place-based investment decisions. As part of the initiative, we ask that you also address the following:

- **Determine your target population**. LGBTQ youth, between the ages of 12 and 24, who are either at-risk of homelessness or who are or experiencing episodic (i.e., non-chronic) homelessness should be part of this initiative's target population. Your community may further restrict the age limits as appropriate, but the federal partners are interested in learning about youth who are 12-24. You have flexibility to determine the definition of an "at-risk" youth, but you will need to be mindful of the requirements of any specific federal grant program funds that are part of your collaborative efforts. Federal agencies are unable to waive any of these requirements.

Include appropriate partners. We suggest including homeless or formerly homeless LGBTQ youth, family members, your CoC lead agency, an ESG recipient, RHY provider(s), your LEA, and local law enforcement as key partners in planning and implementing your local initiative. Additional partners, such as child welfare and juvenile justice, are recommended but not required.

Incorporate the youth framework. Communities should apply the *Unaccompanied Youth Intervention Model* described in the *[Framework to End Youth Homelessness](#)*. This model includes a focus on risk and protective factors as well as overall alignment around four core outcomes: stable housing, permanent connections, well-being, and education or employment.

The following components highlight some strategies that support developing and implementing a community-wide approach to preventing LGBTQ youth homelessness. Your community may already have embarked on community-wide planning and may have already incorporated some of these components. If you have not, we encourage your community to integrate these components into your strategic planning process:

Strategic Planning

- **Assess your community's understanding** of and commitment to ending LGBTQ youth homelessness. Different actors and cultures within the community may have different levels of comfort with LGBTQ issues, feel different levels of urgency regarding youth homelessness, and have different understandings of how the problem is defined. It is important to fully understand your community's local context and buy-in.

- **Identify key stakeholders** that represent youth and youth-serving agencies from multiple perspectives. Remember to include individuals and groups outside of the housing crisis response system, such as teachers, parents, foster care groups, LGBTQ support organizations, afterschool providers, healthcare providers, judges, police, and other instruments of local and state government. Identify each stakeholder's priorities and perspectives as it relates to issues of LGBTQ youth homelessness.

- **Reach out strategically to stakeholders** by using one-on-one conversations, small group meetings, personal contacts, formal emails, letters, or calls as appropriate to your relationships.

- **Organize a local workgroup or committee** that includes the stakeholders you have identified. We recommend including youth along with family members, or representatives from family organizations, to give voice to their perspectives. Agree on a plan for communication and collaboration. Develop a process for decision-making and consensus-building, and determine points of contact for communicating with local stakeholders and with the federal partners. In some communities, there may already be an organizing body under which this initiative could be housed, such as a coalition to end homelessness.

- **Develop a local timeline and action plan**, which includes processes for engaging stakeholders, assessing resource needs and identifying ways to meet them, finalizing methods, developing a youth access and assessment strategy, training key staff, preparing the community, implementing the strategy, measuring progress, identifying lessons learned, debriefing and modifying approaches, and disseminating results.

- **Be mindful of concurrent processes,** and coordinate whenever possible. An implementation strategy should be developed in coordination with the development of your community's annual consolidated plan. Acknowledge the semester-driven schedule

of schools and their students. Other grant processes at the local and federal level may also have a significant impact on coordinating and accessing resources.

- **Build in time to plan.** We expect that the strategic planning process will need between four and six months. Make full use of the process by starting early and building in small commitments and tasks for community partners to ensure full commitment and consensus by the time you are ready for implementation. Actively engage your federal and TA partners to support this process.

Implementation Approach

- **Include Prevention and Intervention.** The initiative is intended to consider strategies that include both prevention and intervention.

  – Prevention activities engage stakeholders before youth experience homelessness. They are designed to support stakeholders when experiencing precursors to a crisis.

  – Intervention activities engage stakeholders during crisis. They are designed to address a specific and time-sensitive situation for individuals or families.

  Your community is encouraged to include a range of both prevention and intervention strategies in the comprehensive plan to prevent homelessness among LGBTQ youth, and intervene early when it occurs. The federal partners will offer TA that provides best practices and promising strategies from around the country.

Define "At-Risk" and Program Eligibility. One challenge will be defining what qualifies youth as "at-risk" in your community. You are encouraged to create a definition that incorporates the values of as many stakeholders as possible. Defining "at-risk" should not be confused with the eligibility criteria of "at-risk" used by specific federal grant programs. *Eligibility requirements for federal funds will not change or be waived for the project*. Instead, the federal partners will provide resource menus, crosswalks, webinars, and TA to help navigate funding requirements. Your community's experience with these supports will significantly impact the TA that the federal providers will develop and provide to all other communities in the future.

Develop/Implement Strategies for Identifying LGBTQ At-Risk Youth. Implicit in the challenge of defining "at-risk" is the challenge of developing an assessment methodology to identify youth who are LGBTQ and "at-risk." TA resources will be provided; however, the federal partners recognize that this challenge presents communities with an opportunity to provide national leadership in testing new approaches. Communities are encouraged to engage traditional and nontraditional partners during the strategic planning phase to develop a comprehensive, realistic, context-specific, and culturally competent strategy for identifying youth most in need of these services.

Strategies for Integrating Cross-Agency Resources. This initiative requires a cross-agency effort at the federal and local levels. Building relationships and leveraging even the smallest resources will enable communities to access the funding, programs, and information necessary to operate the initiative and to identify the target population. TA will be provided at the local level through webinars and on the ground facilitation, and at the federal level by providing federal program funding menus and crosswalks. Your community is encouraged to connect to local and national funding sources, including foundations. In your effort to build a broad resource base, you have the flexibility to be creative and establish as many unique connections to mainstream groups and organizations as possible.

Example Program Models. Your community will receive assistance in identifying examples of promising program models and best practices from around the country. You are encouraged to reach out to experts and program staff from other communities to learn more about their experiences. Communities will receive additional TA resources that showcase some of these models and can assist with this outreach to other communities.

III. Technical Assistance and Evaluation

Federally funded TA implemented by nationally recognized experts in issues concerning youth, the LGBTQ community, and homelessness, will support your community with resources including webinars, materials, conference calls, on-site TA during the strategic planning process, and ongoing consultations as requested during implementation. Basic TA will address collaboration among CoCs, RHY providers, school district homeless liaisons, and law enforcement professionals; developing a comprehensive community plan; creating a culturally and linguistically competent approach for preventing LGBTQ youth homelessness; incorporating an appropriate access and assessment protocol; data collection; and other topics as needed.

The initiative will also include a process evaluation to capture lessons learned and implications for future efforts. For example, the TA team will interview stakeholders from your community during strategic planning, early implementation, and during the year of implementation. They will observe the planning process as well as how the comprehensive plan is carried out. The evaluation will identify strategies that can be adapted and implemented to prevent homelessness among LGBTQ youth in other communities around the country. The TA team will share and discuss findings with the initiative communities to ensure that lessons learned are useful to and support the initiatives of both the local communities and federal agencies.

IV. Data Collection

So that the federal partners can understand initiative progress and outcomes, *LGBTQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative* sites will be required to submit data in addition to the data submission required by existing funding agents. The goal of the additional data collection is threefold:

- To provide each community with useful local information that will allow them to better design programs and serve their stakeholders.

- To learn about community change and to better understand the benefits of initiatives to prevent LGBTQ youth homelessness.

- To aggregate community outcomes related to LGBTQ youth homelessness and tell a story that builds momentum toward implementation in other sites across the country.

To limit the burden on your community, you will compile data related to project outcomes in a simple Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet will include fields for aggregate data before launch and after completion of your initiative such as number of youth assessed, number of youth served, number of at-risk youth, number of homeless youth, total funds/resources used, and the origin of these funds/resources.

Qualitative data will be collected by the initiative TA team through on-the-ground observation, stakeholder interviews, and resource/tool analysis. This is an opportunity for stakeholders to explain their experience with the collaboration process, their priorities, and the challenges and successes that they experience. Much of the analysis will be based on these qualitative data sources. Importantly, your local initiative leadership will receive findings from analyses of these data to inform your ongoing efforts.

V. Initiative Timeline

The following are critical deadlines and start dates for participating in the initiative.

Informational Webinar: February 27, 2014.

Decision to Participate: Your community must confirm in writing your willingness to participate no later than **February 15, 2014**. Contact **Jeffrey Poirier at jpoirier@air.org**.

Strategic Planning: Beginning **March 1, 2014**. Strategic planning will look different for each site. Recommended local milestones include hosting a kickoff meeting and a series of facilitated discussions. The day that strategic planning and facilitation sessions begin will vary; however, this planning phase is expected to last between 4 and 6 months and produce a community-wide

plan for the local initiative. This strategic planning phase will include access to dedicated TA resources.

Implementation: Begins **September 1, 2014**. This officially begins the implementation phase of the project, which includes continued access to dedicated TA resources. Implementation will depend on the strategic planning process and the date of the first engagement of youth in the project may be unpredictable. It is important that sites have continuous feedback and that project evaluation and strategic planning continue well into implementation. Recommended local milestones include first participant engagement in initiative activities along with project monitoring and feedback sessions.

First Initiative Report: **October 1, 2014**. Your community will be asked to produce a short report summarizing your initiative's collaboration and strategic planning processes. The report will be incorporated in the first formal initiative evaluation to be conducted by the federal partners.

Second Initiative Report: **October 1, 2015**. Following 12 months of initiative implementation, your community will be asked to produce a report summarizing initiative activities. The report will be incorporated in the second formal initiative evaluation to be conducted by the federal partners.

VI. Federal Resources

Here you will find summaries and links to background information related to the major federal programs available to this initiative. You will also find a list of contacts for the federal agency workgroup.

Background Documents

USICH Framework to End Youth Homelessness and Unaccompanied Youth Intervention Model: The USICH Framework to End Youth Homelessness (youth framework) expands on the Amendment to Opening Doors, released in September 2012, by providing clarity on what needs to be done specifically to address youth homelessness to help reach the goal of ending homelessness among children and youth by 2020.
http://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/USICH_Youth_Framework__FINAL_02_13_131.pdf

Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) program description: The ESG program, a HUD formula grant program, provides funding to: (1) engage homeless individuals and families living on the street; (2) improve the number and quality of emergency shelters for homeless individuals and families; (3) help operate these shelters; (4) provide essential services to shelter residents, (5) rapidly re-house homeless individuals and families, and (6) prevent families/individuals from becoming homeless.
https://www.onecpd.info/esg/

Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) program description: The RHY program, a HHS Family and Youth Service Bureau program, supports street outreach, emergency shelters and longer-term transitional living and maternity group home programs to serve and protect the thousands of U.S. youth each year who run away from home, are asked to leave their homes or become homeless.
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/programs/runaway-homeless-youth

Educating Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program description: The EHCY program provides formula grants to the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico based on each state's share of Title I, Part A, funds. The program supports an office for coordination of the education of homeless children and youths in each state, which gathers comprehensive information about homeless children and youths and the impediments they must overcome to regularly attend school, ensures that homeless children, including preschoolers and youths, have equal access to free and appropriate public education (FAPE). States must make competitive subgrants to local education agencies (LEAs) to facilitate the enrollment, attendance, and success in school of homeless children and youths.
http://www2.ed.gov/programs/homeless/index.html
http://center.serve.org/nche/

Find Youth Info Initiative: FindYouthInfo.gov was created by the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs (IWGYP), which is composed of representatives from 18 federal agencies that support programs and services focusing on youth. The IWGYP promotes the goal of positive, healthy outcomes for youth.
http://findyouthinfo.gov/

Federal Technical Assistance Leads

The Federal Technical Assistance Leads can serve as a primary point of contact for your community. Individual grantees of RHY, OESE, OJJDP can also reach out directly to their TA providers for resources.

Name	Title	Organization	Email Address	Phone Number
John McGah, MPA	Project Lead Researcher, LGBTQ Youth Homeless Prevention	American Institutes for Research	jmcgah@air.org	781-373-7069
Jama Shelton, LMSW, PhD	Deputy Executive Director	True Colors Fund	jama@truecolorsfund.org	646-828-9804

Federal Agency Workgroup Contacts

Points of contact for the federal partners are listed below. Please feel free to reach out to them with questions that may be specific to their agencies' areas of focus.

Workgroup Member	Title	Agency
Matthew Aronson	Program Specialist	HUD
Caryn Blitz	Policy Advisor	HHS
Rebecca Flatow	Public Health Analyst	HHS
Sarah Hunter	Special Assistant	HUD
Brian Lyght	Senior Fellow	DOL
John McLaughlin	Education Program Specialist	ED
Robert Pulster	Regional Coordinator	USICH
Laura Radel	Senior Social Science Analyst	HHS
Stephanie Rapp	Program Manager	DOJ

Note on Program Waivers

As a reminder, eligibility requirements for federal funds will not change or be waived for the project. Instead, the federal partners will provide resource menus, crosswalks, webinars, and TA to help navigate funding requirements. If you wish to pursue a waiver of program requirements that govern federal funding or program operations being leveraged to support this initiative, you must follow the standard procedures and guidelines published by the federal agency or office that administers the federal program or grant in question.

Guidance Document Appendix

Background

The *LGBTQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative* addresses the *Opening Doors* goal to end homelessness for families and youth by 2020. *Opening Doors* acknowledges that LGBTQ youth are overrepresented in the homeless youth population and that preventing LGBTQ homelessness would have a significant impact on the total number of youth that become homeless. The *LGBTQ Youth Homelessness Prevention Initiative* supports a recommendation from the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) framework for ending youth homelessness by focusing on evidence for effective intervention strategies. Your community was invited to participate based on a combination of considerations including: local leadership and interest in LGBTQ youth homelessness, active collaboration between the CoC and LEA homeless liaisons, and the presence of RHY service providers.

Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

In working toward the goal of ending youth homelessness by 2020, USICH and its federal partners, including HUD, HHS, ED, and DOJ, developed a framework for ending youth homelessness and presented recommendations from the framework at the June 2012 USICH Council meeting.[30] The framework includes short-, medium-, and long-term strategies for addressing data quality and collection and the capacity of federal programs that serve homeless youth. A key component of the framework focuses on a strategy for building the capacity of systems and service providers needed to end unaccompanied youth[31] homelessness. Recommendations in the framework include the following:

- Disseminating a preliminary, research-informed intervention model for approaching service delivery

- Reviewing screening and assessment tools and effective interventions to improve youth outcomes;

- Improving service capacity for homeless youth and subpopulations; and,

- Implementing service strategies and evaluating those strategies.

The Council approved the proposed framework, and USICH and its federal partners, HUD, HHS, DOJ and ED, are beginning implementation.

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[30] June 2012 USICH Council Meeting on Youth Homelessness,
http://www.usich.gov/usich_resources/videos_and_webinars/june_2012_council_meeting_on_youth_homelessness/

[31] Unaccompanied youth includes youth up to age 24.

LGBTQ Youth: Over Represented

Research suggests that somewhere between 20% and 40% of youth who experience homelessness identify as LGBTQ or another sexual or gender minority.[32] This is a disproportionate compared to the proportion in the general population.[33] Additional data suggest that factors such as bias, rejection, and even violence associated with coming out as LGBT or questioning their sexual orientation and/or gender identity contribute to this overrepresentation. Once homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness, systems may be inadequately trained and resourced to serve LGBTQ youth in a culturally competent and developmentally appropriate manner. Some crisis services organizations and mainstream services, such as schools, child welfare, and the justice system lack the language to speak to youth and the awareness of appropriate interventions and services. These systems also have limited connection across sectors to the other adults who serve the same young people. Similarly, parents and informal community partners are left without connections to people, services, and solutions that might help to prevent or quickly end the homelessness of the youth to whom they are connected.

LGBTQ Youth: Using Current Funding Streams

Fortunately, current crisis response systems are not prohibited from serving LGBTQ youth who are at-risk of or who experience homelessness. HUD's Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) can, in certain circumstances, provide services that range from case management and mental health services to rental assistance and rapid rehousing for at-risk and homeless LGBTQ youth and their families. HHS's Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) program can offer outreach, family reconciliation services, and both short-term and medium term shelter. School staff can access and implement trauma informed and culturally competent tools when working with at-risk or homeless LGBTQ youth, and additional resources may be accessed through Title IA funding. Similarly, other federal and local programs that engage in crisis response through the Department of Labor, the Department of Justice, local police and justice officials, and local child welfare agencies, have flexibility to target resources to preventing and quickly ending homelessness among LGBTQ youth. Some communities have already begun to adapt and coordinate these resources. Agencies have implemented cultural and linguistic competency protocols, schools and HUD CoC providers have collaborated on policy and integrated LGBTQ awareness into strategic plans, and there are new programs that blend funding to create innovative housing and family engagement solutions.

Building Service Arrays to Prevent Homelessness for LGBTQ Youth

We can prevent and then end homelessness among LGBTQ youth by bridging the gap between what is needed, what is available, and what is implemented with fidelity to best practices across our communities. That process will require an increase in the level of awareness of LGBTQ

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[32] Sears, B., & Badgett, L. (2012). Beyond stereotypes: Poverty in the LGBT community. *Momentum, 4*. Retrieved from http://momentum.tides.org

[33] Ray, N. (2006). *Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth: An epidemic of homelessness*. New York, NY: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute and the National Coalition for the Homeless.

homelessness and its root causes within a community, awareness of community resources, collaboration between youth-serving partners, and implementation of best practices across systems of care. Seeing these increases will require coordination and leadership among federal agencies as well as support for local communities in the form of federal resources and TA. By acting together, at the federal and local level, we can align and better utilize our resources to prevent, and end, LGBTQ youth homelessness.

Appendix C. Methods

Survey

Over a one-month period, 24 respondents completed AIR's survey using Survey Monkey. This included 10 respondents from Cincinnati (including the 3 local leads) and 14 from Houston (including 4 local leads). Not all respondents, however, answered all questions. Also, 11 steering committee members (7 Cincinnati, 4 Houston) did not respond to the survey. Although the Houston nonrespondents included participants who had been highly involved in the planning process, only two of the Cincinnati nonrespondents were highly involved in their planning process (and five of them came from two organizations).

Appendix D includes the survey questions used to collect these data. Appendix G provides complete findings for the local leads and steering committee surveys, respectively. Local leads and steering committee members were asked questions for the following topic areas: (1) local leads; (2) timeline; (3) needs assessment; (4) logic model; (5) local initiative and plan development; (6) steering committee; (7) subcommittees; (8) community involvement; (9) technical assistance; (10) funding; (11) lessons learned; and (12) moving forward.

Interviews

AIR conducted 18 interviews in person or by phone with local leads and steering committee members. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. Participants were asked questions about the following topic areas: (1) local leads, (2) timeline, (3) needs assessment, (4) logic model, (5) local initiative and plan development, (6) steering committee, (7) subcommittees, (8) community involvement, (9) technical assistance, (10) funding, (11) lessons learned, and (12) moving forward. AIR transcribed and then coded all interviews using NVIVO qualitative data analysis software. The team generated a coding structure based on the purpose of the planning phase review and coded interview data thematically. The study team then ran queries to analyze data and generate findings. Appendix E includes a copy of the interview protocol.

Appendix D. Survey Questions

Local Leads	Steering Committee
Topic 1: Local Leads	
Approximately how many hours do you estimate you spent on initiative planning, on average, from April 2014 to September 2014? Please include meeting time. Average hours per month: _____ Approximately how many hours do you estimate you spent on initiative planning OR implementation, <u>by month</u>? Please include meeting time here too. October 2014: ___ November 2014: ___ December 2014: ___ January 2015: ___ February 2015: ___ Please rate your agreement with the following statements: The time commitment for leading this initiative was what I expected. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure The time commitment for leading this initiative was reasonable. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure My organization has supported my work on this initiative by providing adequate time for me to participate. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure	

Local Leads	Steering Committee
Topic 2: Timeline	
Please rate your agreement with the following statements: Six months was enough time to develop a quality community plan to prevent LGBTQ youth homelessness. ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Unsure How our local initiative spaced out activities during the six-month planning process helped guide our work. ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Unsure We closely followed our overall planning phase timeline. ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Unsure	Please rate your agreement with the following statements: Six months was enough time to develop a quality community plan to prevent LGBTQ youth homelessness. ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Unsure How our local initiative spaced out activities during the six-month planning process helped guide our work. ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Unsure The Steering Committee closely followed the planning phase timeline. ☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐ Unsure
Topic 3: Needs Assessment	
Please rate your agreement with the following statements: The needs assessment activities (e.g., interviews of key stakeholders, community forums) provided valuable information. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure I recommend beginning with a needs assessment before embarking on a similar planning process in another community. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure	Please rate your agreement with the following statements: The needs assessment activities (e.g., interviews of key stakeholders, community forums) provided valuable information. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure I recommend beginning with a needs assessment before embarking on a similar planning process in another community. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure

Local Leads	Steering Committee
Our community used the needs assessment findings to develop our plan's strategies. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure	Our community used the needs assessment findings to develop our plan's strategies. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure
Topic 4: Logic Model	
Please rate your agreement with the following statements: Our initiative's logic model accurately represents the initiative. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure The logic model will be useful to our initiative as we move forward. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure I recommend developing an initiative logic model when beginning a similar planning process in another community. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure	Please rate your agreement with the following statements: Our initiative's logic model accurately represents the initiative. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure The logic model will be useful to our initiative as we move forward. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure I recommend developing an initiative logic model when beginning a similar planning process in another community. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure
Topic 5: Local Plan Development	
	To what extent are you satisfied with the content of your local plan? ☐ Very satisfied ☐ Somewhat satisfied ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied ☐ Very dissatisfied ☐ Unsure

Local Leads	Steering Committee
Please rate your agreement with the following statements: Our community's initiative plan has the right strategies to <u>prevent </u>LGBTQ youth homelessness in our community. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure Our community's initiative plan has the right strategies to <u>intervene early when LGBTQ </u>youth experience homelessness in our community. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure Our community will be able to effectively sustain our initiative's plan for the next five years. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure	Please rate your agreement with the following statements: Our community's initiative plan has the right strategies to <u>prevent </u>LGBTQ youth homelessness in our community. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure Our community's initiative plan has the right strategies to <u>intervene early when LGBTQ </u>youth experience homelessness in our community. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure Our community will be able to effectively sustain our initiative's plan for the next five years. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure Looking forward, what is your biggest concern, if any, about sustaining your local initiative plan?
Topic 6: Steering Committee	
Please rate your agreement with the following statement: Groupsite was helpful for communicating and sharing information to support the planning process. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure	Please rate your agreement with the following statements: My organization has supported my work on this initiative by providing adequate time for me to participate. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure ☐ Not applicable Groupsite was helpful for communicating and sharing information to support the planning process. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree

Local Leads	Steering Committee
	☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure
	Approximately how many hours do you estimate you spent on initiative planning, on average, from April 2014 to September 2014? Please include meeting time. Average hours per month: _____ Approximately how many hours do you estimate you spent on initiative planning OR implementation, <u>by month</u>? Please include meeting time here too. October 2014: ___ November 2014: ___ December 2014: ___ January 2015: ___ February 2015: ___ Please rate your agreement with the following statement: The time commitment for participating on the Steering Committee was what I expected it to be. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure The time commitment for participating on the Steering Committee was reasonable. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure Please share any comments about the steering committee here.
Topic 7: Subcommittees	
	Please rate your agreement with the following statements: The time commitment for subcommittee chairs was what I expected it to be. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure

Local Leads	Steering Committee
	The time commitment for subcommittee chairs was reasonable. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure
	Please rate your agreement with the following statements. Subcommittee meetings were important for our planning process. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure Time during subcommittee meetings was well structured. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure The subcommittee meetings were productive. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure Please share any comments about the subcommittees here.
Topic 8: Community Involvement	
	Please rate your agreement with the following statements: The right <u>organizations</u> participated in our initiative's planning process. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure The right <u>individuals</u> participated in our initiative's planning process. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree

Local Leads	Steering Committee
	☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure Please share any comments about community involvement in your local planning process.
Topic 9: Technical Assistance (TA)	
Please rate your agreement with the following statements: The TA team provided helpful guidance to develop our community plan. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure Overall, the TA we received was a significant support for developing our community plan. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure	Did you receive any TA from any of the following individuals: Jama Shelton, Jeff Poirier, Rachael Kenney, Tom Bardwell. ☐ Yes (continue) ☐ No (skip to topic 10) Please rate your agreement with the following statements: The TA team provided helpful guidance to develop our community plan. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure Overall, the TA we received was a significant support for developing our community plan. ☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐ Unsure
What aspects of the TA support were most useful to you during the planning phase?	What aspects of the TA support were most useful to you during the planning phase?
What aspects of the TA support were less useful to you during the planning phase?	What aspects of the TA team's support were less useful to you during the planning phase?
Please share any other comments about the TA supports here.	Please share any other comments about the TA supports here.
Topic 10: Lessons Learned	
Thinking about the planning period and process overall, what key lessons learned would you want to share with another community embarking on a similar initiative?	Thinking about the planning period and process overall, what key lessons learned would you want to share with another community embarking on a similar initiative?
What were the most important assets for your planning process?	What were the most important assets for your planning process?
What barriers either individually or relative to the overall planning process did you experience, if any?	What barriers either individually or relative to the overall planning process did you experience, if any?
What would you do differently if you were to begin this process again, if anything?	What would you do differently if you were to begin this process again, if anything?

Appendix E. Interview Questions

Local Lead Interview Questions

Topic	Question
Local Leads	• How were you selected to serve as the local lead? What factors influenced your selection as the lead organization? • Please summarize your role with the initiative. What kinds of activities and responsibilities did you take on as a local lead? • If you were describing this initiative to another community, how would you describe the time commitment needed to lead your local planning process? • What helped to support your role as a local lead? • Did you have enough support? Why or why not? If not, what more could have been helpful? • How did you approach managing the planning process and related coordination? • What obstacles or challenges did you encounter, if any? How did you work to address and overcome these? • Thinking about the time commitment and responsibilities of local leads only, what advice would you want to share with another community taking on a similar planning process?
Timeline	• What steps did you take to develop your planning phase timeline? Who was involved? What informed your decisions about the schedule? • How well did the timeline work? • What aspects of your timeline worked particularly well? What would you have done differently if you were to start over? • What recommendations do you have for other communities that are developing a timeline for a similar initiative?
Needs Assessment	• How did your community assess its needs? What types of activities did your community carry out as part of the needs assessment? What sources of data did you collect? How did you analyze it? Are there additional needs assessment activities that would have been helpful? • Was conducting a needs assessment helpful to your community? How so? How was the information from the assessment used throughout the planning process? Are there additional ways that you wish you used the information?
Logic Model	• How did you develop your logic model? Who was involved? How did you engage your steering committee in logic model development? Subcommittees? The community? Was the initiative logic model helpful for developing your local model—and why or why not? • What recommendations do you have for other communities that are developing a logic model for a similar initiative? • To what extent do you think your local logic model adequately reflects your initiative? Why or why not?
Local Initiative and Plan Development	• How did your local initiative develop its brand? Who was involved and in what ways? What are your thoughts about the initiative branding your community developed? • How did you develop your local plan? Who was involved? How did you engage your steering committee in local plan development? Subcommittees? The community? • What support was most useful to you as you developed your local plan? • Was there anything unique about your local community context that guided how the process evolved? [probe about local factors supporting/hindering the planning process] • How has your community approached generating new resources or realigning funding to sustain the initiative locally? What other strategies, if any, have you used to sustain the initiative? • What obstacles or challenges did you encounter, if any? How did you work to address and overcome these? • Did any differences of opinion or conflicts emerge? Please describe. If so, how were these resolved? • What recommendations do you have for other communities that are developing a local plan for a similar initiative?

Topic	Question
Steering Committee	• How did you determine who to include on the steering committee? How did you identify who was missing and engage them? • How frequently did the steering committee meet? Were these meetings in person or by phone? How long were these meetings? How did the committee use this meeting time? • How frequently did the steering committee meet? • What expectations were established for how the steering committee participated in the planning process? How were they set? To what extent were they clear? • Did the steering committee use technology such as online meeting rooms. Groupsite, listservs, etc.? How did you use technology as part of your work with the steering committee? What was most useful? What additional technology would have been helpful? • How did the steering committee interface with the workgroups? How did the subcommittees communicate with the steering committee and each other? What feedback loops were in place? • What were the responsibilities of the steering committee members?
Subcommittee	• What subcommittees were established? How were their areas of focus identified? • How were the subcommittee chairs selected? What were their responsibilities? • How were subcommittee members selected? What were their responsibilities? • What expectations were established for how the subcommittee members participated in the planning process? How were they set? To what extent were they clear? • What technology was most useful to you during your subcommittee work? What was least useful? What additional technology would have been helpful? • How was collaboration encouraged across subcommittees? • What supported subcommittee chair and member efforts? • What obstacles or challenges did subcommittee chairs and members encounter, if any? How did they work to address and overcome these?
Community Involvement	• How did you determine which stakeholders to engage at the community level? What did their involvement look like? • How were partnerships developed? With whom? • Were the right stakeholders engaged and key organizations represented during the planning process? How about youth and families? Why or why not? • For those who were missing, why do you think they were missing/what were the barriers to participation? To what extent did you try to engage important people/organizations who were missing? And if they were engaged, through what strategies (e.g., number of calls, emails)?
Technical Assistance	• How did the core TA team help to support the development of your community plan? What types of support did it provide? • What other supports did you access outside of the core TA team? Why did you choose to access these supports?
Funding	• In what ways has your initiative engaged local funders? What facilitated outreach to funders? Did anything hinder it? • What funding needs are most critical to address for your plan to be successful?
Lessons Learned	• Thinking about the planning period and process overall, what key lessons learned would you want to share with another community embarking on a similar initiative? • If you were to go through this process again, is there anything you would you do differently?
Moving Forward	• What technical assistance supports will your community need to successfully implement and sustain its plan? • What worries you about your plan implementation? That is, anything that concerns you about your community's ability to successfully carry out the plan? • What excites you most about your plan implementation?

Steering Committee Interview Questions

Topic	Question
Local Leads	• How would you describe the role of the local lead(s) for this initiative? • What supports did they provide to the planning process? • What capacities and skills did they bring to the planning process? • Could the local leads have been more helpful and, if so, how?
Timeline	• What aspects of your timeline worked particularly well? • What would you have done differently if you were to start over? • What recommendations do you have for other communities that are developing a timeline for a similar initiative?
Needs Assessment	• How did your community assess its needs? • What types of activities did your community carry out as part of the needs assessment? • What sources of data did you collect? How did you analyze it? Are there additional needs assessment activities that would have been helpful? • Was conducting a needs assessment helpful to your community? How so? • How was the information from the assessment used throughout the planning process? Are there additional ways that you wish you used the information?
Local Initiative and Plan Development	• What support was most useful to you as you developed your local plan? • Was there anything unique about your local community context that guided how the process evolved? [probe about local factors supporting/hindering the planning process] • What obstacles or challenges did you encounter, if any? How did you work to address and overcome these? • What recommendations do you have for other communities that are developing a local plan for a similar initiative?
Steering Committee	• What expectations were established for how the steering committee participated in the planning process? How were they set? To what extent were they clear? • Did the steering committee use technology such as online meeting rooms. Groupsite, listservs, etc.? How did you use technology as part of your work with the steering committee? What was most useful? What additional technology would have been helpful? • How did the steering committee interface with the workgroups? How did the subcommittees communicate with the steering committee and each other? What feedback loops were in place? • What were the responsibilities of the steering committee members? • Was the time burden for your participation in the planning realistic given other demands on your time? Why or why not?
Subcommittee	• How were the subcommittee chairs selected? What were their responsibilities? • Was the time required to contribute to subcommittees reasonable? • How were subcommittee members selected? What were their responsibilities? • What expectations were established for how the subcommittee members participated in the planning process? How were they set? To what extent were they clear? • What technology was most useful to you during your subcommittee work? What was least useful? What additional technology would have been helpful? • How was collaboration encouraged across subcommittees? • What supported subcommittee chair and member efforts? • What obstacles or challenges did subcommittee chairs and members encounter, if any? How did they work to address and overcome these?

Topic	Question
Community Involvement	• How did you determine which stakeholders to engage at the community level? What did their involvement look like? • Were the right stakeholders engaged and key organizations represented during the planning process? How about youth and families? Why or why not?
Technical Assistance	• How did the core TA team help to support the development of your community plan? What types of support did it provide?
Funding	• What are your key concerns, if any, related to funding your local initiative?
Lessons Learned	• Thinking about the planning period and process overall, what key lessons learned would you want to share with another community embarking on a similar initiative? • If you were to go through this process again, is there anything you would you do differently?
Moving Forward	• What technical assistance supports will your community need to successfully implement and sustain its plan? • What worries you about your plan implementation? That is, anything that concerns you about your community's ability to successfully carry out the plan? • What excites you most about your plan implementation?

Appendix F. Community Plan Activities and Intended Results

Activities and Intended Results, by Priority Area	Cincinnati	Houston
Area 1: Child Welfare		
Increased number of foster and adoptive families that support LGBTQ foster youth and increased matches between youth and these families	✓	✓
Increased participation in LGBTQ competency training for foster parents and children's services workers	✓	✓
Mentoring program implemented for LGBTQ youth involved with the child welfare system who are at-risk, or experiencing, homelessness		✓
More inclusive nondiscrimination policies and practices based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression		✓
Area 2: Community Collaboration		
Identification and promotion of existing resources	✓	✓
Improved access to community supports and resources for LGBTQ youth	✓	✓
Increased cross-system community collaboration	✓	✓
Increased community engagement	✓	✓
Area 3: Culturally Competent Policies, Programs, and Practices to Address Youth Needs		
Identification of evidence-based or promising practices	✓	✓
Implementation of interventions and countywide programs, including prevention and early intervention services, to address the specific needs of youth	✓	✓
Increased cultural competency at initiative partner agencies	✓	✓
Area 4: Data		
Initiative outcomes documented	✓	✓
Identification of community need(s) using data	✓	✓
Improved data quality	✓	✓
Improved understanding of the prevalence of LGBTQ youth in foster care	✓	✓
Data and systems outcomes used to identify and inform practice changes	✓	✓
Area 5: Education		
Improved referral processes from the school to community services for youth and families		✓
Improved communication with school district personnel about LGBTQ resources and issues		✓
Increased graduation rates		✓
More positive school environment and experiences for LGBTQ youth	✓	✓
Area 6: Employment		
Improved support for developing career goals and achieving employment		✓
Increased number of LGBTQ youth with employment opportunities	✓	✓

Activities and Intended Results, by Priority Area	Cincinnati	Houston
Area 7: Family and Community Awareness/Supports		
Expanded dialogue to share and explore perceptions of LGBTQ youth and related issues	✓	
Increased community acceptance and adult support of LGBTQ youth	✓	✓
Increased number of LGBTQ youth with permanent connections to families	✓	✓
Increased participant and community awareness of LGBTQ youth homelessness	✓	✓
Area 8: Funding		
Funding sources identified	✓	✓
New funding to support initiative activities	✓	✓
Area 9: Health and Healthcare		
Increased awareness of World Professional Association of Transgender Health (WPATH) standards of care by primary and behavioral health care for transgender youth		✓
Increased awareness of rights for LGBTQ youth in accessing primary and behavioral health care		✓
Reduced barriers for accessing culturally competent and affirming primary and behavioral health care		✓
Area 10: Housing		
Decreased homelessness among LGBTQ youth	✓	✓
Expanded access to safer housing options		✓
Improved consumer-friendly documentation requirements for temporary, transitional, or permanent housing		✓
Area 11: Juvenile Justice and Law Enforcement		
Expanded counseling and supports to families of LGBTQ at-risk and recently homeless youth		✓
Improved stable housing of LGBTQ youth as they transition from juvenile justice (related to Area 10: Housing)		✓
Juvenile justice staff (in detention facilities, treatment centers, jails, and other programs, agencies, and facilities) are more LGBTQ affirming and competent		✓
LGBTQ youth are included as a vulnerable population in state human trafficking laws		✓
Area 12: Screening and Assessment		
Expanded screening and assessment of youth risks and needs	✓	✓
Improved response to risk and protective factors of LGBTQ youth at risk of or experiencing homelessness	✓	✓
Area 13: Social-Emotional Well-Being		
Improved social and emotional well-being among LGBTQ youth at risk of homelessness	✓	
Strengthened relationships among youth and key partners	✓	
Area 14: Youth Involvement and Satisfaction With Services		
Improved LGBTQ youth satisfaction with services	✓	✓
Participation of LGBTQ homeless youth in plan implementation	✓	

Appendix G. Survey Results

Plan Content and Satisfaction[34]

Table G1. The Community's Initiative Plan Has the Right Strategies to Prevent LGBTQ Youth Homelessness in the Community

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	–	3	–	–	–
Cincinnati Steering Committee	3	2	–	–	–
Subtotal Cincinnati	**3**	**5**	**–**	**–**	**–**
Houston Local Leads	–	3	1	–	–
Houston Steering Committee	1	8	–	1	–
Subtotal Houston	**1**	**11**	**1**	**1**	**–**
Total	**4**	**16**	**1**	**1**	**–**

Table G2. The Community's Initiative Plan Has the Right Strategies to Intervene Early When LGBTQ Youth Experience Homelessness in the Community

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	–	3	–	–	–
Cincinnati Steering Committee	2	3	–	–	–
Subtotal Cincinnati	**2**	**6**	**–**	**–**	**–**
Houston Local Leads	–	3	1	–	–
Houston Steering Committee	1	8	–	1	–
Subtotal Houston	**1**	**11**	**1**	**1**	**–**
Total	**3**	**17**	**1**	**1**	**–**

Table G3. Extent of Satisfaction With the Content of the Local Plan[35]

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Unsure	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Cincinnati Steering Committee	3	2	–	–	–
Houston Steering Committee	1	8	–	1	–

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[34] Over a one-month period, 24 respondents completed AIR's survey using Survey Monkey. This included 10 respondents from Cincinnati (including the 3 local leads) and 14 from Houston (including 4 local leads). Not all respondents, however, answered all questions (tables indicate the number of responses per item). Also, 11 steering committee members (7 Cincinnati, 4 Houston) did not respond to the survey

[35] This question was not included on the local leads survey since the local leads were deeply involved in developing the plans

Total	4	5	–	1	–

Timeline

Table G4. Six Months Was Enough Time to Develop a Quality Community Plan to Prevent LGBTQ Youth Homelessness

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	1	1	1	–	–
Cincinnati Steering Committee	1	3	1	2	–
Subtotal Cincinnati	**2**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**–**
Houston Local Leads	–	1	–	2	1
Houston Steering Committee	2	4	–	4	–
Subtotal Houston	**2**	**5**	**–**	**6**	**1**
Total	**4**	**9**	**2**	**8**	**1**

Table G5. How the Local Initiative Spaced Out Activities During the Six-Month Planning Process Helped Guide Work

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	1	1	–	1	–
Cincinnati Steering Committee	1	6	–	–	–
Subtotal Cincinnati	**2**	**7**	**–**	**1**	**–**
Houston Local Leads	–	2	1	1	–
Houston Steering Committee	2	7	–	1	–
Subtotal Houston	**2**	**9**	**1**	**2**	**–**
Total	**4**	**16**	**1**	**3**	**–**

Table G6. The Overall Planning Phase Timeline Was Closely Followed

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	1	2	–	–	–
Cincinnati Steering Committee	–	6	–	1	–
Subtotal Cincinnati	**1**	**8**	**–**	**1**	**–**
Houston Local Leads	–	2	2	–	–
Houston Steering Committee	3	7	–	–	–
Subtotal Houston	**3**	**9**	**2**	**–**	**–**
Total	**4**	**17**	**2**	**1**	**–**

Needs Assessment

Table G7. The Needs Assessment Activities Provided Valuable Information

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	2	1	–	–	–
Cincinnati Steering Committee	3	2	1	–	–
Subtotal Cincinnati	**5**	**3**	**1**	**–**	**–**
Houston Local Leads	2	2	–	–	–
Houston Steering Committee	2	5	–	3	–
Subtotal Houston	**4**	**5**	**–**	**3**	**–**
Total	**9**	**8**	**1**	**3**	**–**

Table G8. Recommend Beginning With a Needs Assessment Before Embarking on a Similar Planning Process in Another Community

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	2	1	–	–	–
Cincinnati Steering Committee	6	–	–	–	–
Subtotal Cincinnati	**8**	**1**	**–**	**–**	**–**
Houston Local Leads	2	2	–	–	–
Houston Steering Committee	6	3	–	1	–
Subtotal Houston	**8**	**5**	**–**	**1**	**–**
Total	**16**	**6**	**–**	**1**	**–**

Table G9. The Community Used the Needs Assessment Findings to Develop the Plan's Strategies, Percentage Responses

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	2	1	–	–	–
Cincinnati Steering Committee	4	1	–	1	–
Subtotal Cincinnati	**6**	**2**	**–**	**1**	**–**
Houston Local Leads	1	1	2	–	–
Houston Steering Committee	1	6	2	1	–
Subtotal Houston	**2**	**7**	**4**	**1**	**–**
Total	**8**	**9**	**4**	**2**	**–**

Logic Model

Table G10. The Initiative's Logic Model Accurately Represents the Initiative

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	–	2	1	–	–
Cincinnati Steering Committee	2	4	–	–	–
Subtotal Cincinnati	**2**	**6**	**1**	**–**	**–**
Houston Local Leads	–	4	–	–	–
Houston Steering Committee	1	7	1	1	–
Subtotal Houston	**1**	**11**	**1**	**1**	**–**
Total	**3**	**17**	**2**	**1**	**–**

Table G11. The Logic Model Will Be Useful to the Initiative in the Future

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	–	1	1	1	–
Cincinnati Steering Committee	1	4	1	–	–
Subtotal Cincinnati	**1**	**5**	**2**	**1**	**–**
Houston Local Leads	–	4	–	–	–
Houston Steering Committee	1	5	2	2	–
Subtotal Houston	**1**	**9**	**2**	**2**	**–**
Total	**2**	**14**	**4**	**3**	**–**

Table G12. Recommend Developing an Initiative Logic Model When Beginning a Similar Planning Process in Another Community

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	–	3	–	–	–
Cincinnati Steering Committee	4	2	–	–	–
Subtotal Cincinnati	**4**	**5**	**–**	**–**	**–**
Houston Local Leads	1	3	–	–	–
Houston Steering Committee	1	6	1	2	–
Subtotal Houston	**2**	**9**	**1**	**2**	**–**
Total	**6**	**14**	**1**	**2**	**–**

Community Involvement

Table G13. The Right Organizations Participated in the Initiative's Planning Process[36]

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Steering Committee	3	–	–	1	–
Houston Steering Committee	2	5	1	1	–
Total	**5**	**5**	**1**	**2**	**–**

Table G14. The Right Individuals Participated in the Initiative's Planning Process[37]

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Steering Committee	2	1	–	1	–
Houston Steering Committee	1	8	–	–	–
Total	**3**	**9**	**–**	**1**	**–**

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[36] This question was not included on the local leads survey since the local leads were responsible for bringing together organizations for the planning process.

[37] This question was not included on the local leads survey since the local leads were responsible for bringing together individuals for the planning process.

Comment Table 1. Steering Committee Member Comments About Community Involvement in the Local Planning Process

Cincinnati Steering Committee Members:
- I believe a broader inclusion would have been helpful and for some a stronger sustained involvement, such as CMHA, faith based organizations and first responders.
- We lost the faith community. Sad.

Houston Steering Committee Members:
- All organizations were rightly invited to participate. Several right individuals are involved; but we could benefit from more active participation from key CEO/CFO/Executive Leadership staff.
- Community involvement needs to be ongoing.
- Strong, collaborative leadership at local level lacking. What helped the most was the energy and commitment from the technical assistance efforts. Lack of clarity as to how local leadership for implementation of the plan would work. Seems to be competition from the lead agency and other non-profits. Too much control and not enough collaboration in the implementation phase.

Local Leads Time Commitment

Table G15. The Time Commitment for Leading This Initiative Was as Expected

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	–	2	–	1	–
Houston Local Leads	–	1	1	1	1
Total	**–**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**1**

Table G16. The Time Commitment for Leading This Initiative Was Reasonable

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	–	2	–	1	–
Houston Local Leads	–	2	1	1	–
Total	**–**	**4**	**1**	**2**	**–**

Figure G1. Estimated Hours Spent on Initiative Planning, on Average by Local Lead, From April to September 2014, Cincinnati
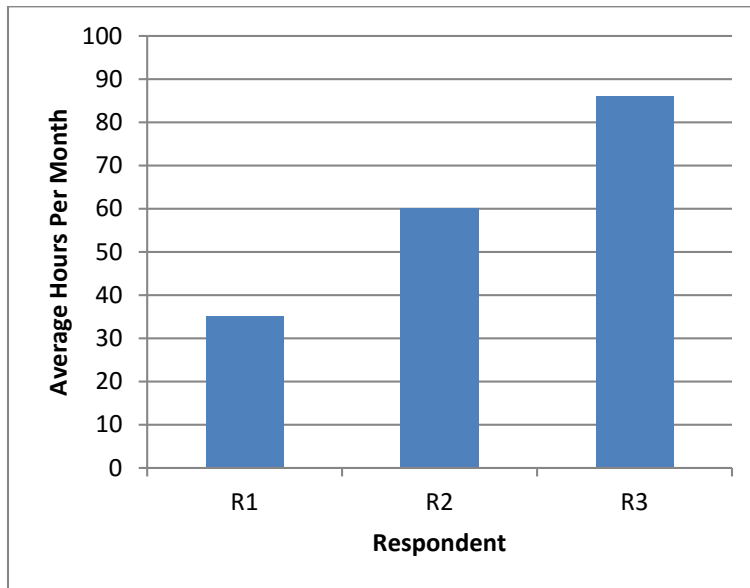
Figure G2. Estimated Hours Spent on Initiative Planning, on Average by Local Lead, From April to September 2014, Houston
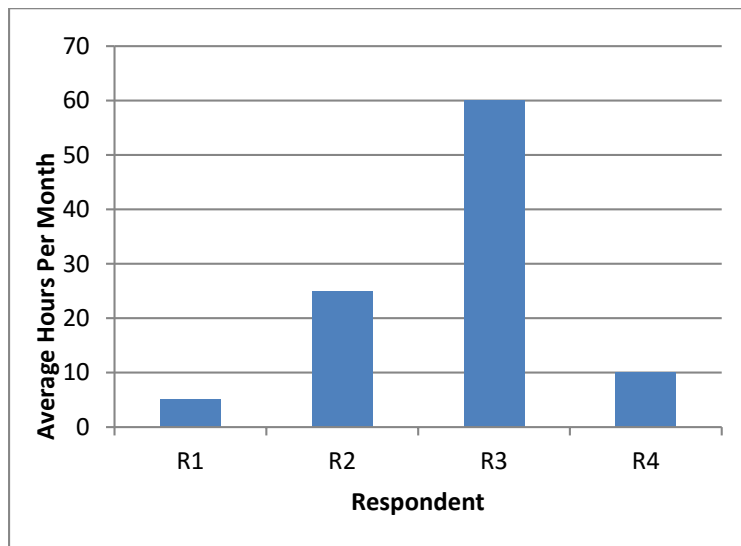
Figure G3. Estimated Hours Spent on Initiative Planning or Implementation[38], by Month and Local Lead, Cincinnati
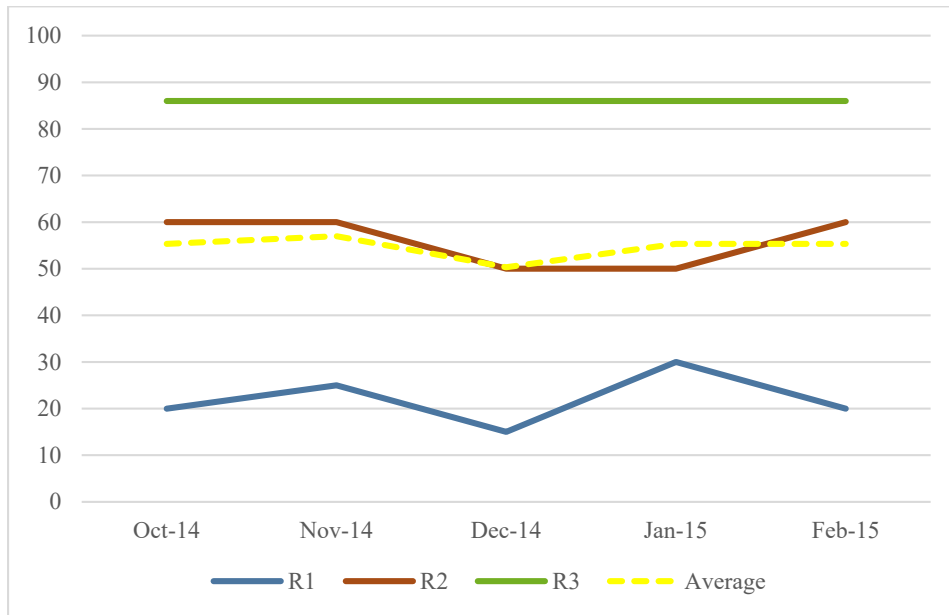
Figure G4. Estimated Hours Spent on Initiative Planning or Implementation, by Month and Local Lead, Houston

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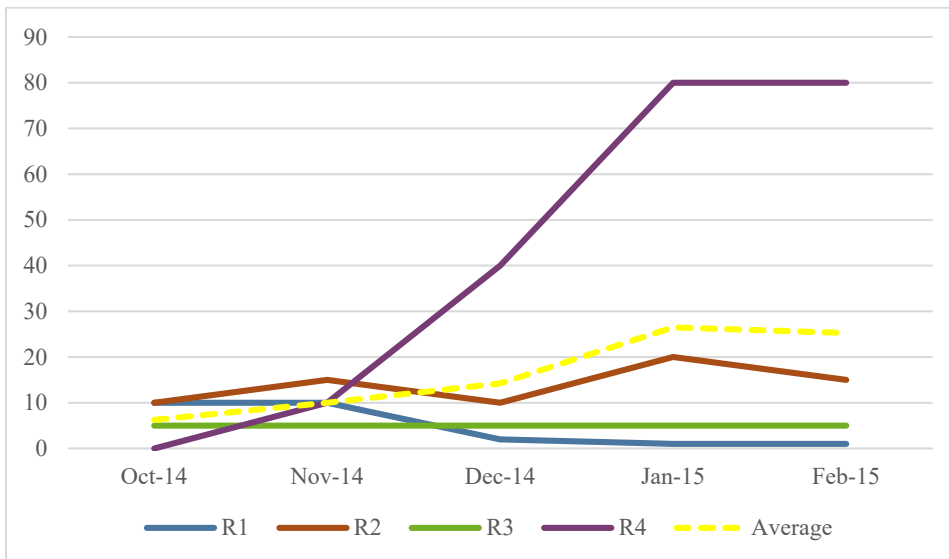
[38] Given the timing of the survey, we included questions about the hours spent on planning *or* implementation for the five months following the end of the planning period. We do not include these data in the report, though, since the report focuses on the planning phase only. We include them here for supplementary information.

Steering Committee Participation

Table G17. The Time Commitment for Participating on the Steering Committee Was as Expected

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Steering Committee	1	3	–	–	–
Houston Steering Committee	2	3	–	4	–
Total	**3**	**6**	**–**	**4**	**–**

Table G18. The Time Commitment for Participating on the Steering Committee Was Reasonable, Percentage Responses

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Steering Committee	1	2	1	–	–
Houston Steering Committee	2	6	–	2	–
Total	**3**	**8**	**1**	**2**	**–**

Figure G5. Estimated Hours Spent on Initiative Planning, on Average by Steering Committee Member Respondent, From April 2014 to September 2014, Cincinnati
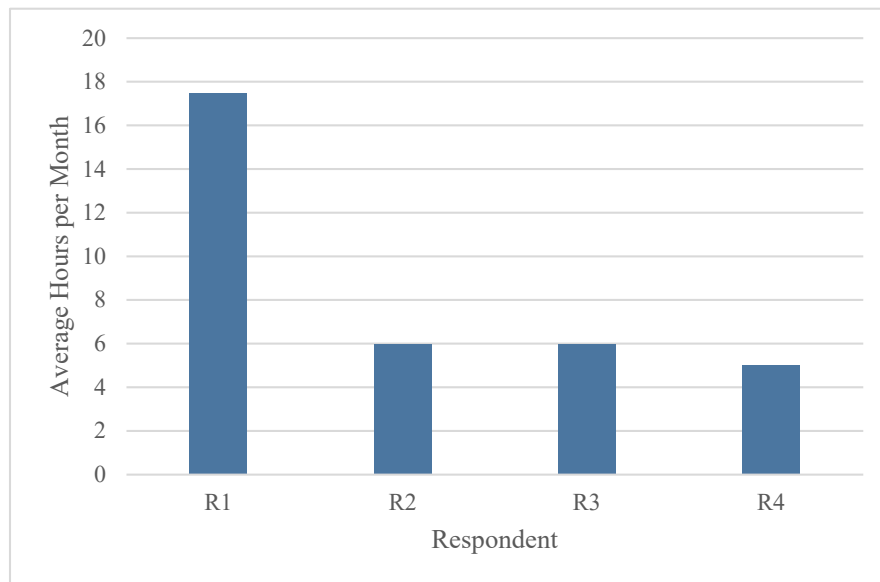
Figure G6. Estimated Hours Spent on Initiative Planning, on Average by Steering Committee Member Respondent, From April 2014 to September 2014, Houston
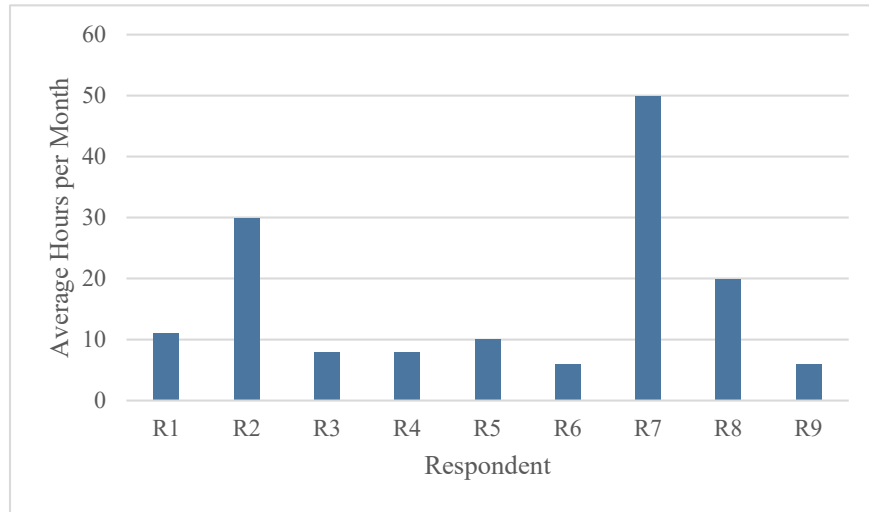
Figure G7. Estimated Hours Spent on Initiative Planning or Implementation[39], by Month and Steering Committee Member Respondent, Cincinnati

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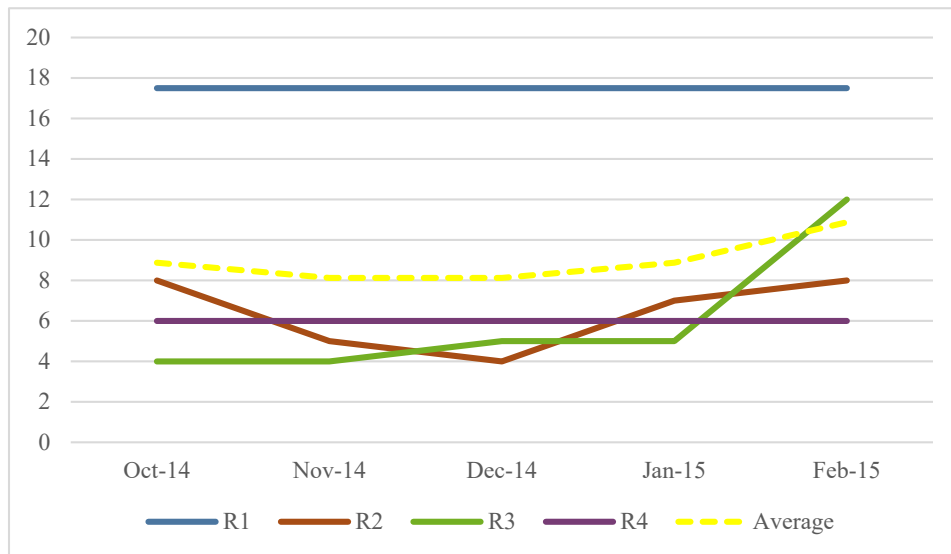
[39] Given the timing of the survey, we included questions about the hours spent on planning *or* implementation for the five months following the end of the planning period. We do not include these data in the report, though, since the report focuses on the planning phase only. We include them here for supplementary information.

Figure G8. Estimated Hours Spent on Initiative Planning or Implementation, by Month and Steering Committee Member Respondent, Houston
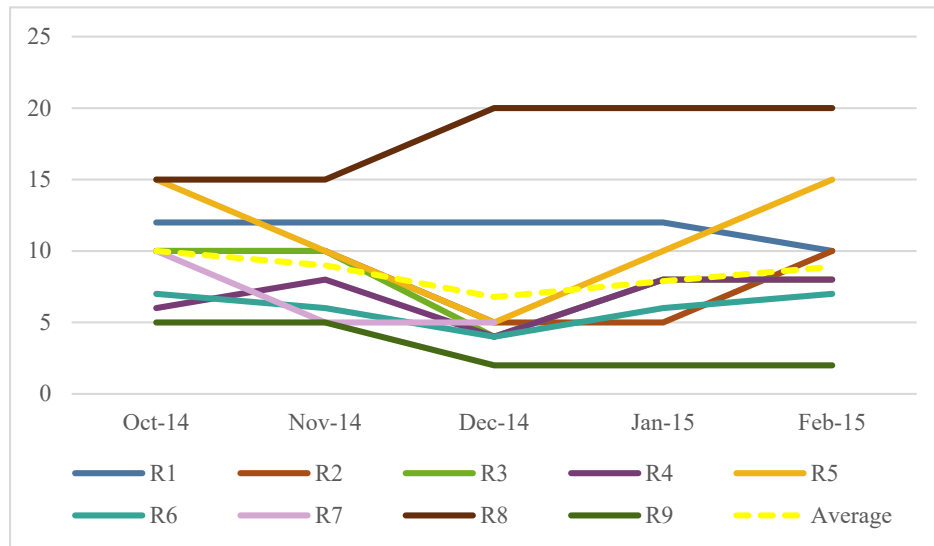
Comment Table 2. Steering Committee Comments about the Steering Committee

Cincinnati Steering Committee Members:
- The time commitment is pretty intense. It has been hard to find the time needed to work on this in addition to my other commitments.

Houston Steering Committee Members:
- I mistakenly thought that a higher level of work would be done at the Steering Committee level, (e.g. not just reviewing work done by the subcommittees). But, this probably just reflects my limited experience in participating at this level of project involvement.
- Steering Committee's work was well organized, effective and accomplished a lot in a short time. Technical Assistance provided by HUD was most valuable. Do not see the leadership at the local level.
- The expectations on steering committee members who have senior management positions within their own organizations are greater than what I had expected.
- This initiative is more of a time commitment then thought.

Organizational Support for Participating in the Planning Process

Table G19. Individuals' Organizations Have Supported Work on This Initiative by Providing Adequate Time for Individuals to Participate

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	2	1	–	–	–
Cincinnati Steering Committee	2	–	2	–	–
Subtotal Cincinnati	**4**	**1**	**2**	**–**	**–**
Houston Local Leads	2	1	–	1	–
Houston Steering Committee	5	3	–	1	–
Subtotal Houston	**7**	**4**	**–**	**2**	**–**
Total	**11**	**5**	**2**	**2**	**–**

Subcommittee Participation

Table G20. The Time Commitment for Subcommittee Chairs Was as Expected

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cincinnati Steering Committee	1	1	–	1	1
Subtotal Cincinnati	1	1	–	1	1
Houston Local Leads	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Houston Steering Committee	1	4	–	3	1
Subtotal Houston	**1**	**4**	**–**	**3**	**1**
Total	**2**	**5**	**–**	**4**	**2**

Table G21. The Time Commitment for Subcommittee Chairs Was Reasonable

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cincinnati Steering Committee	1	1	–	1	1
Subtotal Cincinnati	1	1	–	1	1
Houston Local Leads	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Houston Steering Committee	1	4	–	4	–
Subtotal Houston	**1**	**4**	**–**	**4**	**–**
Total	**2**	**5**	**–**	**5**	**1**

Table G22. Subcommittee Meetings Were Important for the Planning Process

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cincinnati Steering Committee	3	1	–	–	–
Subtotal Cincinnati	**3**	**1**	**–**	**–**	**–**
Houston Local Leads	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Houston Steering Committee	3	4	–	1	1
Subtotal Houston	**3**	**4**	**–**	**1**	**1**
Total	**6**	**5**	**–**	**1**	**1**

Table G23. Time During Subcommittee Meetings Was Well Structured

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cincinnati Steering Committee	1	3	–	–	–
Subtotal Cincinnati	**1**	**3**	**–**	**–**	**–**
Houston Local Leads	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Houston Steering Committee	2	6	–	1	–
Subtotal Houston	**2**	**6**	**–**	**1**	**–**
Total	**3**	**9**	**–**	**1**	**–**

Table G24. The Subcommittee Meetings Were Productive

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Cincinnati Steering Committee	**1**	**3**	**–**	**–**	**–**
Subtotal Cincinnati	**1**	**3**	**–**	**–**	**–**
Houston Local Leads	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Houston Steering Committee	2	6	–	–	1
Subtotal Houston	**2**	**6**	**–**	**–**	**1**
Total	**3**	**9**	**–**	**–**	**1**

Comment Table 3. Steering Committee Comments About the Subcommittees

Cincinnati Steering Committee Members:
- I feel badly that I can't devote more time to my subcommittee.
- If I had really understood the time commitment, I would not have volunteered to chair a subcommittee.
- Need broader participation and inclusion with sub-committees.

Houston Steering Committee Members:
- It has been a huge challenge to pull a subcommittee together and find a consistent meeting time. Until I recently found a co-chair the work was all on me which was not reasonable considering my main other projects and responsibilities as a senior manager in my organization.
- Our subcommittee lost its initial leader about midway through the first six months; and meetings had been sporadic previous to that, (and mostly focused on recruiting more members). This was followed by a couple of months with no leadership. Finally, a new leader was identified, but in the interim we lost the participation of several potential members. As a result, an increasing share of the work has fallen onto 1-2 early members.
- This is a big time commitment
- Unable to complete work for funding gaps because of lack of information from other subcommittees.

Technical Assistance

Table G25. The TA Received Was a Significant Support for Developing the Community Plan

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	2	1	–	–	–
Cincinnati Steering Committee	3	1	–	–	–
Subtotal Cincinnati	**5**	**2**	**–**	**–**	**–**
Houston Local Leads	2	2	–	–	–
Houston Steering Committee	5	3	–	–	–
Subtotal Houston	**7**	**5**	**–**	**–**	**–**
Total	**12**	**7**	**–**	**–**	**–**

Table G26. The TA Team Provided Helpful Guidance to Develop the Community Plan

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	2	1	–	–	–
Cincinnati Steering Committee	4	–	–	–	–
Subtotal Cincinnati	**6**	**1**	**–**	**–**	**–**
Houston Local Leads	1	3	–	–	–
Houston Steering Committee	5	3	–	–	–
Subtotal Houston	**6**	**6**	**–**	**–**	**–**
Total	**12**	**7**	**–**	**–**	**–**

Table G27. Groupsite Was Helpful for Communicating and Sharing Information to Support the Planning Process

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	–	–	–	1	2
Cincinnati Steering Committee	1	3	–	–	–
Subtotal Cincinnati	**1**	**3**	**–**	**1**	**2**
Houston Local Leads	–	3	–	1	–
Houston Steering Committee	4	2	–	2	1
Subtotal Houston	**4**	**5**	**–**	**3**	**1**
Total	**5**	**8**	**–**	**4**	**3**

Comment Table 4. Local Lead and Steering Committee Member Comments About Technical Assistance

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Most Useful Aspects of the Technical Assistance Support During the Planning Phase

Cincinnati and Houston Local Leads:
- Access to federal partner resources.
- Background and stats.
- Encourage[ing], pushing us, holding us to deadlines. Writing, editing.
- Helpful guidance and direction.
- In-person training/facilitation of community meetings, connection to resources, logic model, communications planning, cheerleading.
- Information about HUD expectations, information about best practices, information about what works elsewhere.
- TA assisted us with the structural pieces (Needs Assessment, Focus Groups, Logic Model, etc.) that were critical to the plan we created. Because of these activities, I am confident that our community plan is well-informed and addresses the needs that are unique to our community. Furthermore, the TA provided us the logistical assistance that kept [us] on track—setting up phone calls with relevant contacts, directing us to relevant resources (so we did not "re-create the wheel" so to speak)—and created necessary documents. Without this logistical help, the 6-month time frame would have been a challenge.

Cincinnati Steering Committee Members:
- Examples of national programs, guidance on what HUD needs as a part of our local plan, and sharing experiences from our peer community
- They have great experience and have seen many other programs across the country.

Houston Steering Committee Members:
- Assistance in paring down goals and activities and reorganizing in a more streamlined way.
- Data and information sharing
- Keeping us on track; providing important resource material information; close collaboration with the Lead Agency representatives; positive and upbeat optimism.
- Ready at a moment's notice to be helpful with guidance, support, more information.
- Resource sharing
- The one on one assistance each provided
- The TA Team has been very helpful and supportive

Less Useful Aspects of TA Support During the Planning Phase

Cincinnati and Houston Local Leads:
- Connections to the federal partners and their available TA were not very user-friendly for us. There was so much information [that] we couldn't prioritize and sort through it all.
- Our Steering Committee was receptive to Groupsite but failed to utilize it enough to be meaningful. In theory, it's nice having a centralized location for our files but few people—outside of our Initiative Leads—ever referred to the online documents. If anything, Groupsite's main benefit was featuring a long section of resources to explore. However, it may not have been worth all the time lost setting people up and teaching them how to use it to leave it largely underutilized.
- Rewriting everything after we spent hours carefully crafting the goals, etc.
- Some frustration with rewriting documentation and feeling like repeating work already done.
- The editing of the NEST document got complicated.

Cincinnati Steering Committee Members:
- None

> **Houston Steering Committee Members:**
> - I found everything to be useful.
> - Providing clear templates and framework.
>
> *Other Comments About Technical Assistance*
>
> **Cincinnati and Houston Local Leads:**
> - I can't imagine more effective TA support.
> - Loved the mixture of nonprofit and government/contract support.
> - Overall very helpful.
> - The TA supports are quick to respond and that has made all the difference. TA supports were readily available for questions and to participate in meetings via phone when necessary.
> - The TA team was great. I think the initiative could have been better served if the TA team had acted in more of a facilitator role instead of technical assistance though. Our initiative lacked a clear timeline and expectations for community partners. It would have been helpful to have assistance on the front end with outlining the timeline and partner requirements. I think our initiative could have used more guidance with the development of the plan to ensure that it is the most effective and meaningful plan for truly ending/preventing LGBTQ youth homelessness.
>   We now need structural assistance.
>
> **Cincinnati Steering Committee Members:**
> - None
>
> **Houston Steering Committee Members:**
> - They have done a fantastic job—especially Jeff and Jama!
> - The TA support was invaluable. Without this assistance, it would have been very difficult to achieve results.
> - The TA was extremely helpful in guiding the process and sharing information.
> - Very accessible.

Sustainability

Table G28. The Community Will Be Able to Effectively Sustain the Initiative's Plan for the Next Five Years

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Cincinnati Local Leads	–	–	3	–	–
Cincinnati Steering Committee	1	2	1	1	–
Subtotal Cincinnati	**1**	**2**	**4**	**1**	**–**
Houston Local Leads	–	1	2	1	–
Houston Steering Committee	1	3	1	2	3
Subtotal Houston	**1**	**4**	**3**	**3**	**3**
Total	**2**	**6**	**7**	**4**	**3**

Comment Table 5. Biggest Concern for Sustaining Their Local Initiative Plan, Steering Committee Members Only

Cincinnati Steering Committee Members:
- Funding, the lack of a comprehensive needs assessment and solid data.
- Getting the buy in from all agencies and school districts.
- Keeping community members engaged and active. Sharing the expectations equitably amongst the community stakeholders.
- Staffed, salaried organizations will be able to sustain their level of commitment. I'm not so sure about smaller, volunteer organizations.

Houston Steering Committee Members:
- Funding
- Fractions within the stakeholder community
- It is my belief that too few agency members are willing to do the hard work at the subcommittee level. Also, some strong early supporters of the initiative have become disillusioned and left the effort. Also, there is a lack of CEO/CFO/executive level personnel involvement in the Steering Committee's work.
- Lack of strong leadership, lack of clarity around funding gaps, funding competition at organizational level, lack of larger community buy-in, limited capacity for coordination of plan
- Maintaining cohesiveness.
- The plan is very ambitious and comprehensive. I am concerned about the local funders' ability to fund the plan and the agencies/organizations being to sustain them financially.
- The right partners are not involved in implementation or planning. Low and mid-level staff did most of the work and there is not a buy in from the people who control the resources. If staff turns over or gets redirected from this project, this won't be sustainable.

Lessons Learned

Comment Table 6. Key Lessons Learned for Another Community Embarking on a Similar Initiative

Cincinnati and Houston Local Leads:
- Add funding to the planning process to have enough dedicated staff with the time to focus more on the planning process.
- An organization looking to lead a similar initiative must be ready to dedicate the required amount of hours for the initiative to be a success. Furthermore, conducting a Needs Assessment and consulting key service providers and youth are critical to developing a plan that is well-informed. Findings from these assessments are going to be unique to each community, so it only makes sense to develop a plan that is specific to your own community with the supports and structures that are available.
- Clarify committees and committee members, with at least one year commitment; get youth and families involved early; more stakeholder meetings.
- Ensure that a clear timeline and partner agency expectations are outlined from the beginning. Conduct specific outreach and engagement to LGBTQ youth, youth serving agencies, and other underrepresented populations.
- Longer time period, push committee chairs.
- The more diverse your planning team is the better. Over invite people to the table because folks will drop off. Support youth participation from day 1. Make sure key systems are involved. Create a structure for folks to participate in (clear subcommittee activities and worksheets etc.) to keep people focused.
- Understand this is a huge undertaking and adequate, dedicated resources must be assigned.

Cincinnati Steering Committee Members:
- Do not underestimate the time needed for activities and tasks
- Invite absolutely everyone from the community into the process, especially the faith community. Define more clearly the commitment required.

- Start with data and a needs assessment.
- Try to gather commitment early.

Houston Steering Committee Members:
- Don't over plan
- Keep community engaged throughout. Include youth up front.
- Need to have a more clear vision of what the final work product and what success looks like
- Our Steering Committee created a number of small subcommittees early in the process to focus on a number of different initiatives. Obtaining sufficient membership to support all subcommittee work was a lingering problem from the very beginning, (and is still an issue). I wonder if it wouldn't have been better to have the Steering Committee collectively work on 1-2 tasks at a time and finalize those tasks, (especially as the Steering Committee has maintained high levels of participation). In this scenario, the Steering Committee would be much more of a working committee. Later, after sufficient commitment was obtained from other individual agency members, a very small number of subcommittees could be formed to work on other issues.
- Start with a series of community conversation and then one large report-out. Important to have the shared community vision and community will to create and implement a plan.
- Taking the time to learn from each other about needs and services, funding streams, differing definitions that limit access to services.
- The large number of subcommittees was too ambitious given the resources available I would recommend starting with a few key subcommittees.

Assets

Comment Table 7. The Most Important Assets Provided for the Planning Process

Cincinnati and Houston Local Leads:
- Community commitment/engagement.
- Community inputs.
- In-kind staff time provided by the Lead Agency and Key Partners. Because the mission of our initiative [is] aligned with our organization's work, and because other agencies in the community saw value in this work, we were able to maintain the necessary moment[um] for developing our plan. While it can be said that there were many individuals who would have participated in the initiative regardless if it was part of their job or not, having our initiative be part of paid working hours made all the difference.
- Local people.
- Our leadership team/strong staff and their TIME, community and youth knowledge, a deadline.
- The expertise of the lead team and the TA.
- The interest and energy from our community partners. Although it has been challenging to keep them engaged, there is a strong level of interest and commitment from partners in our community.

Cincinnati Steering Committee Members:
- Connecting all the community service providers. Staff leadership: Meradith, Meridith, Zachary
- Experiences with grant programs and community planning
- Having the right people at the table.

Houston Steering Committee Members:
- A strong sub-committee
- Community involvement.
- Logic Model, Community Landscape study, local information on what is currently available as well as gaps in services/housing. Liked having different mainstream systems represented.
- People sharing ideas
- Subcommittee membership and active participation.
- TA and data from the community, local PIT and research data
- The committed people involved.
- The steering committee meetings and TA team

Barriers

Comment Table 8. Barriers Experienced During the Overall Planning Process

Cincinnati and Houston Local Leads:
- Following my response to question #14, it is difficult—but completely realistic— that we faced frequent staff turnover among many of the agencies participating in our Steering Committee. Noticeably, we had people who either changed jobs, went on a leave of absence, or simply could not balance our requests with their primary workload. … We were constantly providing "new member orientation." Because of this, individuals had different levels of understanding of the work during meetings which sometimes [created] obstacles to productive discussion when so much time was spent back-tracking so everyone was on the same page.
- Getting stakeholder and community organizational participation in the actual work of planning, research, writing, etc. Many seemed willing to advise others who would do the actual work.
- Lack of funding to support the effort.
- Lack of funding was a significant barrier. The amount of time needed to fully staff the planning and implementation is challenging for people to absorb into their already packed full time job responsibilities.
- None I recall.
- The belief that if we could do this we would already be doing it.
- We have experienced drop off of LGBT individuals/orgs being able to participate. Most of these people/orgs are volunteer run and they don't have the time/staff/money to show up at meetings. Individually, my time was split between this and my other work so sometimes it was difficult to pay attention to everything that was necessary to do this really well.

Cincinnati Steering Committee Members:
- Conservative communities.
- I feel we lost people as we moved forward. It took too long and was too hard for some folks.
- Lack of data
- No time was carved out from my traditional work, this grant involvement was added to an already demanding work schedule.
- None.

Houston Steering Committee Members:
- A lack of stable leadership within my subcommittee from early in the process has significantly crippled our productive output.
- Differing definitions.
- Fractions from the stakeholders and lack of consensus on direction. Failure to pinpoint clear simple action points for immediate implementation
- I did not have the ability to make decisions for my agency, so there was a lot of back and forth with information.
- Lack of time Lack of follow-up
- My own time commitments
- Too much control from the lead agency.

Other Reflections

Comment Table 9. What Could Be Done Differently if This Process Were Repeated

Cincinnati and Houston Local Leads:
- Get the leads to (provide) training about how this is expected to work and how to manage the process.
- Have leadership in on initial meetings so we know what to expect.
- I would have an LGBT organization as one of the lead orgs from the beginning.
- More stakeholder meetings in a variety of locations.
- More time in the setup of the planning process and in recruiting local stakeholder involvement and money for the lead agency or a local staff. One person half time is not enough.
- Seek resources to hire an initiative facilitator. Clearly define roles and responsibilities on the front end. Take the draft plan recommendations to an outside group to vet. Truly take a look at the recommendations in our plan and decide if they really impact our goal of preventing/ending LGBTQ youth homelessness.

Cincinnati Steering Committee Members:
- I think the process and timeline [were] handled well.
- Insist on a needs assessment.

Houston Steering Committee Members:
- Be more realistic in what could be done.
- Better distribute current assessments or plans for future assessments
- I would have encouraged leadership to be in the sub-committee.
- Not sure.
- Share more information with the community partners and the community-at-large.
- Spend more time on objectives and examples of framework and templates
- We had no control over this, but I think that it was wrong for the federal government to "select" our community for this project without first seeking our input and commitment. I understand that we always had the option to turn the offer down; but it just feels different to me if I am asked if I want my community to be one of 5-10 for consideration in implementing an initiative, from being told that 5-10 sites were reviewed without our knowledge, and we were picked! I understand some of the reasons why Houston was ultimately selected, but I wonder if one of the other sites might have had more movement by now because of some unique problem issues inherent to Houston.
- Would have liked to have community consider a more neutral supporting/convening organization and a youth plan coordinator that would be able to work more at a systems level rather than out of one agency. Like the idea of a convening/support organization rather than a "lead" agency designation. Makes a difference in being able to achieve true collaboration and collective impact.