

Youth At-Risk of Homelessness Implementation Study

IMPLEMENTATION STUDY PURPOSE

The implementation study examines the execution of Colorado's Pathways to Success comprehensive service model (Pathways) and business-as-usual services provided through Chafee funding (comparison). The study focuses on two main objectives.

1. Support interpretation of Pathways impacts on outcomes
2. Generate information about factors that contributed to or inhibited implementation of Pathways in different settings, which will support replication or improvement of future Pathways service delivery

DATA SOURCES FOR YARH-3 IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

DATA SOURCES FOR SAMPLE OF HUBS¹ PARTICIPATING IN HUB VISITS

Interviews

Conducted with leadership, supervisors, and Pathways Navigators or comparison program workers

Focus groups

Conducted with up to four youth and young adults per focus group

Interviews and focus groups are conducted through two rounds of hub visits, which include six of nine Pathways and six of six comparison hubs*

Hub visits



ROUND 1
Started in May 2022 and were all conducted virtually



ROUND 2
Will start in 2024 and may be conducted virtually or in person

DATA SOURCES FOR ALL PATHWAYS AND COMPARISON HUBS

Telephone check-ins

Notes from check-ins with county child welfare agency leadership at all hubs

Conducted approximately six months after each round of hub visits



Program administrative data

Pathways Management Information System (PMIS) – a case management system for Navigators

- Screening and assessment data: eligibility screening tool, Working Alliance Inventory, and Youth Connections Scale
- Case management data: participation data, youth-Navigator contact, youth goals, and a graduation criteria checklist

Received from Colorado quarterly



Documents guiding programming**

Pathways hubs

- Pathways program manuals
- Staff training documents

Comparison hubs

- Service-related policies and procedures
- Training/meeting documents

Collected and reviewed annually



Aggregated extant data

Data from multiple sources to document the service, resource, and policy environment in each hub

- 2022 Colorado child welfare system (Trails) data
- 2020 U.S. Census data
- 2013 National Center for Health Statistics Urban-Rural Classification Scheme for Counties
- 2020 Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count data

Collected before and during the first round of hub visits



*Any additional hubs added after September 2021 are not included in the implementation study.

**May include other relevant documents identified by hubs.

¹ Some counties have a small number of youth and young adults who need services. In these cases, adjacent counties form a hub for service provision.

YARH IMPLEMENTATION STUDY

Youth At-Risk of Homelessness (YARH) overview: To expand the evidence base on interventions to prevent homelessness among youth and young adults who have been involved in the child welfare system, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services launched the Youth At-Risk of Homelessness (YARH) multiphase grant program. ACF is now in the third phase of YARH (or YARH-3) and is conducting a rigorous summative evaluation of a policy-relevant, comprehensive service model developed and refined during the first two phases of YARH. The summative evaluation conducted under YARH-3 will examine the effect of Colorado's Pathways to Success comprehensive service model (Pathways) and business-as-usual services provided by counties in Colorado through Chafee funding (comparison).² Pathways is an intensive, coach-like case management model for youth and young adults with foster care history at age 14 or older.

Implementation study purpose: There are two broad objectives for the implementation study. First, it will support interpretation of Pathways' impacts on outcomes. Second, it will generate information about factors that contributed to or inhibited implementation of Pathways services in different settings, which will support replication or improvement of future Pathways service delivery. For more information on the implementation study, please see the [YARH Implementation Study Design Report](#) and other documents on the [OPRE website for the project](#).

Research topics: The implementation study will address research questions under the following areas: 1) differences between the Pathways service model and comparison services, 2) facilitators of and barriers to Pathways' implementation, 3) fidelity to the Pathways service model, 4) the service, resource, and policy environment in which Pathways and comparison services were delivered, and 5) youth and young adults' responsiveness to the Pathways service model.

Research design and data collection methods: Data collection focuses on all components of the Pathways service model and comparison services, and will take place over multiple years. Hub visits collect information about facilitators of and barriers to implementation of the Pathways service model, including moderators of fidelity that influence the level of adherence to the Pathways service model. Interview and focus group data will be collected across two rounds of hub visits. Telephone check-ins are conducted six months after each round of site visits. Documents guiding programming are collected and reviewed annually to better understand Pathways and comparison services, and to help prepare for data collection during hub visits. Program administrative data collected from the Pathways Management Information System (PMIS) on a quarterly basis are used to assess patterns in service delivery and describe the extent to which Pathways services are delivered with fidelity. Aggregated extant data are collected before and during the first round of hub visits are used to document the service, resource, and policy environment for each intervention and comparison hub in the implementation study sample.

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The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, the Administration for Children and Families, or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

²The John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (the Chafee program) is a federal program that provides funding to support youth and young adults in or formerly in foster care in their transition to adulthood. For more information, please see: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/grant-funding/john-h-chafee-foster-care-independence-program>.