Reducing Homelessness Among Youth with Child Welfare Involvement: An Analysis of Phase I Planning Processes in a Multi-phase Grant

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Youth At-Risk of Homelessness

Reducing Homelessness Among Youth with Child Welfare Involvement: An Analysis of Phase I Planning Processes in a Multi-phase Grant

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Youth and young adults with child welfare involvement face significant challenges in their transition to adulthood—challenges that increase their risk of becoming homeless. Evidence on "what works" for youth in foster care or young adults formerly in foster care is limited (Courtney et al. 2007). To expand this evidence base, the Children's Bureau (CB) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) developed a multi-phase grant initiative for planning, implementing, and evaluating comprehensive service models intended to prevent homelessness among youth and young adults with child welfare involvement. The funding opportunity announcement (FOA) for the first phase of this initiative was called "Planning Grants to Develop a Model Intervention for Youth/Young Adults with Child Welfare Involvement At Risk of Homelessness" (Phase I).

In September 2013, the start of the first phase, CB awarded 18 two-year planning grants, each worth up to $360,000 per year. Grantees were to focus on three populations: (1) adolescents who enter foster care between 14 and 17, (2) young adults aging out of foster care, and (3) homeless youth/young adults with foster care histories up to 21.

The focus of this report is a process study of Phase I. The report documents the activities and progress grantees made over the course of the planning period. In it, we explore the following research questions:

- When did grantees proceed through the various activities that were part of Phase I ? How long did it take? How did their progress through the tasks align with the CB's expectations?
  - Although grantees made progress with all activities, adhering to the time line suggested by CB for completing activities was challenging for many.
  - Data analysis required more time than planned.
  - Grantees started logic models and evaluation plans later than planned.
- How did grantees build teams to do the work required by the grant? How did these partnerships unfold?
  - The partnership structures that grantees used to implement and manage the work of the grant varied, but often consisted of leadership or planning teams and subcommittees organized around outcome areas.
  - Grantees varied with respect to their history of collaboration with partners, though most had experience in working with proposed partners before the planning process began.
  - Grantees identified governmental, community-based, philanthropic, and business partners to participate on their planning teams.
  - Partnerships unfolded with varied levels of leadership strength and consistency, buy-in and shared goals, responsiveness between partners, and engagement of the youth perspective.
  - The type of lead agency often influenced the staffing of planning teams, their level of access to data, and the types of service models proposed.

- How did grantees use data to learn about youth at risk of homelessness? What challenges did grantees encounter in using the data?
  - Grantees accessed a wide range of data sources to complete this activity. Data included administrative records, such as those related to youth homelessness; and alternative sources to augment information about services and needs, such as youth surveys, focus groups, pilot tests, and case record reviews.
  - Many grantees encountered challenges related to data access and quality.
  - The extent to which grantees made progress on the data analysis had an impact on their ability to move forward with other grant activities.
  - Grantees used findings to describe the target population, understand the target population, and engage partners on the planning team and larger community.

- What comprehensive service models did grantees develop under the planning grant? What were the components of the comprehensive service model? Were there different comprehensive service models for different target populations? How did grantees plan to evaluate their comprehensive service models?
  - Although all grantees had started to consider potential components at the time of the site visits, the extent to which they made progress toward defining a comprehensive service model varied. Five grantees had fully defined comprehensive service models by the time of their site visits.
  - Some grantees faced challenges that delayed their comprehensive service model's progress, and these challenges were chiefly in the areas of data access and planning team structure.
  - Although grantees' comprehensive service model plans varied in their operational details, they all included a similar set of components – in particular, independent living services and intensive case management.
  - Grantees varied in the progress they made toward plans for evaluation and the evaluation processes they considered using.
  - Although most grantees were still in the process of developing evaluation plans, nine of them were considering randomized control trials (RCTs). Three grantees were considering alternatives to RCTs.

Through exploring these questions, the report aims to we capture the grantees' experiences of the multi-phase initiative–including the benefits and challenges of this newer way to fund local work, and to identify lessons learned from this project that can inform future multi-phase initiatives.

I. INTRODUCTION

Youth and young adults with child welfare involvement face significant challenges in their transition to adulthood—challenges that increase their risk of becoming homeless. In fiscal year 2014, more than 22,000 youth "aged out" of foster care, meaning they reached the maximum age for being in foster care in their state or territory (U. S. DHHS 2015). These youth are at high risk for homelessness and unstable housing situations (Children's Bureau 2014; Dworsky et al. 2012). They are likely to have limited education and training, making it difficult to earn a living wage (Dworsky et al. 2012). Further, they are at risk of experiencing mental health issues, including trauma and substance abuse, which may put any housing situation they attain at risk (Courtney et al. 2007; Pecora et al. 2009; Keller et al. 2010; Zlotnick et al. 2012).

Designing services to support youth and young adults with housing, education, and mental health challenges as they transition to adulthood successfully is not easy. Evidence on "what works" for youth in foster care or young adults formerly in foster care is limited (Courtney et al. 2007). To expand this evidence base, the Children's Bureau (CB) developed a multi-phase grant initiative for designing comprehensive service models intended to prevent homelessness among youth and young adults with child welfare involvement.[1] The funding opportunity announcement (FOA) for the first phase of this initiative was called "Planning Grants to Develop a Model Intervention for Youth/Young Adults with Child Welfare Involvement At Risk of Homelessness" (YARH Phase I, or "YARH"). In September 2013, the start of the first phase, CB awarded 18 grantees 24-month planning grants, worth up to $360,000 per year. Grantees[2] were to focus on three populations: (1) adolescents who enter foster care between ages 14 and 17 (youth in care), (2) young adults aging out of foster care (young adults aging out of care), and (3) homeless youth/young adults with foster care histories up to 21 (youth/young adults formerly in care).[3] CB expected grantees to establish and work with a planning team, which includes representatives from key stakeholders in the community.

The focus of this report is a process study of Phase I. Process studies address research questions related to process and implementation using qualitative and quantitative methods. The term "process study" is sometimes used interchangeably with "implementation study." Process studies explore events that occurred, analyze the processes undertaken to achieve goals, and provide

[1] The CB grant program initially was designed as a two-phase process. Phase I focused on the identification of the target population, their needs, and developing the comprehensive service model. Phase II was designed to focus on implementing and evaluating the comprehensive service model. Phase I grantees worked under the assumption that a second FOA would be made in summer 2015. They expected Phase II to provide funds for implementing and rigorously evaluating the comprehensive service model designed in Phase I. The Phase II FOA was released on March 26, 2015. Six of the 18 Phase I grantees received Phase II funding. Phase II provides funding to continue to develop and implement the intervention, with a focus on formative evaluation. The Phase II FOA indicates that a Phase III competition may take place, requiring a summative evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the comprehensive service model. Phase III would be designed to add to the evidence on preventing homelessness among youth and young adults with histories of child welfare involvement.

[2] This report uses "grantees" to indicate the organization awarded the grant. Grantees may also be referred to as "lead agencies." Grantees developed "planning teams" that included members of their own and other organizations.

[3] CB and grantees frequently refer to the three target populations as "population 1," which is youth who entered foster care between 14 and 17; "population 2," which is young adults aging out of foster care; and "population 3," which is homeless youth/young adults with foster care histories up to 21. This report refers to the three populations as: youth in care, young adults aging out of care, and youth/young adults formerly in care.

contextual information in order to understand decisions made about implementation. While process studies can help inform the context in which outcomes or impacts occur, they are not intended to assess impacts or assign values to outcomes. Rather, process studies are descriptive studies intended to provide contextual data about challenges faced and decisions made in the course of planning and implementation.

The Phase I process study documents the activities and progress grantees made over the course of the planning period. It discusses how the grantees used the 24-month planning period and what they accomplished during that time. It is a descriptive study that does not identify "successful" grantees or determine whether the multi-phase funding structure is "correct." Its goals are to document what the grantees accomplished, what they learned, and how the planning grant can inform future phases of the multi-phase process or other multi-phase funding opportunities.

Planning grant goals

The goal of Phase I of the YARH grant program was for grantees to develop a comprehensive service model that identified both changes needed in the child welfare system and new or modified services or practices ("components") to prevent homelessness among youth and young adults with child welfare involvement. The comprehensive service model is the "intervention" being designed, which may include multiple services.[4] CB grounded Phase I of the grant program in the work of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). The USICH Framework to End Youth Homelessness served as a foundation for the development of grantee comprehensive service models.[5] Each grantee's comprehensive service model was expected to address outcomes in four areas identified in the USICH framework: (1) stable housing, (2) permanent connections to caring adults, (3) education and employment, and (4) social-emotional well-being.

Planning for evaluation

From the beginning, grantees were expected to consider how they could evaluate the comprehensive service model designed during the YARH planning grant in a future phase. The Phase I FOA discussed the importance of a rigorous evaluation and identified activities that would help prepare a grantee for an evaluation. Subsequent guidance from CB provided a more detailed list of activities to prepare for a rigorous evaluation. The Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation (OPRE) awarded a contract to Mathematica Policy Research, which ran parallel to the Phase I funding to support grantees evaluation planning. The contract funded two types of activities: (1) group technical assistance (TA) on evaluation topics and (2) a process study. The evaluation TA helped grantees identify and think about the development of the comprehensive service model and its evaluation plan simultaneously to ensure that the comprehensive service model could be evaluated and the findings would add to the evidence base. Mathematica delivered evaluation TA in

[4] This report uses "comprehensive service model" to represent the complete package of services being developed in a site. Grantees may have developed different comprehensive service models for different populations, but the report uses the singular term to represent the full set of comprehensive service models developed. The term "component" refers to parts s of the comprehensive service model such as programs, discrete interventions, or services.

[5] Information about the USICH and the resources developed, including the 2012 Opening Doors amendment that focuses on youth can be found at http://usich.gov/. The USICH framework for addressing youth homelessness can be found at http://usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/USICH_Youth_Framework__FINAL_02_13_131.pdf

a group format using webinars, conference calls, supporting memoranda and documents, and two in-person meetings. This report does not discuss the evaluation TA in detail.

Research questions that shaped the YARH Phase I process study

In this report on the process study, we explore the following research questions:

- When did grantees proceed through the various activities[6] that were part of Phase I of the grant program? How long did it take? How did their progress through the tasks align with the CB's expectations?
- How did grantees build teams to do the work required by the grant? How did these partnerships unfold?
- How did grantees use data to learn about youth at risk of homelessness? What challenges did grantees encounter in using the data?
- What comprehensive service models did grantees develop under the planning grant? What were the components of the comprehensive service model? Were there different comprehensive service models for different target populations? How did grantees plan to evaluate their comprehensive service models?

Through exploring these questions, the report aims to capture the grantees' experiences of the multi-phase initiative–including the benefits and challenges of this newer way to fund local work, and to identify lessons learned from this project that can inform future multi-phase initiatives.

Data that informed the process study

To answer these research questions, we used data from all 18 grantees, collected in a variety of ways. The data were collected throughout the first 18 months of the planning grant period, ending when a FOA for YARH Phase II was released.[7] Data are qualitative—including reviews of grant applications and semi-annual reports (SARs) that grantees submitted to CB, and notes from two-day site visits to the grantees. Table I.1 provides an overview of the timing of each data collection. Appendix A includes the grantee profile template that was used to systematically extract data from grant applications. Appendix B is the SAR template that grantees completed and submitted to CB. Appendix C contains the site visit protocol and template used to write-up site visits notes.

[6] The FOA identified six expected activities: (1) refine the target population and identification of youth most at-risk; (2) conduct an analysis and finalize the referral and selection process; (3) conduct a comprehensive readiness assessment; (4) develop and finalize the plan to adapt, modify, or create the sub-set of the service interventions identified from the needs assessment to meet the (a) needs of at-risk youth/young adults and (b) create an appropriate continuum of interventions (or comprehensive service model) to meet the goals of this project; (5) develop effective partnerships to provide the set of interventions necessary to meet the goal of this project; and, (6) prepare for evaluation of the intervention. CB provided a suggested time line with 12 activities, which included the expected activities as well as additional suggested activities (see Table II.4).

[7] The FOA effectively ended the interaction between the grantees and Mathematica in order to prevent the appearance of any advantage by receiving technical assistance from the evaluation contractor.

Table I.1. Data collection timing

	Oct 2013–Dec 2013	Jan 2014–Mar 2014	Apr 2014–Jun 2014	Jul 2014–Sep 2014	Oct 2014–Dec 2014	Jan 2015–Mar 2015	Apr 2015–Jun 2015	Jul 2015–Sep 2015
Grant applications and profiles	X							
Semi-annual reports			X		X		X	
Interviews with planning team members, conducted during site visits						X		

Note: The instruments for these data collection efforts are located in appendices to this report. Appendix A includes the grant application and profile template. Appendix B includes the semi-annual report template. The site visit materials, including protocols for interviews, are in Appendix C.

Qualitative data include administrative documents that the grantees submitted to CB and notes from interviews conducted during site visits to each grantee. Administrative documents include grant applications, grantee profiles, and SARs. These documents describe grantees' plans, goals, and outcomes.

Mathematica conducted interviews with grantees and partners during two-day site visits to each grantee between January and March 2015. These interviews gathered in-depth information about planning period activities, proposed target populations and comprehensive service models, and partnerships. Interviewees included members of the planning team, including the project director and project manager; members of the evaluation and data analysis teams and of subcommittees, if applicable; young adults on the planning team; and other partners in the community who might not be members of the core planning team or a subcommittee but were participants in the planning grant activities.[8] The interviews focused on topics such as the grant's various activities and the process of forging and sustaining partnerships; they were semi-structured so the conversation could be free flowing and focus on elements relevant to the interviewees.

In the chapters that follow, we describe the experiences of the grantees and make suggestions for future efforts. In the next chapter (Chapter II) we orient the reader to the grantees as a group by describing them and their progress at various times. We focus in Chapter III on how the grantees did what they did. We discuss the partnerships and the structure and functioning of the planning teams. We discuss in Chapter IV what the grantees learned about their three populations. We discuss the data that were used and the analyses that were conducted. In Chapter V, we focus on the services the grantees developed under the planning grant, discussing the comprehensive service models and highlighting similarities and differences across grantees. The final chapter (Chapter VI) includes suggestions for shaping future funding opportunities and TA to grantees.

[8] This report uses one set of terms ("planning team" and "subcommittees") to describe a range of structures implemented by grantees. The organizational structure is discussed in more detail in Chapter III.

OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN'S BUREAU DISCRETIONARY GRANT PROCESS

The Children's Bureau (CB) uses a competitive peer review process to award discretionary grants for research and demonstration projects to state, tribal and local agencies; faith- and community-based organizations; and other nonprofit and for-profit groups. A brief overview of the grant-making process is described below in order to provide additional context to the findings of the Phase I process study report.

ACF Program Offices signal their intent to publish a discretionary grant Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) by publishing a forecast. The forecast provides high-level information on the anticipated grant, including description, eligibility information, expected number of awards, funding period, and funding award levels. It also provides an estimate of when the FOA is expected to be published on grants.gov. Until a FOA is published on grants.gov, no further information is available to the public. On April 11, 2013, CB published a forecast signaling the intent to fund a set of grants focused on the intersection of child welfare and youth homelessness.

On June 7, 2013, CB published Planning Grants to Develop A Model Intervention for Youth/ Young Adults With Child Welfare Involvement At-Risk of Homelessness HHS-2013-ACF-ACYF-CA-0636 (Planning Grant FOA). Applications were due July 22, 2013, 45 days after the FOA was released. CB funded 18 projects for 24 months with up to $360,000 available per year.

There are several critical sections of the FOA that guided the applicant in submission and reviewers in scoring of the applications. Section I. Funding Opportunity Description provides background information relevant to the particular issue being addressed in the FOA. It also describes what is expected of grant projects. Section IV.2 The Project Description tells the applicant what to include in their application and how to submit an application. Section IV.2 includes both general information and detailed information specific to the CB FOA. Finally, evaluation criteria for reviewers are listed in Section V.1. Criteria. The information contained in the three sections align to create a comprehensive overview of expectations of applicants, the criteria that reviewers will use to evaluate applications, and the activities to be conducted by grantees during the project periods.

Once applications are received, CB screens the applications against qualification factors published in the FOA, selects qualified reviewers and panel chairpersons, and establishes panels to independently review and score the applications. Each application is judged on its own merits and is not compared with other applications. Review panels use the published evaluation criteria found in Section V.1. Criteria of the FOA to review and score applications. Successful applicants tend to focus on responding to these criteria. Although applications are scored against the evaluation criteria applicants should provide an overall picture of the work to be completed during the grant.

The Planning Grant FOA stated CB's intent to publish a second YARH FOA to fund a subset of the Phase I grantees to further implement and evaluate their proposed intervention (Phase II). The Planning Grant FOA also outlined the activities to be expected in Phase II of the grant in order to show how Phase I activities should align with Phase II. Until the Implementation FOA was released, the Planning Grant FOA was the best source of information about the work of Phase II and how the activities of Phases I and II were intended to align.

On September 5, 2014, CB published the forecast for the Implementation FOA (Phase II) and on November 11, 2014 this forecast was revised to reflect a shift in the Phase II work. Applicants were advised through the forecast that a shorter period would be funded. On March 26, 2015, CB released the Phase II FOA - Implementation Grants to Develop A Model Intervention for Youth/ Young Adults With Child Welfare Involvement At-Risk of Homelessness HHS-2015-ACF-ACYF-CA-0961. Applications were due 60 days later on May 26, 2015.

The Implementation FOA announced that Phase II would be funded for a 36 month project period with up to $670,000 available per year. The FOA also specified a series of activities to be conducted during the grant period. The Implementation FOA said that in Phase II, the target population would begin to experience the interventions, services, and supports developed during Phase I. Grantees in Phase II, through rapid cycle improvement processes, would test critical elements, such as key processes and data collection activities, and modify early-occurring components so that intervention processes would be improved and fine-turned. It was stated in the Implementation FOA that after the completion of the formative evaluation work in Phase II, a third phase would follow to support a summative evaluation (Phase III). The activities outlined in the Implementation FOA supported and continued the activities outlined in the Planning Grant FOA. Therefore, planning activities conducted by the Phase I grantees in year 2 of their projects may reflect their work in completing activities needed to support a strong application for the Implementation FOA (Phase II).

II. YARH GRANTEES: WHO, WHAT, AND WHEN

Research questions

- Who are the Phase I grantees?
- What did the Phase I grantees do?
  - When did grantees proceed through the various activities[9] that were part of Phase I of the grant program?
  - How long did it take?
  - How did their progress through the tasks align with the CB's suggestions?

Takeaways

- The 18 grantees varied substantially regarding location, establishment of partnerships, previous experience providing similar services to the target population, and readiness for data analysis.
- CB provided guidance about the activities of Phase I and a suggested time line for completing these activities.
- Although grantees made progress with all activities, adhering to the time line suggested by CB for completing activities was challenging for many.
- Data analysis required more time than planned.
- Grantees started logic models and evaluation plans later than planned.

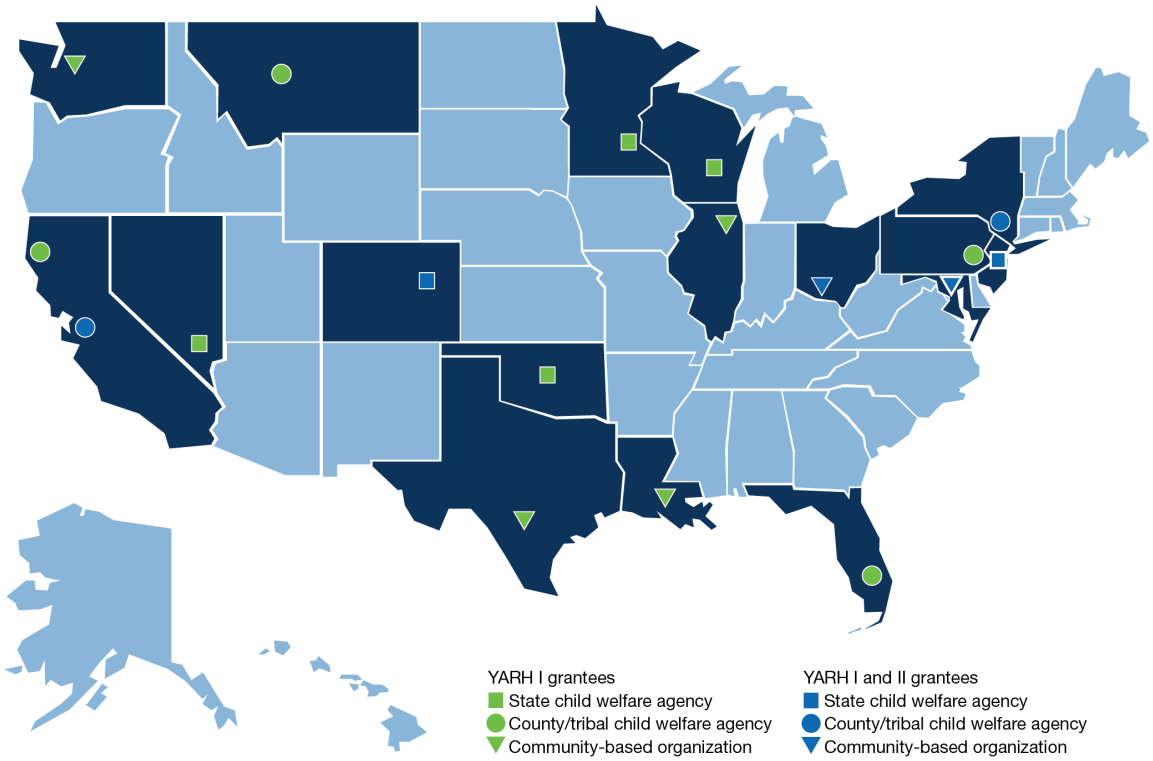
On September 30, 2013, CB awarded Planning Grants to Develop a Model Intervention for Youth/Young Adults with Child Welfare Involvement At-Risk of Homelessness to 18 grantees. Understanding what grantees accomplished requires knowing who they are, what they did, and when they started and completed planning grant activities. Five sources helped answer these questions about each grantee. First, the grantee applications described them at the time they started this 24-month journey. Grantees then submitted four SARs—in April 2014, October 2014, April 2015, and October 2015—to describe what they had done in the six months preceding the submission (September 2013–March 2014; April 2014–September 2014; October 2014–March 2015; and April 2015–September 2015). Finally, the interviews we conducted on our site visits (January 2015–March 2015) gave us information on what grantees had accomplished, when they planned to do the work, and what challenges they were facing in completing activities.

[9] The FOA identified six expected activities: (1) refine the target population and identification of youth most at-risk; (2) conduct an analysis and finalize the referral and selection process; (3) conduct a comprehensive readiness assessment; (4) develop and finalize the plan to adapt, modify, or create the sub-set of the service interventions identified from the needs assessment to meet the (a) needs of at-risk youth/young adults and (b) create an appropriate continuum of interventions to meet the goals of this project; (5) develop effective partnerships to provide the set of interventions necessary to meet the goal of this project; and, (6) prepare for evaluation of the intervention. CB provided a suggested time line with 12 activities, which included the expected activities as well as additional suggested activities (see Table II.4).

Who are the YARH grantees?

The 18 YARH grantees represent a diverse array of geographic areas and organizational structures. They are located in 17 states within the New England, Mid-Atlantic, East North Central, West North Central, South Atlantic, West South Central, Mountain, and Pacific regions of the United States (Figure II.1). They grantees are led by several different types of organizational entities, including state child welfare agencies (n = 5), county/tribal child welfare agencies (n = 7), and community-based organizations (n = 6).

Figure II.1. Location of YARH grantees



Each grantee named intended partners during the application process, varying with respect to number, type, and history of the partnership. The total number of intended partners ranged from 8 to 46 and averaged 19. The type of partners also varied from community-based organizations, to state government, to philanthropic and other business partners.

Although nearly all grantees had experience serving young adults aging out of care, only a small number had previously engaged with youth when planning services. Sixteen grantees had experience in working with youth and young adults transitioning out of foster care. Five grantees had previous experience in engaging youth in planning processes, such as by using a youth advisory committee.

What interventions did YARH grantees initially propose?

CB defined four key outcome areas that align with the USICH framework, including (1) stable housing, (2) permanent connections to caring adults, (3) social-emotional well-being, and (4) education/employment. Grantees' proposed interventions typically included services that addressed

more than one outcome area (Table II.1). Nearly all grantees cited housing, self-sufficiency resources, independent living services, and mental health services as currently available to the target populations within their communities. Although all 18 grantees proposed services in their grant applications, only 14 reported a history of providing any of the services proposed. Four grantees provided no detail on their experience in providing the proposed services.

Table II.1. Services initially proposed, by type of outcome

Proposed services	Number of grantees
Stable housing	**7**
Vouchers/income support	5
Database of housing opportunities	1
Screening/assessment for stable housing	1
Provision of in-home services	1
Permanent connections to caring adults	**8**
Mentoring	5
Permanency roundtables	2
Specialized training for foster parents	2
Social-emotional well-being	**10**
Trauma-informed care	7
Additional mental health/intensive services	4
Education/employment	**8**
Mentoring/youth employment program	5
Employer outreach	4
Independent living skills	2
Screening/assessment for education/employment	1

Source: Grantee profiles based on grant applications.

Notes: The total number of grantees with proposed components in an outcome area does not total to 18, as grantees could propose more than one component type per outcome area.

How prepared were grantees to conduct data analyses to understand the target populations?

Analyzing data on the three target populations (youth in care, young adults aging out of care, and youth/young adults formerly in care) was a foundation of the YARH grants and the first activity suggested in the CB time line. Administrative data,[10] case records, youth surveys, and focus group data can paint a rich picture of the target populations' histories and experiences.

At the time of application, grantees varied in their (1) experience with data, (2) access to and planned use of data, and (3) readiness to obtain new data. Understanding where grantees started with respect to these elements of data analysis is key to explaining what they accomplished during the planning period.

Experience with data

In their grant applications, grantees described their capacity for data analysis. The Phase I FOA required that applicants present data to demonstrate they had access to appropriate data and could utilize the data in a meaningful manner. Based on our analysis, only 3 of the 18 grantees

[10] Administrative data are collected in the process of providing services. In some cases, grantees will have access to these data for analyses without needing to establish a memorandum of understanding (MOU) (Wallgren and Wallgren, 2007).

demonstrated a strong readiness for the complex data analysis in their applications through (1) demonstrating familiarity with appropriate data sources and (2) discussing strategies to address issues with accessing or linking data (Table II.2). Eight grantees demonstrated familiarity with the data but did not offer suggestions for addressing potential issues with data access such as developing agreements to access external/partner data and resolving linkage issues or missing variables. Four grantees exhibited limited familiarity with the data and did not articulate strategies for addressing data issues. Three grantees did not discuss data sources or any data limitations in their applications.

Table II.2. Knowledge of data and limitations

Knowledge of data and limitations	Number of grantees
Established familiarity with data, limited issues	3
Established familiarity with data, some issues	8
Emergent familiarity with data, many issues	4
Does not discuss	3
TOTAL	**18**

Source: Grantee applications.

Note: All responses are out of a maximum of 18 grantees. The data sources grantees mentioned included the National Youth in Transition Database, Homeless Management Information System, Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System, and internal sources. "Limited issues" indicates that the grantee did not identify many issues with the data and/or made some suggestions about how to resolve potential issues with data or access to data. We used "some issues" when grantees either identified moderate concerns or a moderate number of issues with the data or data access, and did not propose suggestions for how to resolve potential issues with the data or data access. "Many issues" indicates that the grantee identified either serious concerns or a large number of issues with the data or access to the data, and did not identify potential issues or suggestions for how to resolve challenges with data or data access.

Access to and planned use of data

In the grant application, grantees also described the data they used or intended to use to learn about the target populations (Table II.3). Most grantees stated they already had access to administrative data on the three target populations. Five grantees provided strong plans for data analysis that would help them review the data, better understand the population, and develop definitions for youth "most at-risk" as well as an intervention strategy. Overall, administrative data—including child welfare and other systems—were the most prevalently cited data source, both for early and final data analyses. All grantees anticipated using administrative data for youth ages 13 – 17 in foster care and youth aging out of foster care to support their population analyses. All grantees expressed an interest in integrating administrative data over the course of the planning grants. Surveys were the second most common type of data source grantees intended to use, particularly for homeless young adults with previous child welfare involvement. At the time of the grant application, grantees had entered into agreements with internal and external evaluators to study the outcomes of their proposed interventions. Thirteen of the grantees hired an external evaluator and seven used an internal evaluator.

Table II.3. Grantee data sources: preliminary and intended access

Type of data	Number of grantees using as a source in grant application	Number of grantees intending to use data source in grant activities
Youth in care		
Administrative data	14	18
Case records	0	1
Survey	0	2
Focus group	0	1
Young adults aging out of care		
Administrative data	13	18
Case records	0	1
Survey	2	5
Focus group	0	1
Youth/young adults formerly in care		
Administrative data	13	16
Case records	1	1
Survey	12	8
Focus group	0	1

Source: Grantee profiles.

Note: All values are out of a maximum of 18 grantees.

Readiness to obtain new data

In their grant applications, grantees also reported on their ability to access data they planned to use to understand the target population. Four grantees had data use agreements (DUAs) or memoranda of understanding (MOUs) in place with other departments or organizations to access all desired data at the time of the grant application. Half of the grantees had these in place for some, but not all, of the desired data at the time of the grant application. The remaining five grantees had no MOUs or DUAs in place for this purpose at the time of the grant application.

CB guidance on planning grant activities

Twice during Phase I, CB provided grantees with guidance on planning activities to complete during the grant period. First, it provided a list of expected activities in the Phase I FOA that helped to shape the grantees' work:

1. Refine the target population and identify youth most at risk of homelessness
2. Conduct an analysis and finalize the referral and selection process
3. Conduct a comprehensive readiness assessment
4. Develop and finalize plans to adapt, modify, or create a sub-set of interventions
5. Develop effective partnerships to provide the intervention services necessary to meet the goals of this project
6. Prepare for evaluation of the intervention

Then, on February 11, 2014, CB provided a more detailed list of suggested key activities and time line to the grantees via email. To help grantees plan their work, this list expanded upon the six

activities described in the FOA and provided a time line describing when each activity should be completed. Table II.4 presents the detailed list of activities, which served as an organizing structure for the SARs submitted by grantees. Appendix B includes the form grantees completed for each SAR.

CB recognized that each grantee would be different in terms of access to data and capacity at the beginning of Phase I. It was expected that each grantee would take the suggested activities and time line under advisement but that it should not be considered official guidance on how activities must be completed.

Table II.4. CB-suggested YARH grantee time line

	O-D 13	J-M 14	A-J 14	J-S 14	O-D 14	J-M 15	A-J 15	J-S 15
Perform data analysis to define and refine the target population	■	■						
Identify youth most at-risk from data analysis		■	■					
Conduct needs assessment of the target youth		■	■					
Determine, align, and develop effective partnerships	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Assess services and gap analysis			■	■				
Develop and finalize the plan to adapt, modify, or create the sub-set of the service interventions identified from the needs assessment				■	■			
Review, refine, and develop screening/ assessments				■	■			
Develop a theory of change/ logic model				■	■			
Prepare the evaluation plan					■	■	■	
Conduct a comprehensive readiness assessment						■	■	
Conduct an analysis and determine the referral and selection process						■	■	
Test the referral and selection process; sustainability; dissemination								■

Source CB Email to YARH listserv, February 11, 2014.

■ Children's Bureau suggested timing of activity

Completing the work

CB identified particular activities in a time line it believed would increase the chances of grantees being successful in meeting the goals of the grant. Early activities in the time line focused on data and learning more about the youth and existing services. Following their analysis of data on the three target populations, CB anticipated that grantees would work on developing comprehensive service models, assessments, and screening tools. Once the comprehensive service model was set, CB expected grantees to be ready to plan a rigorous evaluation and pilot test elements of their comprehensive service model and/or process.

Even with a suggested time line and two years to do the work, accomplishing the full scope of activities under the grant was challenging. Based on the site visits, grantees frequently started activities as suggested but were not always able to complete them in the suggested time frame. Thirteen grantees started 90 percent of the activities within the time frame suggested by CB. However, early delays affected later progress. On average, grantees completed 40 percent of the activities on time.

The following series of tables describes grantees' experience with each set of activities during the planning period, as reported through the grantee SARs. Each table focuses on a set of activities and compares planned and actual work for each reporting period.

Data analysis

Grantees began work on data analysis activities in alignment with CB's time line; however, the work continued much longer than CB envisioned (Table II.5). At the time of the first SAR (April 2014), most grantees had MOUs in place or in progress, were working on obtaining administrative data, and had begun analyzing the data. Only two grantees had started analysis of integrated data–most commonly data from different programs merged at the individual level. During the site visits, grantees reported their difficulties in obtaining homelessness data, which they sought to integrate with child welfare data to perform more detailed population analyses. Pursuit of additional administrative data to create integrated data sets likely contributed to the delay in completing data analysis activities.

> *"It took–between IRBs and attorneys and different color pens (literally!) the better course of 9, 10, 11 months [to acquire data]. Since then things have quickened…we should be in very good shape for an integrated data set. We've run into a lot of concerns …and different rules about de-identified data even if we attach an anonymous identifier to it. So we are slowly but surely working through that … everyone wants to tell you why their data are the least able to be released."*

The second SARs (October 2014) revealed that all grantees had accessed data: 16 were analyzing administrative data and 17 were collecting additional data through youth focus groups or case record reviews. A notable difference emerged between the grantees plans for this period and CB's vision: grantees were still planning to conduct data analysis although CB thought that much of the data analysis would be complete by this time. Though 12 grantees planned to analyze integrated data during this period, only 2 reported working on that activity at that time.

Sixteen grantees continued analyzing administrative data through the period of the third SAR (April 2015), and 12 ultimately succeeded in analyzing integrated data. Grantees also continued collecting youth data through surveys and focus groups. Based on the data from site visits, many

grantees were holding focus groups to discuss gaps in services, analytic findings, and potential services with youth.

During the period of the final SAR (October 2015), many of the grantees continued to work to develop MOUs to gain access to additional data. More than half of the grantees continued to access administrative data and collect data on youth through surveys and focus groups. Grantees persisted with data analysis; 15 grantees analyzed administrative data and 7 analyzed integrated data during the final period of the grant. In Chapter IV, we discuss the grantees' data analysis activities in detail.

Table II.5. Data analysis to define and refine the target population

		O-D 13	J-M 14	A-J 14	J-S 14	O-D 14	J-M 15	A-J 15	J-S 15
CB proposed time line									
Memorandum of Understanding for data sharing in place									
SAR 1	Worked on		8						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*10*				
	Worked on				10				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*9*		
	Worked on						6		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*9*
	Worked on								5
Memorandum of Understanding for data sharing in progress									
SAR 1	Worked on		12						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*9*				
	Worked on				8				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*6*		
	Worked on						9		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*5*
	Worked on								5
Access administrative data									
SAR 1	Worked on		13						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*14*				
	Worked on				18				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*13*		
	Worked on						16		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*10*
	Worked on								13
Develop or modify definition of at-risk									
SAR 1	Worked on		6						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*14*				
	Worked on				9				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*16*		
	Worked on						12		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*8*
	Worked on								11
Conducted data collection									
SAR 1	Worked on		11						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*18*				
	Worked on				17				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*13*		
	Worked on						17		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*11*
	Worked on								8

		O-D 13	J-M 14	A-J 14	J-S 14	O-D 14	J-M 15	A-J 15	J-S 15
Analyzed administrative data									
SAR 1	Worked on		12						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*17*				
	Worked on				16				
SAR 3	*Planned for*					*15*			
	Worked on					16			
SAR 4	*Planned for*							*11*	
	Worked on							15	
Analyzed integrated data									
SAR 1	Worked on		2						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*12*				
	Worked on				12				
SAR 3	*Planned for*					*15*			
	Worked on					12			
SAR 4	*Planned for*							*10*	
	Worked on							7	

Source: Semi-annual reports.

Children's Bureau suggested timing of activity

Grantee planned for

Grantee worked on

Partnerships

CB expected building and maintaining partnerships to be an ongoing activity for the life of the grant (Table II.6). All grantees spent their first months (October 2013 to March 2014) identifying planning team members. Partnerships continued to be a focus during the remainder of the grant, with 14 grantees still engaged in the process of identifying partners during the period of the second SAR, 13 during the period of the third SAR, and 12 during the fourth SAR. Over the course of the planning period, the number of reported partners ranged from 0 to 67, and the average increased from 11 to 16 partners by March 2015. During the period of the final SAR, the average size of the planning teams contracted slightly—to an average of 10 members, with a maximum reported size of 43. In Chapter III, we present more information on grantee partnerships.

> *"Initially, we put an emphasis on getting the data matching in place, but if I had to do it over again, I would have … engaged the planning partners simultaneously."*

Table II.6. Determine, align, and develop effective partnerships

		O-D 13	J-M 14	A-J 14	J-S 14	O-D 14	J-M 15	A-J 15	J-S 15
CB proposed time line									
Identify Planning team members									
SAR 1	Worked on		18						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*13*				
	Worked on				14				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*13*		
	Worked on						13		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*8*
	Worked on								12
Number of planning team members (mean, min, max)									
SAR 1	Mean		11.27						
	Min–Max		2-24						
SAR 2	Mean				10.5				
	Min–Max				0-59				
SAR 3	Mean						16		
	Min–Max						0-67		
SAR 4	Mean								10
	Min–Max								0 – 43

Source: Semi-annual reports.

Children's Bureau suggested timing of activity
Grantee planned for
Grantee worked on

Services and gap analysis

The majority of grantees worked on examining current services and conducting a gap analysis of services available in the community during the expected range of time (Table II.7). For some grantees, this activity continued throughout the period of the grant. During the period of the fourth SAR, 10 grantees continued to examine existing services, and 7 conducted a gaps analysis of services in their target community. Thirteen grantees also performed a needs assessment, though the nature of this assessment varied depending on the grantee. For many, assessing services activities overlapped with data analysis activities instead of following them. Grantees often worked on these analyses even when they had not planned to do them in the previous period. In Chapter V, we provide more detail on how grantees completed these activities.

Table II.7. Assess services and gaps analysis

		O-D 13	J-M 14	A-J 14	J-S 14	O-D 14	J-M 15	A-J 15	J-S 15
CB proposed time line									
Examine current services									
SAR 1	Worked on		12						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*3*				
	Worked on				16				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*0*		
	Worked on						14		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*7*
	Worked on								10
Conduct gap analysis									
SAR 1	Worked on		7						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*5*				
	Worked on				13				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*2*		
	Worked on						9		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*6*
	Worked on								7

Source: Semi-annual reports.

Children's Bureau suggested timing of activity
Grantee planned for
Grantee worked on

Selecting service interventions

> *"The biggest challenge facing the planning team is deciding on the intervention. We've been waiting a long time for [the data]. We have been in a holding pattern, doing other things, and waiting for that."*

Throughout the planning period, more grantees worked on identifying evidence-based interventions than identifying services to evaluate during the time range expected by CB (Table II.8). Grantees that planned to identify evidence-based interventions during the previous reporting period worked on doing so. Many grantees that planned to identify services to evaluate during the expected time frame did not do so until late in the grant period. Through the site visits, some grantees reported that it took them longer than they thought it would to identify evidence-based interventions, and this delayed their selection services to evaluate. In Chapter V, we describe grantees' selection of service interventions at more length.

Table II.8. Develop and finalize the plan to adapt, modify, or create the subset of the service interventions identified from the needs assessment

		O-D 13	J-M 14	A-J 14	J-S 14	O-D 14	J-M 15	A-J 15	J-S 15
CB proposed time line									
Identify evidence-based interventions									
SAR 1	Worked on		11						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*16*				
	Worked on				16				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*16*		
	Worked on						16		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*9*
	Worked on								10
Identify services to evaluate									
SAR 1	Worked on		7						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*5*				
	Worked on				13				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*2*		
	Worked on						9		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*13*
	Worked on								13

Source: Semi-annual reports.

Children's Bureau suggested timing of activity
Grantee planned for
Grantee worked on

Screening and assessment tools

As the planning grant proceeded, grantees increasingly worked on identifying screening or assessment tools (Table II.9). They worked on assessments even when they had not planned to do so in the previous reporting period. For most grantees, work on screening tools and assessments continued through the final period of the grant.

Table II.9. Review, refine, and develop screening/assessments

		O-D 13	J-M 14	A-J 14	J-S 14	O-D 14	J-M 15	A-J 15	J-S 15
CB proposed time line									
Identify screening/assessment tools									
SAR 1	Worked on		7						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*3*				
	Worked on				13				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*3*		
	Worked on						14		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*12*
	Worked on								11

Source: Semi-annual reports.

Children's Bureau suggested timing of activity

Grantee planned for

Grantee worked on

Theory of change and logic model

In both the second and third SAR reporting periods, more grantees planned to work on their theories of change for partnership and service delivery and logic model than ultimately did so (Table II.10). Ultimately, many grantees worked on theories of change and logic models during the final year of the grant, which may reflect the requirements of the second FOA.

Table II.10. Theory of change and logic model

		O-D 13	J-M 14	A-J 14	J-S 14	O-D 14	J-M 15	A-J 15	J-S 15
CB proposed time line									
Theory of change for partnership									
SAR 1	Worked on		1						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*9*				
	Worked on				2				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*12*		
	Worked on						7		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*10*
	Worked on								10
Theory of change for service delivery									
SAR 1	Worked on		4						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*13*				
	Worked on				3				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*13*		
	Worked on						9		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*12*
	Worked on								11
Logic model									
SAR 1	Worked on		0						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*9*				
	Worked on				4				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*13*		
	Worked on						9		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*14*
	Worked on								14

Source: Semi-annual reports.

Children's Bureau suggested timing of activity
Grantee planned for
Grantee worked on

Evaluation plan

Grantees did not start working on their evaluation plans until late in the grant period (Table II.11). Although grantees expected to work on their evaluation design during the later phases of the planning period, few reported doing so until the final SAR. Twelve grantees worked on developing the evaluation plan during the fourth period of the SAR.

Table II.11. Develop the evaluation plan

.		O-D 13	J-M 14	A-J 14	J-S 14	O-D 14	J-M 15	A-J 15	J-S 15
CB proposed time line									
Developed evaluation plan									
SAR 1	Worked on		4						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*9*				
	Worked on				5				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*13*		
	Worked on						6		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*14*
	Worked on								12

Source: Semi-annual reports.

Children's Bureau suggested timing of activity
Grantee planned for
Grantee worked on

Preparation for evaluation

The final phase of CB focal activities included the planning and pilot testing aspects of the evaluation. These activities included developing a process to identify target youth, gaining partners' support for the evaluation plan, selecting outcomes of interest to evaluate, determining the sample size needed for evaluation, developing recruiting strategies, drafting consent and assent forms, and submitting institutional review board (IRB) applications. More and more grantees worked on these activities at the time of the third SAR. Many were able to make progress through these activities by the conclusion of the grant period (Table II.12). In Chapter V, we describe grantees' work on developing evaluation plans.

Table II.12. Prepare for development of the evaluation plan

		O-D 13	J-M 14	A-J 14	J-S 14	O-D 14	J-M 15	A-J 15	J-S 15
CB proposed time line									
Identify comparison services									
SAR 1	Worked on		2						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*8*				
	Worked on				4				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*10*		
	Worked on						10		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*11*
	Worked on								9
Process of identifying youth									
SAR 1	Worked on		7						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*10*				
	Worked on				9				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*15*		

		O-D 13	J-M 14	A-J 14	J-S 14	O-D 14	J-M 15	A-J 15	J-S 15
	Worked on						13		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*12*
	Worked on								14
Establish partner support									
SAR 1	Worked on		4						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*8*				
	Worked on				7				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*11*		
	Worked on						9		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*12*
	Worked on								14
Identify outcomes									
SAR 1	Worked on		6						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*7*				
	Worked on				6				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*11*		
	Worked on						10		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*9*
	Worked on								16
Determine sample size									
SAR 1	Worked on		4						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*5*				
	Worked on				4				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*10*		
	Worked on					!	8		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*10*
	Worked on								11
Develop recruitment plan									
SAR 1	Worked on		5						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				5				
	Worked on				7				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*11*		
	Worked on						10		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*11*
	Worked on								12
Develop consent and assent process									
SAR 1	Worked on		6						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*5*				
	Worked on				4				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*9*		
	Worked on						8		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*9*
	Worked on								13
Prepare Institutional Review Board application									
SAR 1	Worked on		7						
SAR 2	*Planned for*				*5*				
	Worked on				7				
SAR 3	*Planned for*						*10*		
	Worked on						7		
SAR 4	*Planned for*								*7*
	Worked on								11

Source: Semi-annual reports.

Children's Bureau suggested timing of activity

Grantee planned for

Grantee worked on

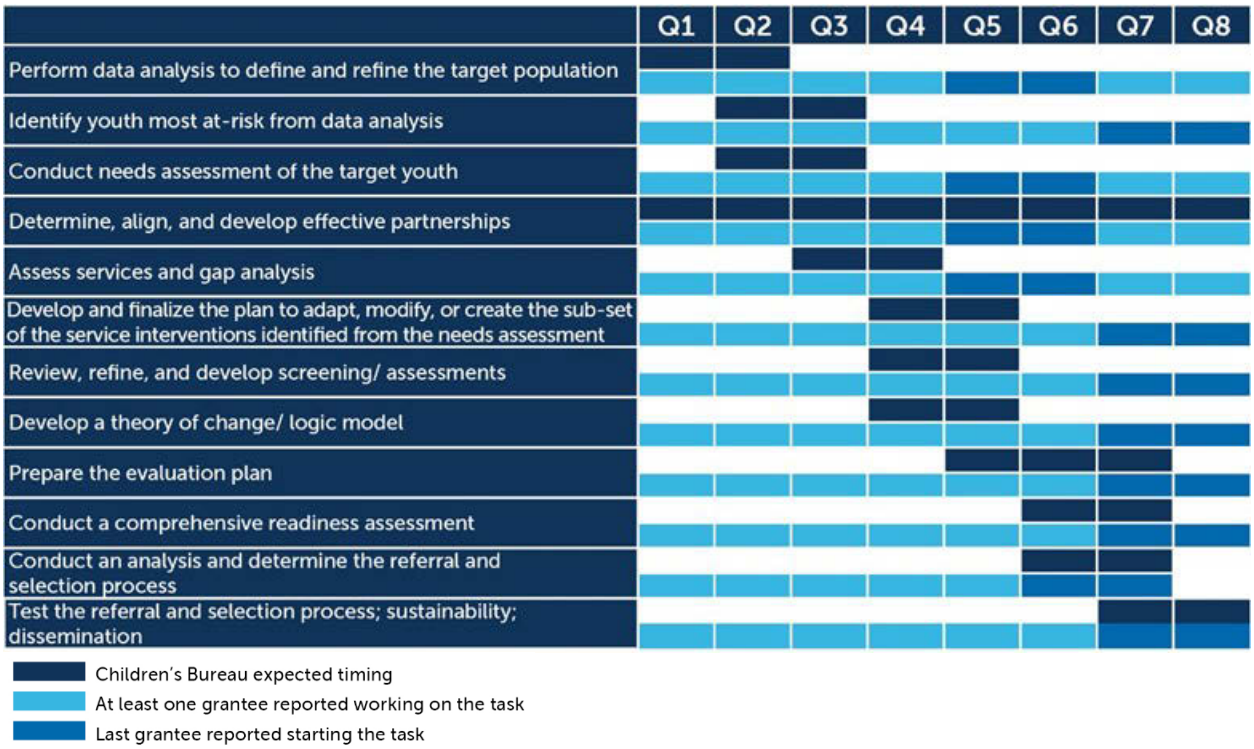
Conclusion

In this chapter, we described the grantees, their experiences in completing the focal activities of the grant, and how their progress aligned with CB's expectations for the time line of activities during the planning period. Grantees were diverse in their geography, experience, partnerships, and access to and readiness for data analysis at the start of the planning period.

CB provided guidance for grantee activities that suggested a linear progression of activities from data analysis, to selecting services to evaluate, and then to development of an evaluation plan. Grantees faced early delays in data analysis activities which affected their completion of later activities, including the development of an evaluation plan.

Many activities overlapped as a result of delays, and the timing of activities varied for different grantees, as did the timing for the start of their activities. In Table II.13, we show the time when the first grantees and last grantees started each activity. For example, the first grantees reported that they performed data analyses to define and refine the target population in the first six months of the grant (October 2013 to March 2014). The 18th grantee indicated that it began that same task between October 2014 and March 2015, a full year later. During the final period of the grant, grantees were still working on tasks they were expected to conclude early in the planning period. Also shown in Table II.13 is the last quarter during which a grantee reported working on a specific task. For example, at least one grantee was performing data analyses to define and refine the target population between June and September of 2015. While the guidance provided by CB suggested a linear sequence of planning activities, the time line that different grantees needed to conduct each activity varied widely.

Table II.13. Expected and suggested activities of Phase I



Source: CB email to YARH listserv, February 11, 2015 and semi-annual reports.

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III. FORGING PARTNERSHIPS

Research questions

- How did grantees build teams to do the work required by the grant?
- How did these partnerships unfold?

Takeaways

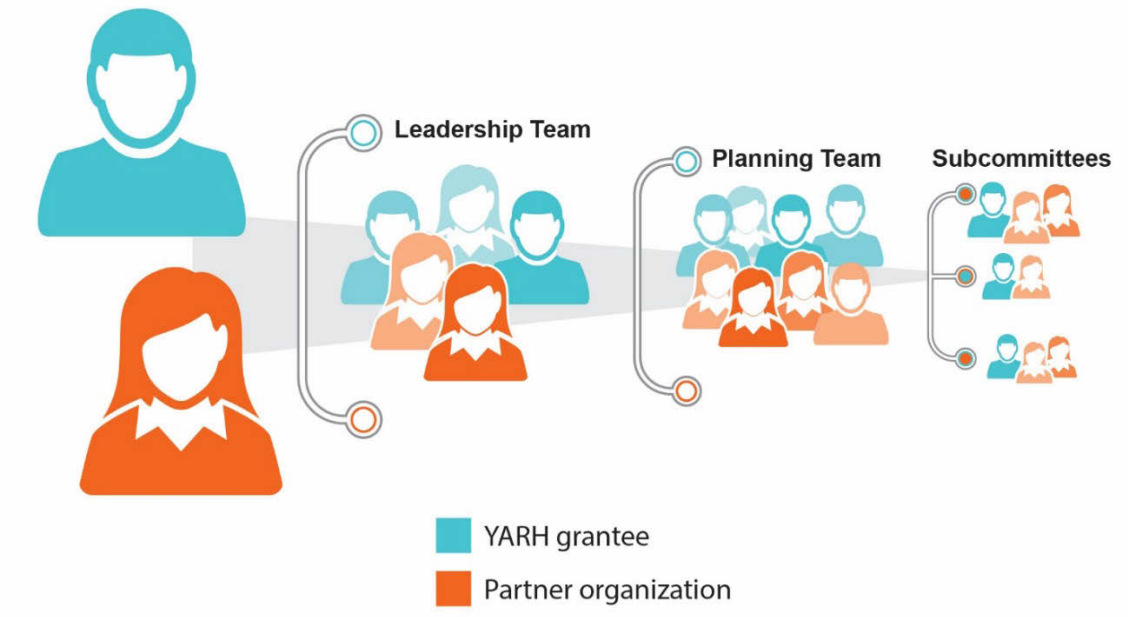
- The partnership structures that grantees used to implement and manage the work of the grant varied, but often consisted of leadership or planning teams and subcommittees organized around outcome areas.
- Grantees varied with respect to their history of collaboration with partners, though most had experience in working with proposed partners before the planning process began.
- Grantees identified governmental, community-based, philanthropic, and business partners to participate on their planning teams.
- Partnerships unfolded with varied levels of leadership strength and consistency, buy-in and shared goals, responsiveness between partners, and engagement of the youth perspective.
- The type of lead agency often influenced the staffing of planning teams, their level of access to data, and the types of service models proposed.

In this chapter, we describe how YARH grantees organized themselves and their partners to complete the work required under the grant. We present the structures and roles grantees developed to manage the work and describe grantees' history of collaboration with partner agencies and the types of agencies that filled these roles. We then discuss how grantees established their partnerships and how the type of agency leading the planning process may have influenced completion of grant activities. Much of this chapter draws on information collected from site visits conducted between January and March 2015.

Building blocks: Partnership structures

YARH grantees developed systems to organize the work of partners under the grant; these often consisted of leadership and planning teams, as well as subcommittees (Figure III.1). Throughout this chapter, we collectively refer to them as "teams." Figure III.2 illustrates the various structures grantees used to implement and manage the work of the grant.

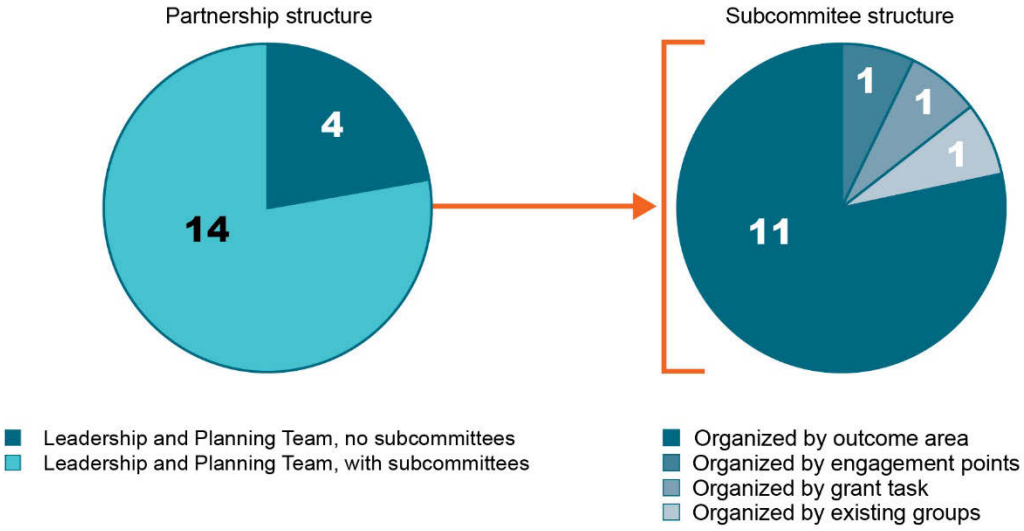
Figure III.1. Typical grantee and partner organization structure



Source: Site visits.

All grantees developed a leadership team that included leaders within their own organizations and individuals from partner organizations. Leadership teams consisted of "thought leaders," or people with years of experience working directly with or managing the services provided to the target populations of interest. Sometimes, grantees referred to their leadership teams as "steering" or "advisory" committees. Leadership teams provided guidance or structure to planning teams; they often consisted of the project manager, project director, and key advisors. Key advisors included internal leadership from the grantee agency—often those in roles more senior than the project manager or project director—and leaders in other agencies. The advisory aspect distinguishes a leadership team from a planning team.

Figure III.2. Partnership structures that grantees used for the planning grant



Source: Site visits.

All grantees also convened a planning team that complemented the leadership team. Whereas leadership teams generally "directed" the work, planning teams "drove" the work. Planning teams were generally responsible for ensuring that the work required to achieve the activities described by CB was completed in a timely way, whether done by themselves, subcommittees, collaborators, or a combination of entities. Project managers and project directors often staffed both leadership and planning teams, and took an active role in each.

Fourteen of the 18 planning teams organized themselves further into subcommittees. Subcommittees varied in their functions and organization. Within some teams, subcommittees took on great responsibility and did most of the day-to-day work, whereas others were tasked with activities that occurred less frequently, such as gathering information and input from the larger community and then providing community feedback to the leadership team. Some grantees also referred to subcommittees as "work groups." We use the term "subcommittees" throughout this report.

Of the 14 grantees that used subcommittees, 11 organized themselves by the four outcome areas: housing, education/employment, permanent connections, and social-emotional well-being. Of these, two grantees developed this structure early on, but their subcommittees disbanded before they could play an active role in decision making; this was due to turnover within the subcommittees and communication issues between the planning team and subcommittees.

Three grantees used subcommittees but did not organize them by outcome area. One grantee relied on existing subcommittees within the lead agency, whereas another created subcommittees specific to each grant activity that CB had defined. A third structured subcommittees by the three populations: youth in care, young adults aging out of care, and youth/young adults formerly in care. Leadership within this grantee felt strongly that the success in their work had been driven by dividing the three subcommittees in this way. To them, this subcommittee structure provided each group with a clear area of focus, and the subcommittees were considered an integral part of driving the work forward.

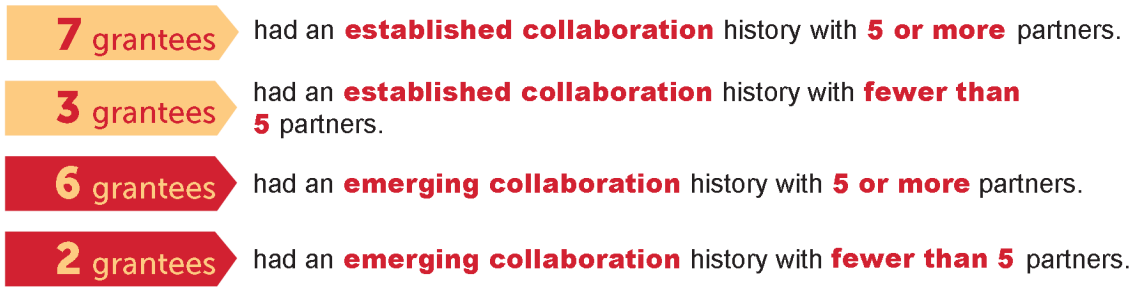
Four grantees did not organize their planning team into subcommittees. Two of these grantees relied on their planning and leadership teams to solicit community input. One of these hosted regular community meetings to invite a wide a spectrum of partners and stakeholders to discuss issues and provide input to the leadership committee. Another grantee organized large community meetings on a less frequent basis to collect community feedback, a process they felt was more manageable than convening regular subcommittees given the size of their planning team. The third grantee had an entirely "self-contained" planning team. The agency had integrated its offices a few years before in an effort to facilitate communication between staff, and the planning team consisted of employees across divisions within this lead agency. Planning team members noted that, although this may have slowed the planning process, they appreciated that all voices were heard and respected.

Collaboration: History of and with whom

Not all YARH grantees brought experience with collaborative planning to this grant. Ten grantees described an "established" collaboration history with their proposed partners (Figure III.3). These grantees had a great deal of experience in working with or convening the proposed partners before the beginning of the planning process. Eight grantees had an "emerging" collaboration

history before the grant. They had little experience in working with or convening the partners before the start of the planning process. The number of proposed partners varied across grantees with both established and emerging partnership histories. In all, 13 grantees proposed five or more partners in their grants, whereas 5 grantees proposed fewer than five partners.

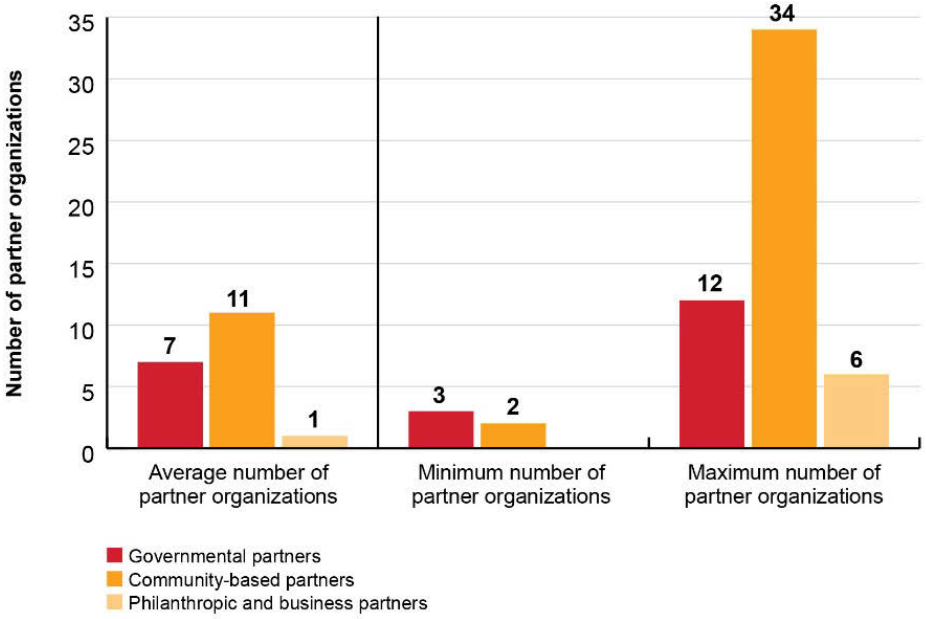
Figure III.3. History of collaboration



Source: Grantee profiles based on grant applications.

A number of governmental, community-based, philanthropic, and business partners ultimately participated on teams. Figure III.4 illustrates the number and types of partners represented on these teams across grantees. Community-based, non-governmental partners were most common on the teams, followed by governmental partner organizations, typically from state, county, tribal, or local governments. Some teams included philanthropic and business partners on some, but not all, teams. On average, grantees worked with 7 governmental partners, 11 community-based partners, and one philanthropic partner, for an average of 19 partners.

Figure III.4. Number and types of partner organizations proposed in grant application, across grantees



Source: Grantee profiles based on grant applications.

The YARH grant supported a large collaborative effort among a group of governmental and community-based agencies. In some cases, the collaborations preceded the planning grant and YARH resources bolstered ongoing efforts. The 13 grantees with "established" collaboration histories had partners who were part of collaborations or partnerships before YARH. One grantee had existing partnerships through a 10-year contract; this grantee engaged 40 partners across the four outcome areas targeted by YARH. Eight grantees built their planning grant around an existing network of service providers, with whom they already were collaborating. Another grantee engaged 70 to 90 partners across government agencies and within the private sector for its grant. One planning team member said that the project director and project manager conducted "great outreach" throughout their networks to identify everyone needing to be at the table.

> *One grantee described its planning team as "the largest group of stakeholders brought together for any project that's happened within [the state]."*

New opportunities for partnerships

Six grantees reported that YARH resulted in new collaborations. At least one grantee began a new collaboration by contracting with a research team that housed the homelessness point-in-time count data they had not accessed previously. For at least five grantees, the planning process produced new partnerships and collaborative relationships, such as with faith-based groups; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (LGBTQ) groups; and local or state administrative agencies.

Nine grantees said they found YARH essential in helping them expand, mobilize, or complement existing efforts to learn from peers in the field. During the site visit, most interviewees felt they knew, or at least knew of, all of the partners at the table. Some also noted that although they were known to one another, they had worked together in the past only infrequently. Similarly, a member of the planning team of one grantee commented that she knew many of the people involved on the various committees but had previously not interacted with them on a day-to-day basis–particularly homeless youth providers. She found that it brought value to her work to see the on-the-ground perspective and experience from providers working with youth populations unfamiliar to her.

How partnerships unfolded

Partnerships unfolded with varied levels of leadership strength and consistency, staff turnover, shared goals and buy-in, and responsiveness of the planning team to partner contributions.

Leadership strength and consistency

Teams typically had consistent and well-defined leadership. Interviewees across 14 grantee teams were clear on who was leading and driving the planning process. Multiple interviewees at one grantee consistently described the project lead as the organized "hub" of the planning process. For this grantee, one planning team member referred to the grantee's leadership as a "stability factor" without which, the YARH grant would have been "punted around the [grantee organization]."

> *"There was something special about having [the grantee] as a hub [of the planning process]… they help us, so it's obvious we'd reciprocate."*

However, the planning processes of four grantees were somewhat hampered by inconsistency and unpredictable changes in the leadership and planning teams. For example, one grantee hired external, professional consultants to manage the leadership

team and moderate planning team discussions. The first consultant hired was thought to be ineffective and their lapse in proper group facilitation was seen as a primary reason for poor communication between the leadership and planning teams. The grantee hired a second consultant roughly halfway through the planning process; the functionality of the leadership team greatly increased as a result. Another grantee described an unprecedented number of retirements at high levels in the organization, which led to a loss of institutional knowledge. Interviewees within this grantee spoke of the leadership changes as resulting in a lack of continuity regarding the grant.

Staff turnover

Staff turnover more broadly had the potential to influence partnerships as well. One grantee found that staff changes occurred regularly throughout the planning period to accommodate financial and staffing constraints and match staff skills and interests to grant activities. As a result, participation on subcommittees varied and caused frequent lapses between meetings or communication efforts. Another grantee experienced multiple directorship changes at the state child welfare agency during the planning period, but they made intentional efforts to orient new staff to the project to maintain their partnerships. A third grantee described consistency within their leadership team as a challenge. Despite attending nearly every team meeting, another member of the leadership team did not know who else was on the team.

Major staff changes among project leadership at one grantee led an interviewee to describe the planning process as "feeling orphaned."

Shared goals and buy-in

In 13 grantees, most partners shared the goals and vision of the leadership team and considered themselves integral members of the planning team. A subcommittee member for one grantee stated he felt the team was "on the same page in the same book and even the same paragraph sometimes" and that the "right people" were at the table.

One grantee described as especially open to feedback, commented how none of its partners "came and said, my model is what we need."

Elsewhere, planning team members felt disconnected from the planning process. In addition to the impact on turnover resulting from poor facilitation by a grantee contractor, this problem also contributed to communication difficulties between leadership and planning teams. Although the grant felt important to participants, the leadership team's weak facilitation of the planning team inhibited partnership development. The grantee made some staffing changes to enhance the connection between teams and, at the time of the site visit, planned to infuse project-related communications with positive language to reinvigorate the planning team experience. Another grantee that had organized its planning team into four subcommittees described different visions for the grant among the subcommittees which made it difficult to complete activities. These subcommittees had been organized by CB-suggested grant activities; interviewees commented that this structure helped partners to remain productive but may have contributed to communication challenges given the different focal points for each activity.

At least two grantees had difficulty in engaging partners and obtaining buy-in from the start. One grantee found that partners were not at all engaged; as a result, subcommittees were fractured and disorganized. Partner reluctance stemmed from competing demands for time, as well as internal agency strife and the political climate. Another grantee stated that its staff were already stretched too thinly to participate fully and engage partners, due to limited financial and time resources. At the time of the interview, the grantee was facing major staffing, space, and service program shortages.

> *"When we had these [planning team] discussions, at least internally at [child welfare agency], there was readiness and acceptance that something needed to change … I was always a staunch believer of keeping kids in care, and then by looking at data, I shifted my way of thinking. Maybe we don't necessarily need to keep kids in care, maybe we do need to hold them accountable. This would be a big philosophical shift for [state]."*

Responsiveness between leadership and planning teams

Grantees varied in the responsiveness of their leadership team to feedback from planning team partners. Six grantees stood out regarding how well team members felt they solicited and responded to suggestions from other members of the team. Planning team members described one child welfare agency as especially open to feedback, critique, and questioning of child welfare policies. Planning team members described this grantee as open to discussion and felt the planning team had a shared vision despite the variety of members' experiences.

For at least one grantee, partners perceived project leadership as less willing to accept feedback and implement changes. This grantee had both "internal" and "external"[11] partners on the planning team. Some external partners felt the larger planning and leadership teams did not take their opinions seriously and that they were not well integrated into the planning process. Interviewees noted that sporadic scheduling and lengthy gaps between meetings may have inhibited communication efforts between the project leadership and partners.

Possible connections between grantee structure and completion of CB-identified activities

The type of agency leading the planning process may have influenced the staffing of planning teams, their level of access to data, and the types of service models that grantees proposed. We describe specific examples of this below.

Grant leadership: states, counties, non-profits, and child welfare agencies

The organization receiving the grant differed across grantees: 5 grantees were led by state agencies, 7 by county/tribal agencies, and 6 by non-profit organizations. Child welfare agencies typically filled leadership roles or were committed partners throughout the planning period. In 14 grantees, child welfare agencies actively engaged in the planning process and played a significant role on the leadership teams. For 11 of these grantees, the child welfare agency played a lead role in implementing the grant activities. For the other 3 grantees, the child welfare agency was not the lead agency, but was fully integrated and committed to the planning process.

[11]"External" partners here refers to individuals on the planning team who were not members of the organization that received the grant, whereas "internal" refers to individuals on the team who were members of the organization, but worked in a different division or unit.

For four grantees, all of which were non-profit organizations, the child welfare agency was present but difficult to engage fully, which these grantees saw as detrimental to the success of the planning process. One state child welfare agency, a partner of a non-profit led grantee, was reluctant to participate in planning activities due to concerns about funding. One interviewee noted that the child welfare agency's contributions would have been especially useful in terms of developing comprehensive service models or bringing youth to the table. Some staff felt that had the child welfare agency led the effort, a broader range of services might have been considered for implementation, whereas others thought that its leadership could have resulted in a less inclusive team. Another non-profit grantee had difficulty in getting the attention of the right decision makers at the local child welfare agency to secure permission to access data, which caused delays in the planning process.

Staffing of teams and hiring-related challenges

Three grantees experienced hiring-related challenges as a result of the type of organization leading the grant. Each solved the issue in different ways. One state-level grantee identified the request for proposal (RFP) process as its primary challenge during the grant period. The project manager stated that contracting at the state level was a difficult and lengthy process; it took this grantee longer than expected to hire both an evaluation contractor and planning contractor. One grantee described challenges in hiring a project manager for the grant. As a state agency, it could not initiate the hiring process until receiving confirmation that it had been awarded the grant, so the grantee felt it was behind from the start. The agency indicated that it would have preferred to be notified about receiving the grant before the actual "start," given the importance of the first few months of the planning process. The grantee anticipated this type of challenge and decided to hire a new staff person anyway, running the risk that it might not actually be awarded the grant. A third grantee reported that it took several months to hire a project coordinator, and staff on the project did not have the time they thought they would have to get the project off the ground once it started.

Access to data

The ability of planning teams to access data varied by grantee, and this issue influenced the efforts of the planning team to move forward with other aspects of its planning work. Whereas some grantees were able to build on alternative efforts to integrate data, others struggled with accessing data that could help move planning work forward.

At the beginning of YARH, grantees had varied access to data, perhaps because of the type of organization leading the grant. One state-level grantee had immediate access to a longitudinal, comprehensive statewide data set that helped it understand indicators of need and services that the target populations received. In contrast, one grantee led by a child welfare agency had information on child placements but not on the services youth received while in care. This grantee collected data from outside service providers and hired an external firm to combine and analyze the datasets, a process that proved informative but delayed its progression through the activities. A nonprofit reported challenges in accessing data despite buy-in from its partners, who wanted to share their data. The grantee navigated this challenge by working closely with an evaluator with expertise in what the data (had they had access) likely would have told them. The evaluator also pointed the grantee toward published reports and secondary data sources that could help the grantee define its target population in the absence of access to primary sources.

Types of comprehensive service model developed

Grantees with defined comprehensive service models in place ultimately identified similar but not identical components.

For grantees having a child welfare agency as the lead, comprehensive service models were likely to include intensive case management, services to strengthen permanent connections, independent living services, and education services. In addition, these grantees were likely to propose adjustments to their process of providing services (for example, service provider turnover reduction, planning services for young adults aging out of care) as part of their comprehensive service models. One grantee thought process-related policy changes in the child welfare area were more feasible for grantees with the child welfare agency as the lead.

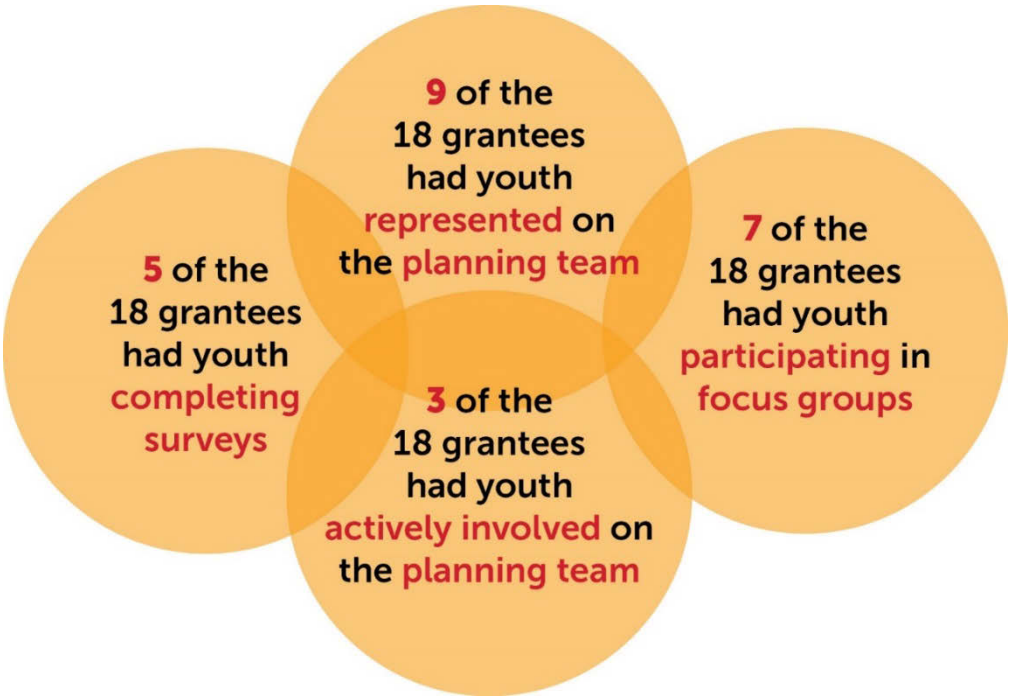
> *A child welfare agency described one grantee's ability to build partnerships as a strength: "But when we started, they asked who should be involved, but they've added more [partners] that we didn't even think of. It's amazing to me, but we pull groups together all the time and not everyone always shows up. But they have gotten the participation, and they've gotten it in ways we haven't been able to. Maybe because they can go out and be very personal about it, and their background working with homeless youth. I'm not sure they're all new, but it's more participation than we've seen."*

For grantees not led exclusively by a child welfare agency, planned comprehensive service models were also likely to include intensive case management, permanent connections, independent living services, and educational services. In addition, these grantees were likely to include housing and comprehensive services (for example, health services, wrap-around services, or other individualized service arrays) as their proposed intervention. Two grantees thought that providing new components was more feasible for community–based organizations. One interviewee within a community-based organization thought it would be easier for her organization to implement the comprehensive service model, as opposed to the child welfare agency in her community, given her organization's strong relationships with service providers.

Incorporating youth perspectives in planning

The method and level of youth engagement varied across grantees. Figure III.5 below illustrates the ways in which grantees incorporated youth into the planning process.

Figure III.5. Youth engagement strategies, by grantee



Source: Site visits.
Note: Grantees could engage youth in more than one way, so the total number of grantees is greater than 18.

For nine grantees, youth were represented on the planning team in some capacity. Youth in three of these nine had a particularly strong voice at the table. For one grantee, youth leaders with experience in the foster care system attended leadership team meetings and chaired subcommittees on topics such as housing, education, and youth leadership. The same grantee also shared key instruments and measures with youth and adjusted its assessment tool based on the youth's feedback. Another grantee included a youth/adolescent specialist on its planning team. This person was tasked with bringing youth perspectives to the leadership team as well as preparing youth to participate in leadership meetings directly to share their perspective.

Five grantees used surveys to collect structured information from youth, such as their contact information, their current experiences in care, and the types of services being received. Seven grantees asked youth for input through less formal focus groups, though youth were not members of the planning teams. One grantee had assessment clinicians conduct focus groups with youth each month, a process that offered another, less formal opportunity for them to share their perspectives on the gaps and barriers in their services in a safe and comfortable environment.

Four grantees sometimes piloted their engagement strategies and comprehensive service models with youth to understand how to facilitate a more successful comprehensive service model if the grantee was selected for Phase II. One of these strategies included the use of peer advocacy and peer-to-peer navigators. One grantee partner, a part-time peer advocate, called youth and asked them about the services they received—the youth's current pursuit of services, their length, and their perceived usefulness and goals—and how they would change them. Some grantees asked youth to pilot assessment tools, with the goal of understanding whether items were worded appropriately and whether youth regarded particular items as difficult to answer or overly sensitive. Other grantees

developed social programming to provide another outlet to learn about youth needs. One grantee hosted youth events twice a month. The grantee described these opportunities as a valuable opportunity to learn about youth needs in a comfortable, relaxing space in a way that a formal needs assessment or focus group might not capture.

Teams perceived youth involvement in different ways. Six grantees involved youth only marginally and interviewees perceived their input as mainly tokenized and limited. One grantee recruited youth from a single school and had only a handful of meetings with them to hear their ideas. These meetings took place late in the life of the grant planning period, and it was not clear how (or if) this grantee incorporated the youth ideas. In contrast, interviews with at least three grantees suggest that they saw youth representatives as the "voice of reason," sharing thoughtful and insightful feedback with the group on the value of the services they received and opportunities for improvement. Youth and staff felt that youth representatives played a key role in holding the leadership team and planning team members accountable and focused on a shared mission.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we described how YARH grantees organized themselves to accomplish the activities of the planning grant. YARH resources prompted grantees to develop organizational structures, often consisting of leadership and planning teams, as well as subcommittees. Teams included staff from governmental, community-based, and philanthropic and business partners, most of whom had experience in working with the grantee before the start of the planning process. Partnerships unfolded with varied levels of leadership strength, staff consistency, and communication, and influenced how grantees completed activities including their level of collaboration and buy-in from partner agencies, their level of access to data, and the types of service models proposed.

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IV. LEARNING FROM THE DATA: ACCESS, ANALYSIS, AND CHALLENGES

Research questions

- How did grantees use data to learn about youth at risk of homelessness?
- What challenges did grantees encounter in using the data?

Takeaways

- A key activity grantees undertook during the planning grant was gathering and analyzing data on the target populations.
- Grantees accessed a wide range of data sources to complete this activity. Data included administrative records, such as those related to youth homelessness; and alternative sources to augment information about services and needs, such as youth surveys, focus groups, pilot tests, and case record reviews.
- Many grantees encountered challenges related to data access and quality.
- The extent to which grantees made progress on the data analysis had an impact on their ability to move forward with other grant activities.
- Grantees used findings to describe the target population, understand the target population, and engage partners on the planning team and larger community.

As a condition of the grant, YARH grantees conducted data analyses to define and understand their target populations. This chapter begins with a description of the various data sources accessed during the planning period and the challenges grantees encountered collecting and analyzing data. We then describe how results from the data analysis influenced progression through other planning activities, the dissemination approach that grantees used, and the design of the planned comprehensive service models. This chapter is based on information collected during site visits. For information on the data analysis methods used by grantees and the findings from the data analysis, please see *The USICH Youth Framework in Action: Analyses of Data on Youth with Child Welfare Involvement at risk of homelessness*,[12] in which we describe the intersection of the USICH data strategy and the work of YARH grantees.

Gathering data

Administrative data sources

Grantees accessed a wide range of administrative data sources to define and understand their target populations. Although data from the child welfare and homelessness systems were of primary interest, they also used other sources to understand the lives of youth and young adults with histories of child welfare involvement. The data provided insights about the experiences and needs

[12] https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/building-capacity-to-evaluate-interventions-for-youth-with-child-welfare-involvement-at-risk-of-homelessness

of youth within the target population. Table IV.1 provides examples of the type of content included within each data source.

Table IV.1. Examples of content from grantees' data sources

Types of data sources	Example content
Data from child welfare system	
Administrative data system	Youth demographics, number of placements
Case records	Services provided, services received, date of engagement, referrals provided
National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)	Youth demographics, financial self-sufficiency, experience with homelessness, educational attainment, positive connections with adults, high-risk behavior, access to health insurance
Data on homeless youth and adults	
Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)	Housing status, income sources, mental and physical health status
Housing agency data	Housing status
Data on risk and protective factors	
Juvenile or criminal justice data	Involvement with the juvenile justice system, including arrests and periods of incarceration
Education data	Last grade completed, school status
Health and mental/behavioral health agency data	Mental health status, substance abuse, health insurance
Public assistance data	Receipt of public benefits, income, income sources, and unstable housing
	Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
Child support services agency data	Services provided, services received, date of engagement, referrals provided
Employment agency data	Employment status and earnings

Source: Site visits

Alternative data sources

Although administrative data were a key source of information for grantees, most of them used other data sources to augment or verify those data. Grantees conducted youth surveys, interviews, and focus groups with youth. Gathering data through these sources often occurred as a parallel effort to the process of obtaining and analyzing administrative data. To supplement or replace administrative data sources, grantees also conducted case record reviews of current or former youth in foster care. These record reviews provided useful information about the demographic profile of the target population and yielded insights into service provision and gaps. A few grantees also piloted assessments to enhance current risk assessments or compare them with findings from data analysis about risk factors.

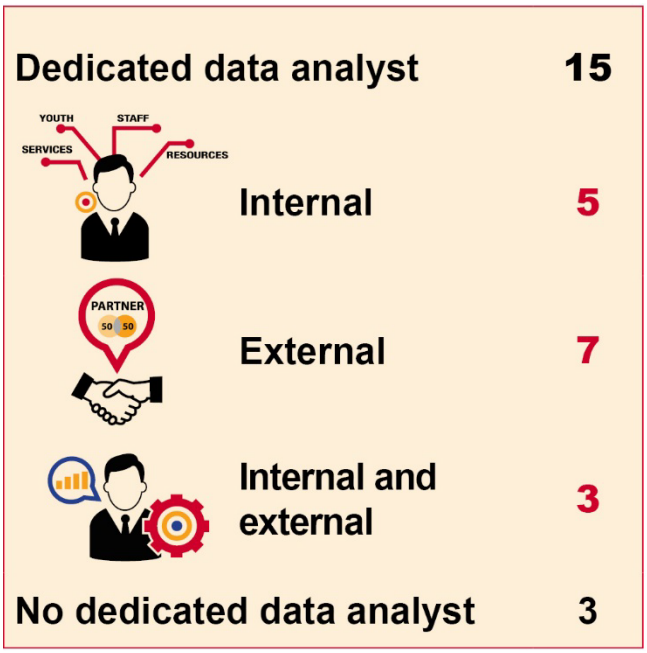
Analyzing the data

Ultimately, most grantees accessed a variety of data sources and conducted correlational analyses.[13] Fifteen grantees established dedicated data analysis teams, consisting of one or more data analysts. Five grantees staffed these teams with internal staff, seven with external staff, and three had both internal and external staff members (Figure IV.1). Within some grantees, the data analysis teams consisted of one or more members of the evaluation team. All grantees that completed a correlational analysis, including those who did latent class analyses or regressions, engaged a dedicated data analyst. In contrast, approximately half of the grantees that did not conduct a correlational analysis also did not engage a dedicated data analyst.

Iterations of data gathering and analysis

Eight grantees found the data analysis activity to be an iterative process, involving multiple rounds of data gathering, analysis, and seeking additional sources. As planning teams provided feedback on initial findings or more data became available, data analysis staff incorporated the information into the analytic framework. Data staff at one grantee said that after presenting new data to the leadership team, the team would suggest additional sources that could clarify or illuminate current data findings. Another grantee initially conducted relatively simple descriptive analyses, then pursued more complex analyses as data sources became available for a predictive risk model.

Figure IV.1. Grantees' use of dedicated data analysts



Source: Site visits.

[13] These analysis efforts are described in detail in the issue brief entitled *The USICH Youth Framework in Action: Analyses of Data on Youth with Child Welfare Involvement at risk of homelessness*, available at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research/project/building-capacity-to-evaluate-interventions-for-youth-with-child-welfare-involvement-at-risk-of-homelessness.

Challenges associated with data access and quality

Throughout the course of the data analysis activities, grantees faced challenges in accessing data, ranging from never gaining access to waiting longer than anticipated. These challenges slowed the work that planning teams needed to complete to understand the target populations and design comprehensive service models.

Data access

> *"The more the data were delayed, the less time we had to use it to inform anything that we were doing ... The earlier you have, it the more you can do with it."*

One of the greatest challenges grantees faced was obtaining the necessary data for the analysis. Their access to data was restricted by reasons including (1) difficulty in negotiating data-sharing agreements, (2) incompatible data systems, and (3) problems in linking data across sources with identifiers. Some grantees were unable to gather the specific data they wanted, which would have given them information on important outcomes such as homelessness or on risk factors that were not well tracked in the data they did obtain.

Some grantees had trouble obtaining data from specific sources, such as entities outside their own organization. A few described challenges in extracting administrative data from their agency's own internal systems. In addition, several state-level grantees experienced difficulty in obtaining data on child welfare and service receipt from counties that used separate systems to track data on youth in their counties. Many grantees found it took longer than they expected to finalize data agreements or access data.

Many grantees lacked access to integrated data or had no means for linking data on the same individuals across some sources. These limitations impacted the ability of grantees to move forward with data analyses that could have informed their understanding of risk factors predictive of homelessness within their population of youth.

Data access problems experienced by grantees

- Challenges in extracting administrative data from their agency's own internal systems
- Challenges in obtaining data from outside entities
- Difficulty in obtaining data on child welfare and service receipt from counties that used separate data systems to track data on youth in their counties
- Longer than expected time frames to finalize data agreements or access data
- No access to integrated data or no way to link data on the same individuals across some sources

Data quality

In some instances, grantees were able to access data, but the data were flawed. Many grantees found that the information was inconsistently available for different populations and missing for some populations, such as youth/young adults formerly in care. Several other grantees found it difficult to access complete or accurate data on youth in care or link data between systems. Legal restrictions prevented one grantee from linking data on youth in care between systems. About half of the grantees were able to obtain data in only a limited format not compatible with their analytic objectives; for example, only in the aggregate or for a subset of the target population. Many grantees found that their own organization (as the grantee) or their partners collected low quality data, collected data infrequently, or collected data not stored in an analyzable format.

As a result of these data quality issues, some grantees implemented, or made plans to implement, changes intended to improve analytical capacity. Nearly half of the grantees said they would start training partners or modifying instruments to get better data. Four grantees that currently lack an integrated data system now plan to work towards an integrated/shared data system. One grantee said that the planning period provided motivation to update and modify their data systems. The desire for change within this grantee extended from county-level staff to community partners.

> *"There is a big gap. We're serving 900 youth per year but data [are] collected on much fewer than that. Some of it is on paper and never gets entered into the database. We're going to have to do better training on data collection."*

Type of data quality issues experienced by grantees

- Inconsistent information across populations and missing data for some subpopulations
- Difficult to access complete or accurate data on youth in care or link data between systems
- Own organization (as the grantee) or their partners collected low quality data, collected data infrequently, or collected data not stored in an analyzable format
- Could only obtain data in only a limited format not compatible with their analytic objectives

Connections between data and completion of CB-identified activities

The challenges presented by data analysis often impeded a planning team's work in other areas. However, when a team successfully completed the analysis having data informed other activities by giving it solid information to use in other activities.

Data analysis and moving forward

Delays analyzing the data sometimes prevented a subset of grantees from moving forward with other activities, resulting in little or no work getting done before site visits. For the planning teams or subcommittees not having access to data made their job harder. Lack of data made it difficult for planning teams to identify a concrete starting point for their planning efforts, and led to discussions described as hypothetical or impractical. One planning team member stated that without complete and reliable data, it was impossible to proceed with identifying youth most at risk, and

> *"In the work groups, the discussions were not exciting. We wished we would have had the data much earlier because the groups were brainstorming instead of actually having informed discussions based on the data… Data would have given us something to react to."*

thus unable to identify services that would meet the needs of the target population. Another grantee explained that before the data were ready for analysis, subcommittee meetings turned into discussions about "wish lists" and theoretical comprehensive service models, rather than concrete discussions focused on the population. Planning team members thus became frustrated and viewed the meetings as pointless or unproductive.

Planning teams that gained access to data could react to something concrete; this allowed them to solicit tangible input in a productive manner. It also facilitated the advancement of other key activities, such as planning a comprehensive service model and beginning to plan for evaluation. One planning team member thought that data helped planning team members to keep conversations and ideas grounded in the evidence. Another noted that the data energized planning team discussions, prompting plans for interventions to begin in earnest.

> *"We had general conversations without data. [Once we had the data], we'd ask, 'Is there any data-driven evidence saying we have to look at X?' [The data analyst] would come back with information, and that allowed folks to move past the population that they are committed to and allowed folks really rallying around that to be more open to other possibilities… People could question, 'is employment really going to do this? It allowed us to think more holistically."*

Although challenges with data analysis were common, grantees differed in their decisions about how to keep moving forward. Seven grantees found that lack of data impeded their ability to arrive at a definition of "at risk" and inhibited the creation of a definition of "at-risk youth" by the time of the site visits. Five grantees worked with the limited information they did have to create a definition of "at risk."

In spite of these analysis delays, and in some cases without a working definition of "at risk," grantees moved forward with other activities while waiting for the analysis to be completed. Two conducted their needs assessments. Seven worked on identifying components, developing their comprehensive service model, or planning the evaluation of the comprehensive service model. Three tackled their logic model. Three grantees went forward with planning their comprehensive service model without the data, hoping that the findings would line up with their proposed comprehensive service model.

Activities informed by data analysis

Most grantees found that completing the data analysis supported moving forward on other activities. Some grantees used the data analysis to refine their understanding of "at–risk" youth and young adults. Other grantees used the data analysis to inform the needs assessment or develop screening and assessment tools. For instance, one grantee's external consultant presented the data as a launch-point for subcommittee discussions on how to develop the needs assessment.

Several grantees based their emerging plans for a comprehensive service model on the data analysis findings. In one instance, a grantee decided to formulate an employment-oriented component based on findings from the data analysis. Another opted to employ the Housing First philosophy and, based on its findings, is now in the process of piloting a program with an intensive focus on housing. Several grantees plan to use analytic findings to identify eligible youth.

> *"The gap is very clearly aligning these kids to a work experience."*

Disseminating findings: energizing and frustrating

> *"[The data analyst] took the factors one at a time. The most predictive was if the youth became a parent while in care. Then a youth who had been a teen parent talked about what her experience had been like. We went through the whole model that way… The audience was taken with the presentation and the data quality. [It] created enthusiasm around research and a collective sentiment that now we're armed with information and can do something to address their needs."*

Grantees varied in how broadly they shared their findings beyond their planning teams. Many shared both descriptive findings (such as the percentage of youth and young adults who ran away from foster care placements) and findings from the predictive risk analysis (such as the strength of the association between a particular characteristic and the risk of being homeless). Reactions in communities with which the data were shared varied significantly. Three communities responded positively to the data findings. One grantee incorporated youth into its presentation of the predictive risk model at a grantee meeting. This presentation technique allowed the team to share findings in a way that allayed child welfare staff member's concerns about the perception that child welfare was responsible for all sources of distress in the life of youth. Another grantee reported that the data findings were interesting to the community, and also mirrored findings from other internal activities in a way the grantee found reassuring.

In two cases, some members of the community were uninterested in or responded poorly to the data. One grantee found that some members of the community were uninterested in the information, due to their high level of exposure to homelessness and the associated risk factors. Some members of this community saw the data analysis as a hurdle to action, and expressed a preference for more immediate intervention. Another grantee received pushback from partner agencies after sharing the findings of their data analysis because the partner had not fully defined certain elements of the dataset and were upset that the data was not characterized accurately in the report.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we described (1) the data gathered by grantees and (2) how grantees used the data to move forward with other grant activities. In many instances, the ability of grantees to move forward with this activity influenced their ability to do so with other aspects of the planning process. Data availability enabled grantees to move forward with other aspects of the planning grant, such as planning their comprehensive service models and thinking about evaluation.

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V. COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE MODELS AND EVALUATIONS: VARIED PROGRESS TOWARD SIMILAR GOALS

Research questions

- What comprehensive service models did grantees develop under the planning grant?
- What were the components of the comprehensive service models?
- Were there different comprehensive service models for different target populations?
- How did grantees plan to evaluate their comprehensive service models?

Takeaways

- Grantees conducted needs assessments and compared the findings to existing services to identify gaps to inform the comprehensive service model development.
- Although all grantees had started to consider potential components at the time of the site visits, the extent to which they made progress toward defining a comprehensive service model varied. Five grantees had fully defined comprehensive service models by the time of their site visits.
- Some grantees faced challenges that delayed their comprehensive service model's progress, and these challenges were chiefly in the areas of data access and planning team structure.
- Grantees that made the most progress toward defining a comprehensive service model also generally made better progress in other planning activities, such as completing the readiness assessment, defining referral and selection processes, and identifying evidence-based interventions.
- Although grantees' comprehensive service models varied in their operational details, they all included a similar set of components—in particular, independent living services and intensive case management.
- Grantees varied in the progress they made toward plans for evaluation and the evaluation processes they considered using.
- Although most grantees were still in the process of developing evaluation plans, nine of them were considering randomized control trials (RCTs). Three grantees were considering alternatives to RCTs.

Grantees' ultimate goals during the Phase I planning grant period were to (1) develop comprehensive service models[14] designed to reduce the incidence of homelessness among the target population and (2) design rigorous evaluations of their proposed comprehensive service model. The sequence of activities that CB suggested builds logically toward these efforts (Table II.13). To

[14] Comprehensive service models are comprised of components, which may be practice models, practices, services, or interventions.

determine which components were likely to help target youth avoid homelessness, grantees conducted needs assessments and compared youth needs with existing services. The gaps they identified in needed services could then inform the selection of components.

In this chapter, we detail grantees' progress in these activities including describing common challenges in the planning process, patterns in comprehensive service models, and factors they considered when crafting evaluation plans. We also describe connections between grantee progress and elements of their comprehensive service models. The analyses in this chapter are based solely on site visit data collected between January and March 2015.

At the time of the site visits, grantees were at different points in the process of defining their comprehensive service models. Although all of them had begun planning their comprehensive service models, some faced challenges that hindered their progress.

Needs assessments informed services gap analysis

A key step in identifying components was to conduct needs assessments to determine what services might help youth in the target populations to avoid homelessness. Fourteen grantees had completed youth needs assessments by the time of the site visits. The four grantees who had not completed their needs assessments cited a lack of data on youth needs as the reason for the delay.

Grantees used a variety of approaches to identify youth needs, ranging from internal discussions among planning group members to charrettes[15] that drew perspectives from youth, service providers, and other community stakeholders. As described in Chapter 4, most grantees sought input from current and former youth in foster care through panel discussions or focus groups. More than half of the grantees sought input from stakeholders other than youth. Two grantees convened charrettes of community stakeholders including youth, child welfare staff, service providers, and other stakeholders. Other grantees gathered input from outside stakeholders through surveys or smaller meetings. One grantee held focus groups of foster parents. Another conducted individual interviews with experts in child welfare and youth homelessness.

> *"We used key informant interviews to assess services and utilization. What are they providing? What are the strengths? What are the gaps? We carved out about an hour to talk. That is how we were able to understand why youth weren't using [the current program]. The one-on-one interviews were very important."*

Five grantees confined their needs assessments to internal discussions among planning team members. This responsibility most often fell on topic-focused subcommittees, with each subcommittee identifying youth needs in its area. Two grantees drew on scholarly literature on the service needs of at-risk youth nationally in determining the needs of their local target populations.

Using this array of strategies, grantees identified a wide range of youth needs (Table V.1). Housing and mental health services were the most common. Five grantees identified housing as a youth need. Of these grantees, two described housing as a basic need—like food and safety—that must be a key component in any comprehensive service model. Respondents from another grantee

[15] A charrette is a collaborative session during which a group of individuals come together to brainstorm and solve a problem. Charrettes are frequently used in urban planning, but the meeting format is conducive to engaging a large number of stakeholders in thinking about an issue and potential solutions.

stressed the importance of offering a continuum of housing options to accommodate a range of youth needs. Five grantees listed mental health services as a youth need. Education, employment, and permanent connections to caring adults were identified by grantees as other common needs.

Table V.1. Youth needs identified by grantees

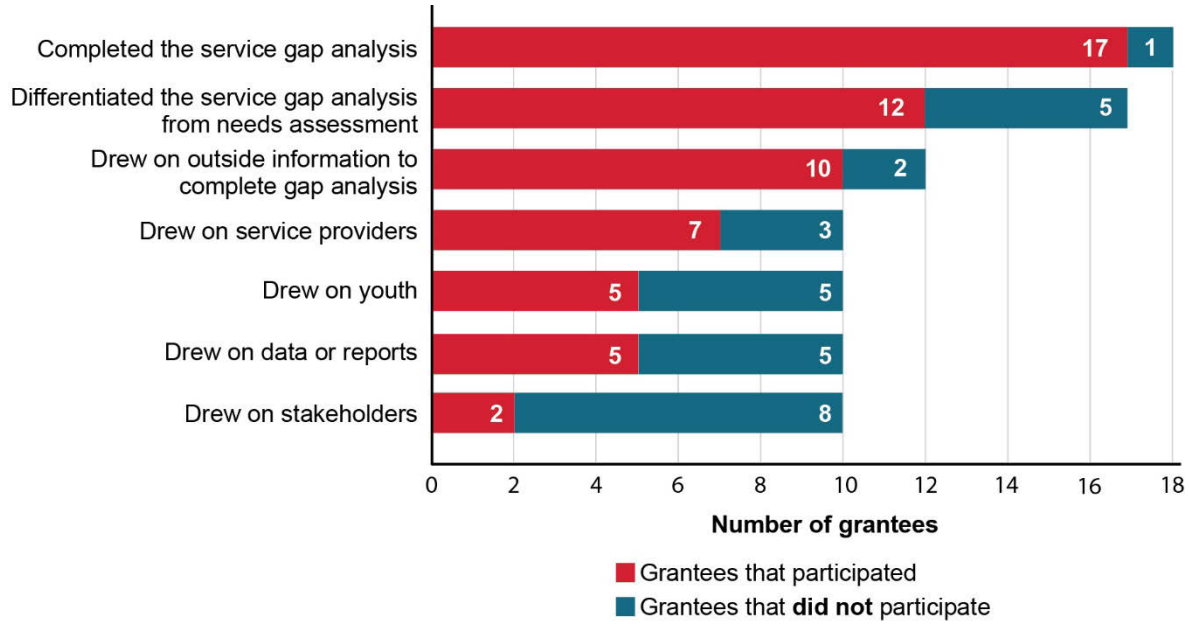
Identified need	Number of grantees
Mental health/trauma-informed services	5
Housing	5
Education	4
Permanent connections to a caring adult	4
Life skills	3
Food assistance	1
Health care and wellness services	1
Rural services	1
Sexual health education	1
Substance abuse care	1
Transportation	1
Improved transition services	1
Improved connections between services	1
Juvenile justice youth programming	1
Social connections	1
The ability to work while in school	1
Training for foster care parents	1
More information about existing services	1

Source: Site visits.

Once grantees established the service needs of their target youth, they could compare these against available services to identify gaps. All but one grantee completed this service gap analysis by the time of the site visits.

Grantees gathered data for the service gap analysis in one of two ways (Figure V.1). Of the 17 grantees that completed this step, 5 combined it with the needs assessment. These grantees did not differentiate the purpose or activities of these two planning steps. Two other grantees confined their service gap analysis to internal discussions among planning team members. The remaining 10 grantees collected information from outside sources specifically to complete the service gap analysis, using sources such as surveys, phone interviews, or youth focus groups; focus groups with other populations such as foster parents or outside experts; and additional administrative data, agency reports, or other data sources.

Figure V.1. Service gap analyses: activities undertaken by grantees

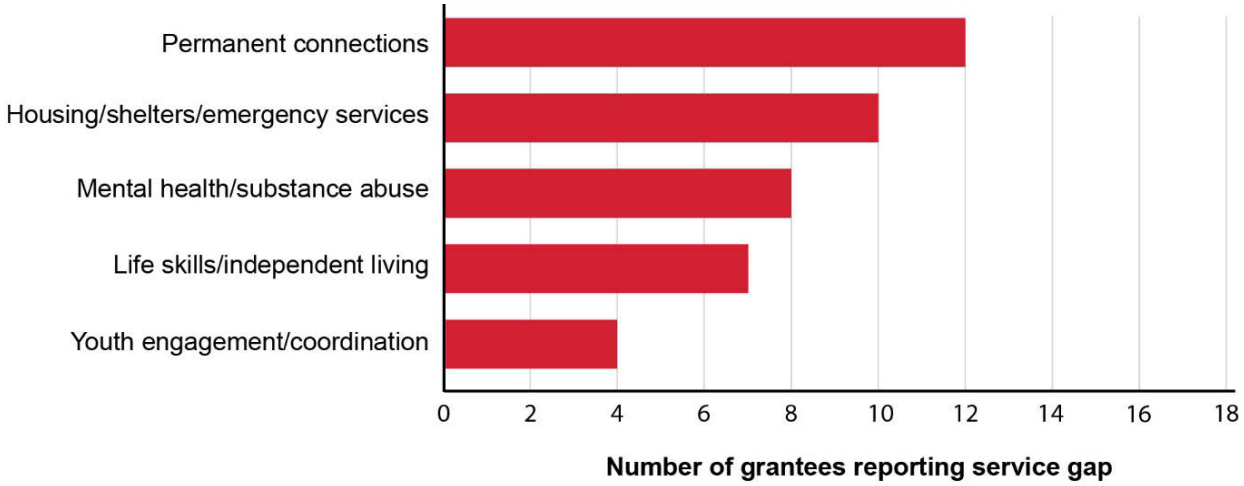


Source: Site visits.

Most grantees noted gaps in multiple outcome areas. Fourteen grantees discussed the outcomes of the service gap analysis during site visit interviews. These grantees reported gaps in three of the four outcome areas on average. All but two of these grantees noted gaps in at least two areas. Grantees most commonly reported them in permanent connection services (Figure V.2). Ten grantees reported them in housing services. Eight of 14 grantees reported them in mental health services. Seven of 14 grantees reported gaps in life skills services.

> *"We've been testing a Housing First model. It seems to be working; the youth are latching on [to service providers]. They feel like they have someone on their side, and it's a lot closer to unconditional housing than what we have. These youth are thirsty for people to engage with. The ultimate thing is 18 months of housing is 18 months not homeless… We can't attend to other outcomes if the youth isn't housed."*

Figure V.2. Service gaps identified by grantees



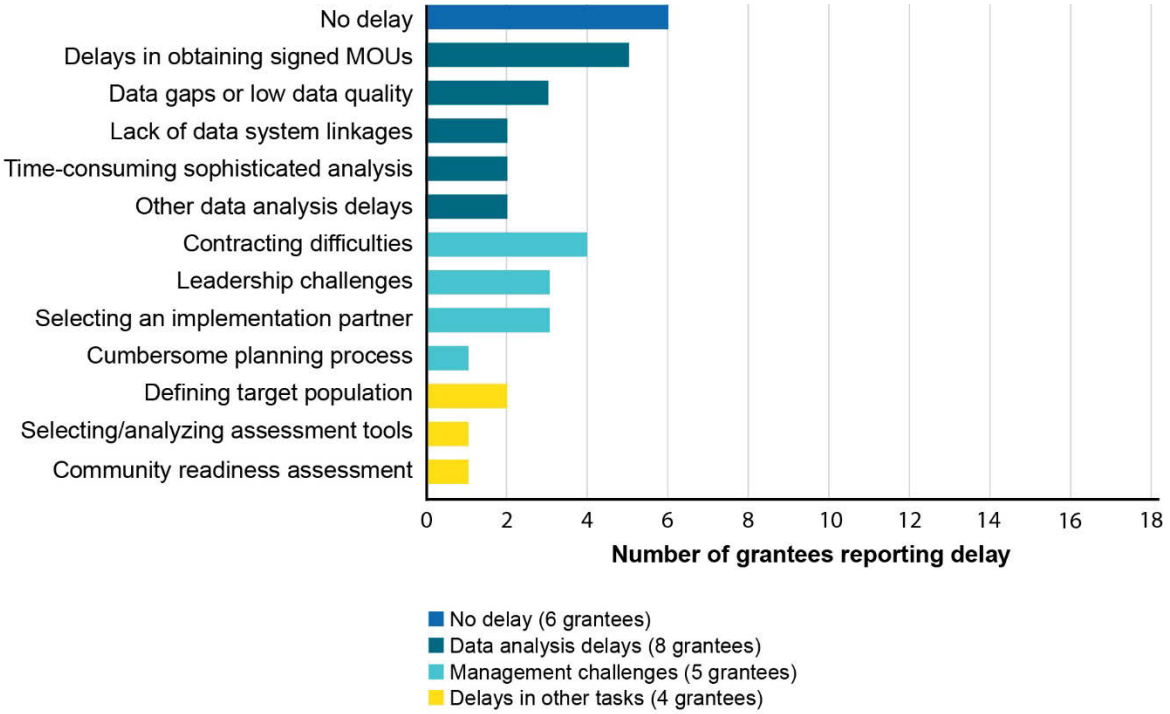
Source: Site visits.

In addition to citing specific types of service gaps, five grantees noted that available services in their areas varied depending on where youth were located. For four of these grantees, differences largely stemmed from urban-rural variation in service availability. Three were considering multiple sites for their demonstration, resulting in uncertainty in the specific array of services that would be available.

Challenges in defining comprehensive service models due to data access and organizational structure

Although almost all grantees completed the early steps in the planning process, 12 encountered challenges that hindered their ability to define a comprehensive service model. Grantees reported a wide range of reasons for their delays in identifying their proposed comprehensive service model. As described in Chapter IV, the most common reason was a delay in accessing the necessary data to conduct the gap analysis and needs assessment (Figure V.3). Other delays related to management challenges and planning activities (described in Chapter III).

Figure V.3. Reasons for delays in identifying comprehensive service models



Source: Site visits.

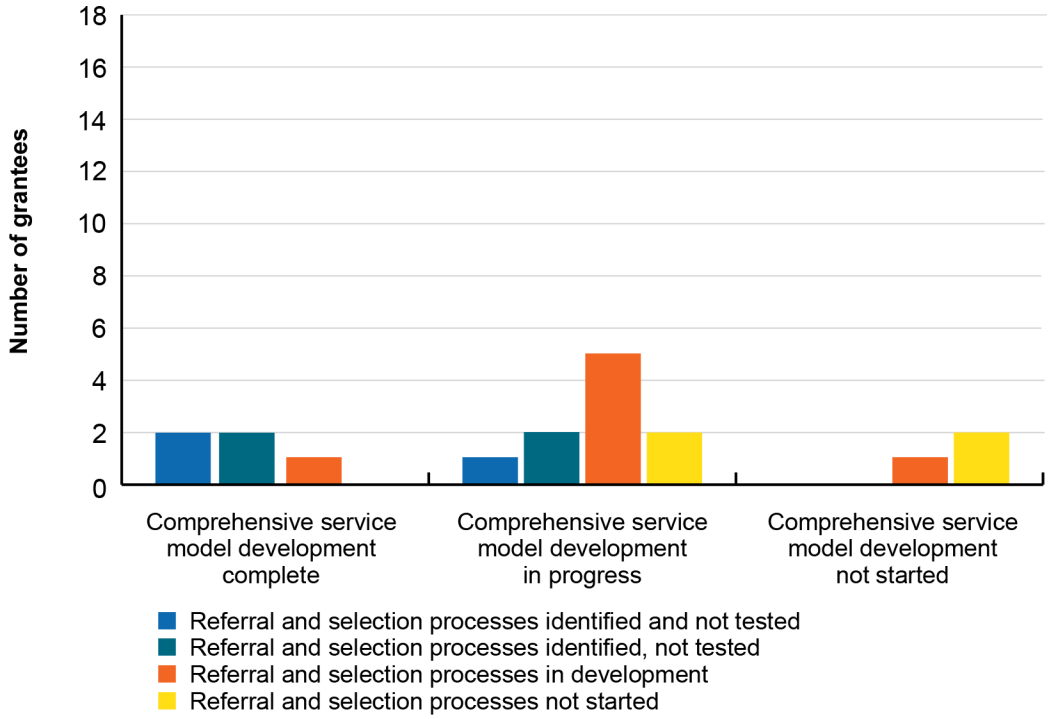
Connections between defining comprehensive service models and completing CB-identified activities

The progress grantees made in defining their comprehensive service models was associated with the progress the made on other aspects of their planning process. Those who had fully defined their comprehensive service model by the time of the site visits had made more progress during the planning period than others had. Five grantees had fully defined comprehensive service models by the time of the visits. Ten had begun defining their comprehensive service models, and three had not yet begun.

Most grantees with completed comprehensive service models had also completed their readiness assessments. Three of the 5 grantees with defined comprehensive service models had completed their readiness assessment compared with 4 of the 10 having partially defined comprehensive service models. None of the 3 that had not started defining their comprehensive service model had completed their readiness assessment. Most commonly, grantees had interviewed service providers and recorded their capacity to deliver certain services to complete the readiness assessment. One grantee contracted with a third party to complete confidential interviews of the grantee's own staff to complete the readiness assessment. Another grantee assigned its implementation partner to complete a readiness self-assessment but reported that the results were not very useful. Another grantee used a readiness assessment completed in a related effort but one separate from YARH. Finally, 1 completed an informal review of its own capacity.

Similarly, grantees that made progress defining their comprehensive service models also made more progress in completing their referral and selection processes—to be used to identify youth for participation in the demonstrations. Four of 5 grantees in this group had completed their referral process; two of the 4 had tested the referral process (Figure V.4). The remaining grantee with a complete comprehensive service model had begun developing its referral and selection processes. Three of the 10 that had partially defined comprehensive service models also had completed their referral and selection processes, and one had also tested the processes. Five other grantees with partially defined comprehensive service models had at least started developing their referral and selection processes. By contrast, among those that had not yet started defining their comprehensive service model, none had completed their referral and selection processes and only one had started developing them.

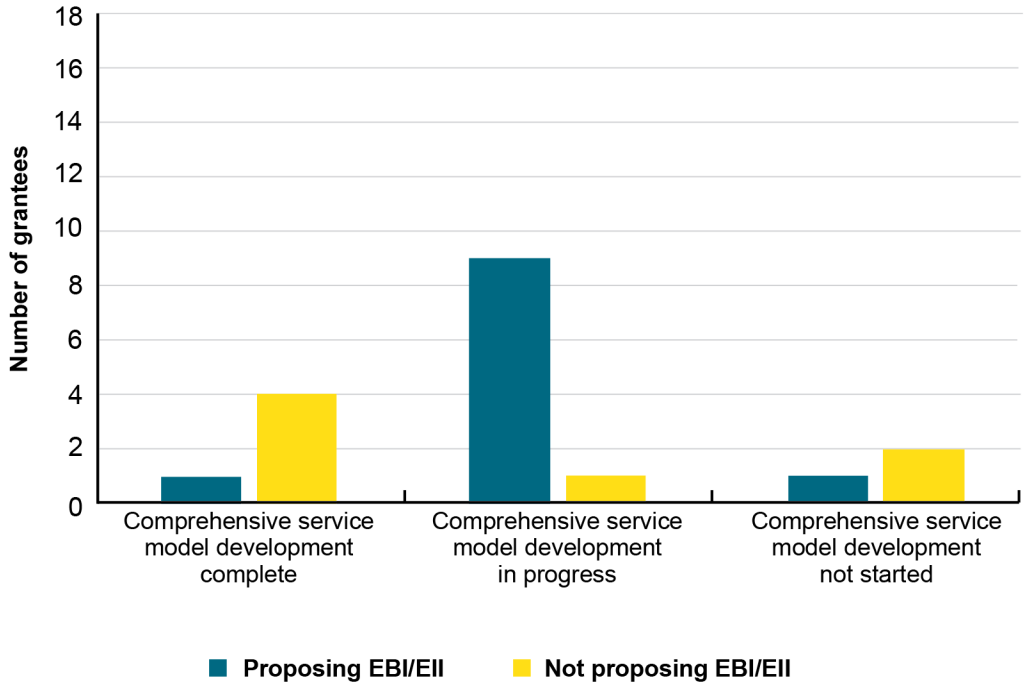
Figure V.4. Progress on referral and selection processes, by status of comprehensive service model at the time of the site visit



Source: Site visits.

Grantees that defined comprehensive service models more quickly were less likely to propose components they identified as evidence-based interventions (EBIs) or evidence-informed interventions (EIIs) than those that took longer.[16] Ten of the 13 that had not fully defined their comprehensive service models were either committed to or considering using EBIs or EIIs. By contrast, only one of the 5 grantees with fully defined comprehensive service models proposed using EBIs or EIIs (Figure V.5). Grantees with undefined or partially defined comprehensive service models had proposed many more components than those that had settled on a comprehensive service model. The prevalence of EBIs or EIIs might decrease among these grantees once they definitively decide on a comprehensive service model.

Figure V.5. Grantees proposing EBIs or EIIs, by status of comprehensive service model at the time of the site visit



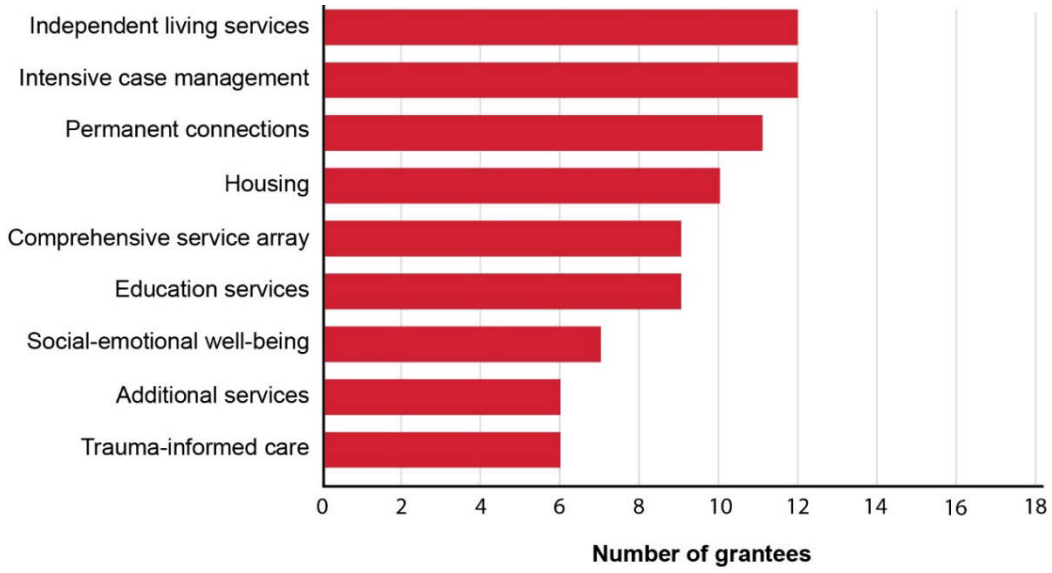
Source: Site visits.

Comprehensive service model components

Whereas each grantee that had begun the process of defining its comprehensive services model proposed a distinct menu of components, many of these components were common across grantees (Figure V.6).

[16] Grantees were not asked to define evidence-based intervention (EBI) or evidence-informed intervention (EII) nor was their classification of a component confirmed with the definition provided in the Phase I FOA. EBIs were defined as "an intervention or program that has been proven effective on the basis of rigorous scientific research and evaluation, and identified through a systematic independent review, for a particular population and outcome(s)." EIIs were defined as "a) an intervention or program that has been implemented or tested in limited circumstances (if at all) but is supported by a strong logic model and/or successful outcomes data for a particular population and outcome(s) or b) an intervention or program that has been implemented and tested previously, and the testing indicates some potential for success for a particular population and outcome(s)" (ACF, 2013, p. 3).

Figure V.6. Components considered by grantees



Source: Site visits.

Independent living services

Independent living services that are designed to help youth learn and build the skills needed for transitioning out of care and living independently were among the most commonly proposed components. Grantee plans for this component varied widely. One discussed registering a partner organization to allow youth to use its address as the permanent address to obtain basic necessities for independence, such as driver's licenses and bank account. Another grantee planned on using an EII to help at-risk youth with emotional or behavioral problems transition out of care and achieve the goals they set for themselves. This EII showed increased self-sufficiency and engagement for youth at a high risk of homelessness transitioning out of care. Still another grantee proposed providing financial stability services for youth.

Grantees also expressed interest in providing employment services in their independent living services component, to help youth transition out of care and attain financial independence. One discussed using an Employment First model, in which employment is the first accessed resource and all individuals are considered capable of participating fully in the labor force.

Intensive case management

> *"The current model for independent living services is that young people get referred at 15 and can stay until 21. They get a case manager, but it's very informal and there is no expectation that they meet regularly. It's not very intensive. We would change to mandatory, in-person visits once per week by a mobile case manager who goes to the youth, starting at 17."*

Intensive case management to connect youth to existing services was the next most commonly proposed component among grantees. Through this component, grantees would seek to address all of the needs facing the youth, including behavioral and medical needs. Of the 15 grantees with defined comprehensive service plans, 12 proposed incorporating intensive case management. This group included 4 of the 5 grantees with fully defined comprehensive service models and 8 of the 10 with partially defined comprehensive service models.

Although many grantees proposed intensive case management as a component of their comprehensive service model, their approaches varied. Several discussed implementing a central case manager to improve access to resources for youth. They hoped central case managers would engage youth and improve the youth participation in programs. Others proposed implementing a services liaison as their intensive case management intervention component. Services liaisons would work in tandem with the case manager. In addition to connecting youth to services, liaisons would work with case managers and other adults in the youth's life to ensure continuity of care. They would specialize in understanding and navigating systems in the community to expedite resource access.

Taking another approach to intensive case management, two grantees discussed implementing a peer case manager position, particularly as a means of engaging high-risk youth. These managers will be close in age to the youth and ideally will have been through the child welfare system themselves. One grantee believed a peer case manager and increased engagement could create stability for the youth. Hoping to strengthen engagement as well, another has already begun training its peer case managers. This training prepared managers to help youth access community resources, navigate systems and handle trauma-related challenges as they arise. These peer case managers will be supported by a clinically trained professional. The managers will interact with youth one on one and in group settings with other youth and peer case managers.

Some grantees also proposed implementing smaller caseloads as part of their comprehensive service model. One proposed reducing caseload sizes from 70 to 12 cases per case worker. Another hoped that reducing caseloads would provide time for case workers and managers to focus on connecting youth with the skills needed for transitioning out of care.

Permanent connections to caring adults

Many grantees were interested in components that would establish and maintain permanent connections for youth. Like other components, their proposals of permanent connection services varied. Some described variations of mentorship. Two wanted to focus on mentoring youth based on developmental stage; for example, one plans on targeting mentorship to a specific age group when it believes youth begin to disengage from the system and school. In addition to one-on-one activities, two grantees also discussed providing group mentorship activities for youth and another talked about including mentee-only activities.

> *"It seems like permanency should be the base for the other [outcome areas]. It's so hard to navigate the other areas without having a support person, or someone to call, or someone to help them understand education, employment, housing, and so on."*

Other grantees wanted to establish permanent connections through permanency pacts. One reported planning a mentorship program incorporating this feature, in which the mentor and mentee explicitly define their goals and expectations for the relationship in weekly sessions. The grantee hoped these pacts would facilitate lasting relationships between the mentor and the youth.

Three grantees also discussed providing family-finding resources for youth to leverage potential permanent connections. This component would help youth locate relatives willing to reestablish a positive relationship with the youth. One proposed service would leverage youth support systems, which could include biological family members. Another grantee spoke generally about including a family-finding component to help high-risk youth establish long-lasting relationships with adults. Another grantee discussed partnering with an organization to help youth locate and reconnect with family members.

Housing

Grantees were also interested in offering a housing component. Ten planned to incorporate a housing component in their comprehensive service model. Services ranged from offering housing vouchers to using a Housing First philosophy. One grantee proposed a program in which youth worked to refurbish homes allocated by the housing authority. Once refurbished, the homes would be used as permanent housing for homeless youth. Another arranged to have housing vouchers set aside for use in its comprehensive service model. This grantee also was inspired by numerous conversations about the lack of housing resources and support available for homeless youth and discussed the potential of providing ongoing housing opportunities. Two other grantees proposed following a Housing First philosophy, in which housing needs are met immediately, and other service needs are addressed after that. Both of these grantees would also provide the comprehensive service array generally included in a Housing First philosophy.

Comprehensive service arrays to meet needs

Nine grantees also proposed providing access to a comprehensive service array as part of their interventions. Youth with child welfare involvement often have a wide range of service needs. This component would be designed to address the complete set of potential needs, with co-location of services to facilitate access to resources.

Education services

Many grantees proposed an education component as part of their comprehensive service model. Their ideas ranged from transportation programs to involving individuals advocating for the youth's education. Temporary housing placements are often made based on immediate availability, which does not allow for school district consideration. For this reason, one grantee proposed using a transportation program to transport youth to the schools they regularly attend. Two grantees also broadly discussed implementing education advocacy. For one, this component involved a neutral individual who would electronically store the youth's education records.

Social-emotional well-being

Some grantees hoped to include a component that would address and improve youth social-emotional well-being. Three discussed including this kind of component but did not share additional details on what the service would entail. Two identified substance abuse treatment as a service they wanted to include. One grantee identified an evidence-based program that would engage the youth's community and local resources in their recovery.

Additional components being considered

Although many grantees proposed comparable components in their comprehensive service model, some did not have defined components. At the time of the site visits, five grantees were considering additional services but had not identified the specific type of additional service. One grantee was considering an intervention that reduced the turnover among grantee and agency staff. Another grantee was considering services that would ease youth's transition out of the child welfare system, specifically connecting youth to health-related services they may need once out of care.

Trauma-informed care

Grantees also expressed a desire to provide trauma-informed care, therapy, and training. Two were interested in providing this type of therapy, while involving partners to ensure systemic

sensitivity to the trauma youth experienced. Another was interested in providing trauma informed care training to program partners and foster parents. This training would also educate and work to provide systemic sensitivity for all adults in the youth's life.

Varying comprehensive service models by population

The comprehensive service models that grantees developed sometimes varied by target population. Out of 15 grantees with defined comprehensive service models, 3 proposed different comprehensive service models for different populations. One proposed a comprehensive service model focused on social-emotional well-being and permanent connections for youth in care. The permanent connections component would target mentoring to a specific age at which the grantee believes youth begin to disengage from school. For young adults aging out of care, this grantee planned to focus on housing, including vouchers to support or maintain housing, and other housing opportunities. Focusing on housing would address this population's immediate need, as youth who are aging out of the child welfare system and might have limited housing options. Another grantee proposed different components for youth in or aging out of care. For youth in care, it proposed components involving family-finding and targeted foster parent recruitment. For young adults aging out of care, however, the proposed components included peer case managers, strengthening permanent connections, and independent living services. The third grantee proposed comprehensive service models for all three populations but with a distinct menu of components for youth in care. For this population, it proposed components aimed at preparing youth for when they would begin transitioning out of care. For young adults aging out of care or formerly in care, this grantee's comprehensive service model would follow a Housing First philosophy.

Evaluation plans

The YARH grant program was motivated by CB's desire to contribute to the existing body of evidence on what helps youth avoid homelessness. Consequently, CB expected grantees to consider how they would evaluate their planned comprehensive service model for effectiveness by drafting evaluation plans. These plans described the grantees' proposed approaches to measuring the impact of their comprehensive service models. They also provided a description of each study's design, the intended approach to creating a comparison group, methods for sample recruitment, and a discussion of how data will be collected.

Evaluation plan progress and delays

Grantees were developing their evaluation plans at the time of the site visits, so the plans they discussed were subject to change. Twelve of them discussed evaluation plans during their site visit, but most were not far along in the process. The other six described detailed evaluation plans at the time of their site visit. Seven grantees that did not have detailed plans nonetheless discussed more general ideas they were considering for their evaluation plans.

Grantees' evaluation plans were incomplete because their comprehensive service models were not yet finalized. Respondents for one grantee explained that they considered themselves unprepared to consider an evaluation plan or specify potential outcome measures when they were still working on confirming their comprehensive service model. Another grantee discussed potential designs for its evaluation, but admitted the design could change as their comprehensive service model evolved. Staff at a third grantee, including the external evaluator on its planning team, hoped to finalize its comprehensive service model in tandem with designing an evaluation. It believed this

would create a comprehensive service model and evaluation design that were compatible with each other.

One grantee had not defined its evaluation plan because it had concerns regarding how to structure the evaluation. It was in the process of addressing structural evaluation problems, such as a site currently offering a component of the comprehensive service model, which will likely result in smaller effects since the comparison group will have access to a component of the comprehensive service model. A second grantee was waiting to see the evaluation requirements in the Phase II funding announcement before finalizing its evaluation plan.

Randomized control trials

Although grantees were in the process of finalizing evaluation designs, half of them discussed using RCTs. RCTs use random assignment to form the intervention and comparison groups, ensuring that there are no systematic differences between groups at the time of assignment. The comprehensive service model would define the experience of the intervention group, while the comparison group did not receive the comprehensive service model. Any differences in outcome measures thus can be attributed to the comprehensive service model. Random assignment can be conducted at the individual level or at higher levels such as offices or counties. Grantee perceptions of Phase II funding requirements likely led to a greater willingness to consider RCTs. Two believed that RCTs would be required to obtain Phase II funding. One of the two did not think an RCT was suitable for its comprehensive service model, but was willing to use it, believing RCTs would be required. The other pursued an RCT under the impression that it would be viewed as preferable in Phase II funding applications.

> *"Random assignment will depend on the culture of the offices that are chosen. Any way we would do it would be complicated. Offices that work with adolescents are passionate. Youth will tell that they heard someone else got a service, and ask, "Why didn't I?" [It feels] unfair."*

Although RCTs were popular among some grantees, eight expressed ethical or logistical concerns. An evaluator working with one of the eight hoped to use randomization but found little community support for it. Another grantee wanted to use an RCT design but raised concerns about logistics and the potential for comparison group members to access comprehensive service model components. Caseworkers at this grantee expressed discomfort with the idea of explaining to the youth why some youth receive comprehensive service model components and others do not. They believed it would harm the trust caseworkers have established with the youth. Similarly, another grantee struggled to gain buy-in from its youth leadership team for an RCT. For another, the community had had previous negative experiences with evaluations, so this grantee recognized the need to craft evaluation activities cautiously.

Grantees' plans for incorporating RCTs in their evaluation plans varied. Six had different plans for incorporating random assignment. Four discussed implementing randomization at intake, when youth first access services. One of these four proposed administering a risk assessment at intake and randomly assigning youth rated highly at risk for homelessness. Another grantee talked about randomizing through use of administrative data. This grantee would use the data to create a model that predicts the at-risk level of youth and then conduct assignment. It believed that using administrative data for randomization would reduce the burden for practitioners.

Eleven grantees discussed challenges they anticipated for their evaluations and in using randomization. Out of 11 grantees that discussed this, 5 described expected difficulties defining the

comparison condition because their business-as-usual model was changing, making stable comparisons between the treatment and control groups difficult. One grantee discussed a potential state requirement to provide more resources for youth in foster care. It explained that this increase would alter its business-as-usual model and evaluation plan. Another grantee faced the same challenge, where the state was changing the business-as-usual services; another anticipated a change to business-as-usual services resulting from creating the comprehensive service model. This grantee believed that more youth would be able to access the business-as-usual services when some of those currently accessing services transition to the comprehensive service model.

Changes to the business-as-usual model also varied by youth or youth population for three grantees. Youth in one grantee's target population accessed a wide array of services, making it difficult to isolate the components of the comprehensive service model to evaluate its impact. The business-as-usual model varies geographically for another grantee, making it difficult to understand the difference between intervention and comparison groups that may be recruited from different geographic areas and the variation that already exists. Finally, one grantee does not believe it will obtain community buy-in without providing the comprehensive service model to the whole service population, thus complicating the creation of a comparison group.

> *"The struggle is figuring out how to evaluate this. We need to balance evaluation of the model with trying to serve youth in multiple ways. Every time you change the program, it changes the evaluation. You can't go so big that you can't tease out what's working."*

Statistical power was also a concern for grantees. "Statistical power" refers to the ability of an evaluation to detect a difference in outcomes between intervention and comparison groups. Small sample sizes make it difficult to detect differences unless those differences are very large. Statistical power is a concern for any study, regardless of whether it is an RCT or uses a different design. Four grantees discussed this issue, acknowledging their small sample sizes.

Alternatives to randomized control trials

A few grantees considered alternatives to randomization. One did not plan on using an RCT for several reasons, including ethical concerns, small sample sizes, and changes in the length of care provided to youth. This grantee planned to implement the most rigorous evaluation possible, but had not selected an alternative design at the time of the site visit. Instead of an RCT design, another grantee considered a phased implementation of its comprehensive service model. Implementing in phases would allow the grantee to compare intervention group outcomes to the outcomes of individuals waiting to enroll in the comprehensive service model who would serve as the comparison group. The grantee considered phased implementation design because practitioners did not support individual-level randomization.

Two grantees also considered using matching designs to establish a comparison group for their comprehensive service model. In matching designs, evaluators use data on participants to form similar groups—in some cases pairs are formed—one member is assigned to the intervention, and the other is assigned to the comparison group. Matching is intended to ensure that members of the intervention and comparison groups are similar at the beginning of the study, so that differences in outcomes might be attributable to the comprehensive service model. For one of the grantees considering a matching design, its leadership team explored matching a comparison group with similar characteristics to its intervention group as an alternative to implementing an RCT. Another grantee also considered using a specific type of matching—propensity score matching. This design

also matches based on individual characteristics, but estimates the likelihood of an individual with certain characteristics being assigned to the intervention group. This estimate is used to match intervention group individuals to comparison group individuals with similar propensity scores.

Data collection

In addition to considering evaluations designs, some grantees had also explored strategies for collecting data for the evaluation, and discussed these strategies during their site visits. Data collection plans varied widely among grantees. One discussed the need to build capacity for data collection before collecting data. Several planned to conduct baseline and follow-up surveys to track change over time. Another grantee hoped offering incentives would encourage youth participation in follow-up surveys, which would occur 6 months and 12 months after baseline.

Piloting comprehensive service model components

During site visits, four grantees discussed piloting their comprehensive service models. Two had initiated a pilot and hoped to pilot with two cohorts before the end of the Phase I grant. At the time of their site visit, one grantee was collecting data for the intervention and comparison groups using web-based surveys. Another believed CB required a pilot in Phase I, and so began working on a three month pilot evaluating the comprehensive service model based on its ability to impact youth-set goals and planning for housing, education, and employment. A third grantee discussed piloting a permanent connections component as well. It hoped to have some preliminary data prepared for its Phase II application, even though outcome data will not be available by then. At the time of their site visit, a fourth planned to pilot its referral system, components, and assessments in the spring. Youth in the pilot would complete three surveys beginning in the spring of 2015. Few grantees planned to conduct pilots, but of those that do, their pilot programs will inevitably inform the grantees' comprehensive service model and evaluation plans for Phase II.

Conclusion

This chapter described the activities YARH grantees engaged in to inform their development of a comprehensive service model, as well as the components they considered. As a first step, the grantees did readiness assessments to identify youth needs and compare them with service gaps. Although the grantees progressed toward finalizing a comprehensive service model, their proposed components varied, and some of the proposed components are already required by federal law or regulations. Plans for evaluating these comprehensive service models also differed, with some proposing RCTs and others seeking alternatives. Some grantees had begun piloting elements of their evaluation plan in preparation for the Phase II grant application.

VI. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS

Research questions

- How did grantees experience the first phase of a multi-phase, competitive grant opportunity?
- What are the benefits and challenges of multi-phase grant opportunities? What implications do the grantee's experiences have for multi-phase grant opportunities in the future?

Takeaways

- Funding opportunities like YARH can be structured in the future to require grantees to incorporate elements that proved critical to the success of YARH grantees.
- When selecting grantees, funders could consider grant applicants with a demonstrated level of dedication to the grant, access to and understanding of data, and experience in engaging youth and young adults in planning processes.
- TA should be structured to consider the variation of grantees in both history and goals.
- To support grant recipients, funders could provide data sharing support and TA on data analysis and partnership development in reflective, one-on-one environments.

In previous chapters, we described how YARH grantees navigated challenges regarding partnerships, data analysis, and intervention development with varying levels of success. Their experiences throughout the planning process serve as a base from which to identify potential considerations when selecting grantees and when providing support to grant recipients. In this chapter, we present concrete steps that could be taken in future efforts similar in focus or structure to YARH.

Considerations when selecting grantees

When selecting grantees, funders could consider grant applications with the following:

Demonstrated levels of partner dedication to the grant. Grantees that experienced changes in leadership or membership faced challenges related to continuity, which can negatively affect momentum. Partnerships with strong leadership, consistency in membership, buy-in, and shared goals are able to continue moving forward even when faced with challenges or dissenting opinions. Demonstrating that partners are committed to providing specific staff to accomplish well-defined tasks by including that information in the letter of commitment could help strengthen the partnership from the grant application phase.

Funders could ask applicants to submit letters of commitment from organizations and identify key staff from the grantee and key partners. The letters could include descriptions of the roles and responsibilities and the skills and experiences of the specific staff who will be engaged in the work. They could encourage applicants to budget to cover engagement from key staff at partner organizations.

Access to data, or a clear understanding of the process required to access necessary data. Many YARH grantees struggled to establish data-sharing agreements, obtain data, or integrate data across systems. One grantee spent nine months developing an MOU with various partners, which significantly delayed its data analysis. The extent to which grantees made progress on the data analysis affected their ability to move forward with related grant activities, such as defining their target population, selecting services, or developing a theory of change or logic model.

To prepare for this important process, funders could ask applicants to submit signed data agreements that describes data access or outlines the necessary steps to gain access to data.

Dedicated data analyst for the grant. Data analysis was a critical activity for the YARH grantees. Grantees that contracted with a dedicated data analyst, either internal or external to their organization, made better progress on their data activities. The data analyst should be well-versed in at least one of the data sources to be used, able to integrate data, and able to conduct multivariate analyses. An analytic plan should be developed in collaboration with the dedicated data analyst and project leadership to articulate how, when, and by whom the work will be completed. The analytic plan could start with identifying who is responsible for negotiating access to data, when the data should be available, and when the analyses should be completed. The data analyst should be prepared to be involved in the grant for a substantial period, as data analysis can be an iterative process. Once the population is defined and assessments selected, the data analyst may also need to help pilot recruitment and screening processes.

Funders could ask applicants to provide a job description for a data analyst and include the position in the budget.

Experience in engaging youth and young adults in other planning processes. Many YARH grantees gained the input of youth through surveys and focus groups; half of the grantees engaged youth as planning team members. However, experiences engaging youth in a meaningful way were mixed. Within some grantees, youth were "tokenized" and felt uncomfortable speaking up. Grantees that did successfully engage youth benefitted from their perspectives, and their involvement energized the planning process.

To fully incorporate youth voice into the planning process, the funder could invite grantees to share in the grant application their plans for engaging youth and incorporating their voice and perspectives in a meaningful way. Monitoring and support of youth engagement could be a component of programmatic TA.

Considerations when supporting grant recipients

To support grant recipients, funders and their partners could provide support in two arenas: data sharing and TA.

Support development of data–sharing agreements. Many grantees encountered challenges related to data access and quality. The extent to which grantees made progress on the data analysis affected their ability to move forward with related grant activities. Agencies are not accustomed to sharing data and may believe there are insurmountable road blocks to do so. Clear communication from the funder and other interested parties about the importance of the work and need to share data may support productive and fruitful conversations at the grantee level.

Federal funders can facilitate data access by providing grantees with a gesture of support by letting grantees know that they would be willing to provide a letter/memo from federal agencies, describing the project, explaining the rationale for the data request, and providing contact information for federal staff.

Provide examples of alternative approaches for grantees unable to access data. Grantees faced various challenges related to accessing data; YARH grantees unable to access data developed solutions to work around this constraint. For example, one grantee provided positive youth development services in exchange for identifying information, another had an internal data office collect the data which they then gave to an external contractor to analyze. A third grantee replaced primary data analysis with a literature review to help define its definition of "at risk," relying on its evaluator's expertise in the area given the barriers to data access.

For grantees unable to secure data access in advance of the grant, the funder and other grantees could share examples of creative solutions for gaining data.

Deliver TA on the various possible types of analyses, including strengths and tradeoffs. Grantees accessed a wide range of data sources, and the complexity of analyses they undertook during the planning period also varied substantially. The complexity of analyses were limited by available data, time, and capacity. Grantees with dedicated data analysts, whether internal or external, frequently contracted with someone having the skills and time to conduct the analyses.

Providing information about the types of analytical options available to grantees, as well as the types of analyses that will provide the greatest insights on the needs of the target populations, could help grantees understand expectations and effectively invest analytic resources.

Explore and support teambuilding, particularly early in the process. Once the planning process began, four grantees found it difficult to maintain consistent engagement with members, partners, and subcommittees. Another grantee was praised for being inclusive and engaging partners it identified and people recommended by partners. The inclusion of additional individuals to bring to the table, suggested by its partners, helped build a sense of cohesion and commitment among all partners. Reasons for difficulties in engaging included: feelings of disconnection or isolation, exhaustion stemming from the number of initiatives underway in the community, competing priorities, and poor facilitation.

Group and individual TA could be offered in an early stage of the grant or when grantee leadership changes for help in finding potential partners, targeting engagement of partners, identifying challenges to engagement, and enhancing engagement.

Ensure that enough time is allowed for building collaborations. In addition, across all of the activities outlined by CB, the differences we observed may be due to grantees' collaboration histories: grantees with established collaboration histories, in contrast with those in emerging partnerships, may not have considered it necessary to devote as much time to crucial team-building efforts. Because they devoted less time to building collaborations, the grantees may not have begun or completed as many projects on time.

Funders could allow grantees emerging partnerships the dedicated time to build relationships among members of their teams before diving into the work, and encouraged grantees to implement strategies to keep partners engaged early in the grant.

Provide ongoing, one-on-one opportunities for reflection. The YARH grant structure put grantees in a position in which they were encouraged to collaborate with each other through TA activities and conferences, but also knew they were ultimately competing for resources. Some grantees felt competitive with other grantees in a way that made them feel disconnected from others or desirous of keeping certain information secret. Others had misperceptions of fellow grantees' progress in the process. In contrast, grantees seemed to benefit from one-on-one site visits and the opportunity to have rich conversations about doing this work, including its purpose and what was needed to complete it.

Future efforts could involve opportunities for more frequent, less formal, individual check-ins with grantees to gather more information about where they are headed with key activities. Funders or TA providers could host these check-ins and ask grantees making steady progress to present in a webinar or provide some one-on-one assistance to other grantees. In addition, TA could be given in both group and individual formats.

Engage grantees in understanding what their TA needs are, and provide TA accordingly. A component of the planning grant was TA, which was provided as part of the grant opportunity. Some grantees found this assistance helpful, whereas others wished more had been available. Fourteen grantees brought in outside experts to help with aspects of the planning grant such as assistance with data analysis or creating risk typologies; development of screening tools; collection of qualitative data from youth or community members; support with systems mapping; planning for implementation; assistance with developing the theory of change and logic model; or planning facilitation.

Grantees expressed a desire for more programmatic TA; TA specifically on permanency; TA on implementing an RCT as a provider, minimizing youth burden during data collection, the role of the evaluator, and data needed for an evaluation; more structured support and guidelines generally; and more discussion about other sites' work on logic models.

Not all grantees will need the same level or type of TA. Grantees who are early in their partnership development may need TA focused on identifying and engaging new partners. Grantees who have limited evaluation experience may benefit from "evaluation 101" TA, which provides a foundation for the evaluation TA offered to all grantees. Grantees working in systems that are not their "primary" system may need assistance in understanding the nuances of the system – for example, understanding federal requirements for child welfare.

The suggested time line that included expected and suggested activities provided by the CB presented activities in a linear format. CB and the TA team highlighted the iterative nature of the activities as well as the fact that a grantee could be working on more than one activity at a time. Some grantees were able to use the time line and list of activities in a flexible manner, adjusting to reflect the realities of working in their community. Other grantees struggled – either being "stuck" on an activity due to challenges in their community or only working on the activity in the identified time period. Individual TA could be used to address this issue by working with the grantee to tailor the generic time line to fit their community.

Through periodic check-ins, the funder or TA provider(s) could invite grantees to share their needs and provide TA on those topics soon after the check-in.

Concluding thoughts: moving grantees toward evaluability

Experiences from Phase I suggest that the progress and level of rigor in grantees' proposed evaluation plans varied, and they took many different paths in pursuit of evaluability, the overall goal of the planning process. We approached the CB-provided activities as sequenced steps that could help grantees design a comprehensive service model and rigorous evaluation of the proposed comprehensive service model. One reasonable assumption is that grantees that completed more of the activities would be better prepared to launch a rigorous evaluation, as measured by their evaluability. Instead, the time line of activities provides a useful roadmap to help grantees think critically and apply their ongoing learning process to developing an evaluable comprehensive service model.

Grantees appreciated a time line that articulated the work to be done, yet the degree to which they followed the time line in a sequenced manner varied. Grantees in emerging partnerships, who were building relationships with planning partners while also completing the activities articulated by CB for the grant, were more likely to complete activities in order than the grantees in established partnerships. The latter had developed working relationships with planning partners before the grant started. Despite differences between the groups in starting and completing activities on time or in the order of activities, at the end of 18 months, both groups had accomplished a similar level of work, suggesting a need to appreciate variation in how the work may be accomplished.

Communication, collaboration, and support may be three necessary components to completing the work. Developing a collaborative learning community in which grantees are both providers and receivers of TA may enhance the work. The challenge will be to develop such a community when additional competitions for funding loom.

Funders and TA providers could develop messaging that clearly articulates the supportive and non-punitive nature of the TA. Sharing the time lines associated with the work of the TA provider may help address concerns if the grantees know any reporting will not be used in awarding future funds. In addition, future stages in the grant competition could "reward" required demonstrations of being an active, contributing member of the larger grant effort.

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APPENDIX A:
GRANTEE PROFILE TEMPLATE

All grantees submitted grant applications in response to the Phase I funding opportunity announcement (FOA). The grantee template was used to systematically extract data provided from grant application for analysis purposes.

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Table A.1. Grantee profile

Topic	Grantee Information
A. Summary Information	
A1. Grantee	
A2. City and State	
A3. Brief description of proposed services for at-risk youth	
A4. Goals and Objectives	
A5. Sources of information for this profile	
B. Partnerships and Collaborations	
B1. Type of agency -- Grantee	
B2. Role of child welfare agency in the partnership	
B3. State and/or governmental partners involved in the grant and their roles	
B4. Community-based / non-governmental partners involved in the grant and their roles	
B5. Philanthropic and business community partners involved in the grant and their roles	
B6. History of collaboration among the partners or in community	
B7. Evaluator(s) and affiliations	
B8. Key staff on project and their organizational affiliations and role in those organizations	
B9. Advisory / Steering / Planning Board? Composition	
C. Organizational Capacity	
C1. Applicant's organization has experience with proposed systems-level interventions	
C2. Relevant knowledge, experience and capabilities of proposed project director and key project staff	
C3. Defined and appropriate roles, responsibilities, and time commitments of proposed project staff positions	
C4. Management plan defines responsibilities, time lines, milestones, and quality assurance	
C5. Roles and responsibilities of lead agency are clearly defined	
C6. Lead agency has history of serving transition-aged youth/young adults involved with foster care	
C7. Lead agency experience using youth/young adults to inform services and program development	
D. Knowledge of the Target Population and Plans to Refine	
D1. Preliminary data and information about target population:	
D1a. Youth age 14-17 in foster care	
D1b. Youth aging out of foster care	
D1c. Homeless young adults with previous child welfare involvement	
D2. Data sources used for the population analysis/anticipate using	
D2a. Youth age 14-17 in foster care	
D2b. Youth aging out of foster care	
D2c. Homeless young adults with previous child welfare involvement	
D3. Knowledge of data available; whether cites limitations, and issues with using the data	
D4. Detailed agreements to secure and use each data set	
D5. Indicate how information from data analysis will inform efforts to refine interventions planned	

Topic	Grantee Information
E. Incorporation of Elements of Intervention Framework	
E1. How intervention framework informs intervention at three points of engagement	
E2. How the intervention plan builds a comprehensive strategy for the agency or system	
E3. Preliminary identification of those most at-risk of homelessness at each point of engagement	
E3a. Youth age 14-17 in foster care	
E3b. Youth aging out of foster care	
E3c. Homeless young adults with previous child welfare involvement	
E4. Currently used and proposed screening and assessment tools	
E5. How valid and reliable screening and assessment will be used at beginning of services and ongoing, to adjust interventions/services for the target populations.	
E6. How the project's interventions will be evidence-based, evidence-informed, adapted evidence-based, and culturally appropriate.	
E7. Existing resources and supports in the community for the target population:	
E7a. Housing	
E7b. Self-sufficiency	
E7c. Independent living skills	
E7d. Mental/behavioral health	
E7e. Other (specify)	
F. Proposed Package of Services/Interventions	
F1. Status of NYTD in state and county; indicates services provided to youth by the agency; how NYTD has informed the service context in state/county.	
F2. Names and description of key local policies affecting youth with child welfare involvement --Age of emancipation --Re-entry to foster care ---Other	
F3. Preliminary plan for referral and selection of youth/young adults into the intervention. Plans to develop sources of referral, create referral process, and test referrals at each engagement point.	
F4. Proposed service types and services to address each of the key outcomes for the target populations:	
F4a. Stable housing	
F4b. Permanent connections	
F4c. Social-emotional well-being	
F4d. Education/employment	
F5. Indicate how proposed services relate to risk and protective factors; how effective/ineffective they are and whether evidence-based; identify service gaps	
F6. Expected length of service/dosage	
F7. Evidence-based / Evidence-informed programs or services	
F8. Adaptations and enhancements planned for evidence-based or evidence-informed programs for this population and community	
F9. Indicates how services will be planned to fit with assessed needs, characteristics and preferences of youth	

Topic	Grantee Information
F10. Indicates how services and interventions will be delivered in a way sensitive to individual identity and culture	
F11. Indicates how data analysis will be used across partner agencies to facilitate alignment toward comprehensive approach to serving youth.	
G. Proposed Logic Model	
G1. Preliminary theory of change	
G2. Articulated connection between theory of change and USICH intervention framework	
G3. Extent to which preliminary logic model is clear and consistent with the theory of change	
G4. Inclusion of key elements in the logic model; missing elements (include outcomes in four domains identified in FOA; activities/services to address the four domains for youth at all 3 “engagement” points)	
H. Systems Adjustments	
H1. Discussion of Chafee services, how allocated, who is underserved, and how planning period will evaluate and reconfigure services and resources	
H2. Clear definition of geographic area to be served	
H3. Discussion of child welfare system operation and other factors influencing success of systems change in the area	
H4. Child welfare agency is lead agency or key partner and will take an active role in the project; indicate resources and activities of child welfare agency in the grant.	
H5. Describe how system improvements and interventions will be informed by impact of trauma on behavior, functioning, and ability to access services	
I. Evaluation Capacity	
I1. Entity responsible for data analysis and evaluation planning	
I2. Whether evaluator is internal, external, or not yet hired	
I3. Evaluator’s previous research and evaluation experience with:	
I3a. Data analysis on youth in foster care, runaway, and homeless youth	
I3b. Measurement of youth risk, resilience, and outcomes	
I3c. Rigorous evaluation designs	
I4. Independence of the evaluator or capacity to conduct objective and rigorous evaluation of the project	
J. Proposed Planning Period Activities and Time Frames	
J1. Brief summary of plans and time lines for:	
J1a. Finalizing intervention services and a comprehensive structure for the agency or system providing services and support	
J1b. Refining the identification of the most at-risk youth / young adults	
J1c. Evaluating and finalizing the use of screening and assessment tools to identify at-risk youth/young adults and target services	
J1d. Identifying, developing, reprogramming, and refining services for the target population	
J1e. Assessing appropriateness of services/supports to the needs of the target population	
J1f. Developing and refining the range of housing options for those at greatest risk	
J1g. Incorporating a positive youth development framework as support for impacts on the four core outcome areas	

Topic	Grantee Information
J1h. Involving youth/young adults in all aspects of the project	
J1i. Developing and finalizing an evaluation plan, including outcome, implementation, and cost analysis	
J2. The grantee has a Gantt chart or milestone chart showing time lines for activities	

Notes: [List acronyms AAA = Full name]

APPENDIX B: SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT TEMPLATE

The Children's Bureau required grantees to provide periodic updates on their activities, accomplishments, and future plans. Grantees used the semi-annual report suggested template to provide the information requested by the Children's Bureau at the conclusion of each reporting period.

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SEMI-ANNUAL REPORTING GUIDANCE

All grantees need to complete and submit the Administration for Children & Families (ACF) Performance Progress Report (or Semi-Annual Report [SAR]) at least four times in the course of the Youth at Risk of Homelessness (YARH) planning grants. This is your third submission, which is due April 30, 2015, and should cover activities between October 1, 2014, and March 31, 2015. You will submit one more SAR on October 31, 2015, and should cover activities between April 1, 2015, and September 30, 2015. The final report will be due December 31, 2015. Please note that the SF-425, a financial form, is due at the same time as the SAR.

The following set of tables is to be used in lieu of writing a full narrative for Appendix B – Program Indicators. Please write "See Attachment" in the explanation boxes on the PDF Appendix B and upload a separate file for the narrative.

Please name your file GranteeNumber_AppendixB_SAR3. The file should be both submitted to the Children's Bureau as a part of the semi-annual report using Grant Solutions[17] and uploaded individually to your grantee folder on the YARH SharePoint site.[18]

B-01: Major Activities and Accomplishments During the Current Six-Month Period

The following table is to be completed in lieu of writing a full narrative for Items B-01. You should be able to capture all of your text in the table provided below. However, if you feel additional narrative text is needed, you may provide that as well as an Attachment. Because each grantee may be focused on different activities at different times, the table includes activities that may occur at any point in the grant period. The same table will be used in each reporting cycle; thus, it includes activities that may not be applicable to your grant at this point. You only need to complete the rows for the activities/accomplishments your grant team has accomplished in the last six months.

In the table below, provide a response if your planning team had activities/accomplishments related to the specific activities listed ***during the reporting period of September 30, 2014, to March 31, 2015***. In the second column, provide details on the activities/accomplishments. The text below each specific activity provides suggestions for what could be discussed. The table is organized by activity type, indicated in bold.

The details you provide for an activity should be brief but enable the reader to understand what was accomplished.

[17] For question or assistance with Grant Solutions, please contact GrantSolutions.

[18] For questions or assistance with loading the appendix to the YARH SharePoint site, please contact the YARH Mathematica Team at YARH@Mathematica-MPR.com.

Activity and Description	Your Grant Activity/ Accomplishment
Engaged Planning Team and Partners	
Identified and/or engaged planning team members In the last six months, did your planning grant identify and/or engage planning team members? This category includes any hiring of staff or consultants. If yes, please list these members, including their home organization or unit, role in their home organization or unit, and role on the planning team. Please include information on how they were engaged, including dates and time of meetings and topics discussed. If there is a defined role for the individual in the planning grant, indicate whether there is an agreement with their home organization or unit to support their participation and whether grant funds are being used to support their participation on the team. Discuss any activities completed to engage or modify the planning team in the last six months (since the award of the grant).	
Established structure of planning team In the last six months, did your planning grant establish or modify the structure of your planning team? If yes, describe the overall structure developed or how it was modified. For example, is there a core group that meets weekly? Are there teams that are focused on a particular aspect of the work? Describe any activities accomplished to establish a workable structure for the planning team.	
Established formal relationships with partners[19] In the last six months, did your planning grant establish formal relationships with partners? If yes, describe the formal relationships your team developed with entities in the community that are not represented on the planning team ("partners"). Indicate the nature of the relationship and whether the partner may become a member of the planning team. Describe activities accomplished to establish formal relationships with community partners.	

[19] Partners are organizations or entities that do not have representation on the planning team but are critical to the success of the planning process. You may have formal partnerships in which there is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or an exchange of resources or informal partnerships that do not have an MOU or an exchange of resources.

Activity and Description	Your Grant Activity/ Accomplishment
Developed informal relationships with partners In the last six months, did your planning grant develop informal relationships with partners? If yes, describe these relationships. Informal relationships are those your team established with entities in the community that are not represented on the planning team (partners). Also, please note the informal relationships that existed prior to the grant and those you have developed since the planning period began. Indicate the nature of these relationships and whether the partner may become a formal partner or member of the planning team during the period of this grant.	
Established/ modified communication process In the last six months, did your planning grant establish or modify/revise your communication process? If yes, is it the same for planning-team members and partners? Summarize your communication process. Discuss any activities used to establish communication protocols for the planning team.	
Established or revised decision-making process In the last six months, did your planning grant establish or revise the decision-making process? If yes, briefly describe any activities used to establish or revise the decision making process for the planning team in the last six months.	

Activity and Description	Your Grant Activity/ Accomplishment
Obtained and Analyzed Data to Understand the Population	
Accessed administrative data sources/ planned to gain access to administrative data sources In the last six months, did your planning grant gain access to administrative data sources or plan to gain access to administrative data sources? If yes, please list those sources categorized by "accessed" or "planned." If your planning team has started the process to gain access to administrative sources in the last six months, please list those sources. Please provide additional information if the data source does not indicate what type of data it is.	
Set MOU/DUA in place In the last six months, did your planning grant set a MOU and/or DUA in place? If yes, list the entity with which you now have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or data use agreement (DUA) in place.	
Set MOU/DUA in progress In the last six months, did your planning grant set a MOU and/ or DUA in progress? If yes, list the entity with whom you started working on the memorandum of understanding (MOU) or data use agreements (DUA). Please describe the steps accomplished.	
Analyzed administrative data In the last six months did your planning grant analyze administrative data? If yes, briefly describe the analyses your team has conducted, including the particular data set and type of analyses. Describe what you have done with the findings. For example, used findings to focus a conversation with partners; used findings to identify cases for in-depth case record reviews; discussed changes that could be made to existing data systems to support future analyses.	

Activity and Description	Your Grant Activity/ Accomplishment
Integrated individual-level or case-/family-level data In the last six months, did your planning grant integrate individual, case and/or family level data? If yes, indicate whether your team has used individual-level integrated data systems that already exist in your community, supplemented existing integrated data, or built an integrated data set at the individual level. Please describe the particular data sets that were integrated in the last six months.	
Analyzed integrated data In the last six months, did your planning grant analyze integrated data? If yes, briefly describe the analyses your team has conducted on the integrated data in the last six months, what you found, and what you have done with the findings.	
Conducted data collection and/or accessed data from youth surveys and/or focus groups In the last six months, did your planning grant conduct data collection and/or access data from youth surveys and/or focus groups? If yes, indicate whether your team has used youth surveys (like NYTD) or conducted focus groups to define and refine the target population. Briefly describe what the data are, including whether the data existed prior to this grant or were collected during this grant period. Please focus on activities conducted in the last six months.	
Analyzed youth data In the last six months, did your planning grant analyze youth data? If yes, describe analyses your team has conducted on the youth surveys or focus groups in the last six months and what you found. Include what you have done with the findings.	
Identified new insights and/or support for existing ideas In the last six months, did your planning grant identify new insights and/or support for existing ideas? If yes, describe what your team has learned in the last six months from data analyses about the population of youth/young adults at risk of homelessness with child welfare involvement. What did you learn that is new to the team? What did you learn that confirmed previous ideas?	

Activity and Description	Your Grant Activity/ Accomplishment
Developed/refined/ modified a definition of "at risk" In the last six months, did your planning grant develop/refine/modify your definition of "at risk?" If yes, please provide your planning team's current definition of "at risk," including whether and how it has changed in the last six months. If your team has changed any aspect of their definition of "at risk" in the last six months, describe the rationale for the change. Examples of rationales include combining definitions from different entities, using findings from analyses to refine definitions, and so on.	
Identified at-risk youth In the last six months, did your planning grant identify at-risk youth? If yes, discuss any analyses that have occurred to help the team identify at-risk youth in the last six months. Examples include case record review, analysis of summary data from numerous entities, analysis of administrative data (integrated or not).	
Assessed and Developed Services and Referral Processes	
Assessed current services In the last six months, did your planning grant assess current services? If yes, discuss any activities your team has undertaken in the last six months to understand the current range of services offered to each of the three target populations.	
Conducted gap analysis In the last six months did your planning grant conduct a gap analysis? If yes, discuss the analyses conducted in the last six months to identify services youth/young adults in your community may need but are not currently able to access. Are there services that are underutilized? Are there services that are over-utilized? Services that are missing or for which there are waiting lists?	

Activity and Description	Your Grant Activity/ Accomplishment
Identified evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions In the last six months, did your planning grant identify evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions currently being used or to be used? If yes, describe how your planning team determined whether services (existing, enhanced, or to address gaps) are evidence-based or evidence-informed. Please discuss only activities conducted in the last six months.	
Decided to continue current evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions In the last six months, did your planning grant decide to continue current evidence-based and/or evidence-informed interventions? If yes, indicate whether the planning team has decided in the last six months to continue, modify, or replace each intervention. Provide a brief rationale for the decision.	
Decided to adapt or modify the evidence-based or evidence-informed services currently available In the last six months, did your planning grant decide to adapt or modify the evidence-based or evidence-informed services currently available in your community? If yes, have you determined whether you will you need to adapt or modify the interventions in any way to meet the needs of your populations? If so, will those adaptations be made in collaboration with the developer or distributor of the intervention? Did your team determine if the service environment will need to be changed? If yes, has the planning team made decisions about how that change will be accomplished? Please focus only on decisions made in the last six months.	
Identified referral and service priorities In the last six months, did your planning grant identify referral and service priorities? If yes, has your team identified: • a set of priority services for youth/young adults, • whether referral procedures and priorities for these services need to be modified? • what modifications are planned Please focus only on decisions made in the last six months.	

Activity and Description	Your Grant Activity/ Accomplishment
Identified screening and assessment tools In the last six months, did your planning grant identify/revise screening and assessment tools? If yes, explain why and how new tools were identified as well as the piloting of the new process. Please discuss how the screening and assessment tools were revised. Please focus only on decisions made in the last six months.	
Developed Theory of Change and Logic Model	
Documented/ revised theory of change[20] – partnership In the last six months, did your planning grant develop/revise your theory of change at the partnership level (that is, how is your planning team going to get organizations to implement the comprehensive system of services you are designing)? If yes, describe the developed or revised theory of change. Describe why the theory of change needed modification. Please feel free to describe in an appendix if that would be easier.	
Documented/ revised theory of change – service delivery In the last six months, did your planning grant develop or revise your planning team's theory of change on which your logic model for the comprehensive system of services is based? If yes, describe the current theory of change and why modification were needed. Please feel free to describe in an appendix if that would be easier.	
Developed/revised a logic model[21] for the service delivery In the last six months, did your planning grant develop or revise your logical model for service delivery? If yes, discuss the state of the logic model for your comprehensive system of services. If your planning team has a logic model they are currently working with, please attach it as an appendix to this document. If there have been no changes in the last six months (since your application), please enter "no changes."	

[20] A theory of change explains the underlying assumptions about causation—why things happen.

[21] A logic model uses a theory of change to tie program activities to outcomes. Logic models tend to discuss inputs, program activities, outputs, intermediate outcomes, and long-term outcomes. A good resource for logic models is the United Way's *Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach*.

Activity and Description	Your Grant Activity/ Accomplishment
Developed Evaluation Design	
Designed rigorous evaluation design In the last six months, did your planning grant design a rigorous evaluation design? If yes, describe activities conducted in the last six months that helped the planning team design a rigorous evaluation design. Include decisions made regarding various elements of the design (for example, individual randomized controlled trial, cluster randomized controlled trial, quasi-experimental design study with comparison group).	
Identified intervention services to be evaluated In the last six months, did your planning grant identify intervention services to be evaluated? If yes, describe what services your planning team will offer youth/young adults as part of the evaluation. What activities did the planning team undertake in the last six months to make these decisions?	
Identified comparison services – what the new services will be compared with In the last six months, did your planning grant identify comparison services (i.e. what the new services will be compared with)? If yes, describe the set of services the planning team will offer the comparison group of youth/young adults as part of the evaluation. What activities did the planning team undertake in the last six months to make these decisions?	
Developed process for identifying the youth/young adults who will be the target of the intervention In the last six months, did your planning grant develop a process for identifying the youth/ young adults who will be the target of the intervention in any of the three engagement points? If yes, describe activities conducted in the last six months that led to the determination of the identification process for youth/young adults who will identified and asked to participate in the intervention.	

Activity and Description	Your Grant Activity/ Accomplishment
Assessed partner support for evaluation design In the last six months, did your planning grant assess partner support for evaluation design? If yes, describe activities conducted in the last six months to create buy-in from your partners and other entities in the community.	
Selected outcomes for the evaluation In the last six months, did your planning grant select outcomes for the evaluation? If yes, describe activities undertaken in the last six months to select the outcomes and measures proposed for the rigorous evaluation. If outcomes and measures have been selected, please list them.	
Determined target sample size In the last six months, did your planning grant determine target sample size? If yes, describe activities taken in the last six months to determine the target sample size, including how that number was determined (that is, number of youth served by targeted organizations, power analyses).	
Developed recruitment and enrollment processes In the last six months, did your planning grant develop recruitment and enrollment processes? If yes, describe the progress your planning team has made in developing the recruitment and enrollment processes over the last six months. If these decisions have been made, please describe the processes as they stand.	
Developed consent and assent processes In the last six months, did your planning grant develop consent and assent processes? If yes, describe activities undertaken in the last six months to develop the consent process your evaluation may use to gain informed consent and assent to participate in the evaluation study. Briefly describe the consent process as planned/ developed. This may involve consent from biological parents or guardians for youth under 18, assent for youth under 18, and consent from young adults over 18.	

Activity and Description	Your Grant Activity/ Accomplishment
IRB Research/Engagement In the last six months, did your planning grant research information about or engage in an IRB process?	
Other[22] In the last six months, did your planning grant have other activities to report? If yes, describe.	

B-02: Problems

Using the table below, please describe the problems you have encountered during this reporting period. If appropriate, please identify steps that have been taken or will be taken in this upcoming reporting period to address the identified problem.

Where appropriate, please use the categories above to categorize and describe your problems encountered. Please use a format in which the first sentence is bold and a summary of the problem with additional text to describe the problem in more detail. Table B-02 is set up for your use in reporting.

Table B-02. Problems Encountered During Reporting Period

B-03: Significant Findings and Events

Discuss the most significant findings, events, or activities that occurred during the past reporting period. There will be overlap with B-01, but here we are looking for what **you** define as significant.

[22] Please feel free to use "Other" but after listing "Other" please categorize (i.e. budget). If you have several "others" please create additional rows for each "other."

Similar to B-02, please provide a summary of the finding or event in bold followed by additional detail. Table B-03 is set up for your use in reporting.

Table B-03. Significant Findings and Events During Reporting Period

B-04: Dissemination Activities

Briefly describe project related inquiries and information dissemination activities carried out over the reporting period. Itemize and include a copy of any newspaper, newsletter, magazine articles or other published materials considered relevant to project activities, or used for project information or public relations purposes.

Please categorized the information in the following ways:

Internal vs external
Information on the grant vs findings/ work of the grant[23]/ other
Type of dissemination (examples include: newspapers, presentation, articles, other)

Who? (Internal vs. External)	Content? (Information on the grant vs. findings of the grant)	Vehicle? (Newspaper, meeting, presentation, article)	Description

B-05: Other Activities

Please use this section to explain any changes to the grant that resulted in a change to the budget but did not include a budget revision. Please see example.

[23] Examples include: (a) identification of target populations; (b) assessment of current services in the community; and (c) gaps in current services).

B-06: Activities Planned for Next Reporting Period

The table below is replicated from B-01. Please indicate whether your team is planning to undertake a particular activity in the next reporting period (April 1, 2014 – September 30, 2014). This could be followed by a brief statement of what your planning team will undertake in the upcoming planning period. We will also review this information for opportunities to provide technical assistance.

Activity	Your Planned Activities for the Next Reporting Period
Identifying and/or engaging planning team members	
Establishing structure of planning team	
Establishing formal relationships with partners	
Developing informal relationships with partners	
Establishing/ modifying communication process	
Establishing or revising decision-making process	
Accessing administrative data sources/ planning to gain access to administrative data sources	
Setting MOU/DUA in place	
Setting MOU/DUA in progress	
Analyzing administrative data	
Integrating individual-level or case-/family-level data	
Analyzing integrated data	
Conducting and/or accessing data from youth surveys or focus groups	
Analyzing youth data	
Identifying new insights and/or support for existing ideas	
Developing/refining/modifying a definition of "at risk"	
Identifying at-risk youth	
Assessing current services	
Conducting gap analysis	
Identifying evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions	

Activity	Your Planned Activities for the Next Reporting Period
Deciding/discussing whether to continue current evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions	
Deciding/discussing adaptation or modification of evidence-based or evidence-informed services selected by your community	
Identifying referral and service processes	
Identifying screening and assessment tools	
Documenting/developing/revising theory of change – partnership	
Documenting/developing/revising theory of change – service delivery	
Developing/revising a logic model for the service delivery	
Designing a rigorous evaluation design	
Interviewing/selecting intervention services to be evaluated	
Identifying comparison services—what the new services will be compared with	
Developing/determining process for identifying the youth/young adults who will be the target of the intervention	
Assessing partner support for evaluation design	
Selecting outcomes for the evaluation	
Determining target sample size	
Developing recruitment and enrollment processes	
Developing consent process and assent process	
IRB Research/Engagement	
Other	

APPENDIX C:
SITE VISIT MATERIALS

Planning team members and partners participated in interviews during site visits to each grantee. The site visit materials consist of a site visit protocol and a write-up template. The protocol contains a table summarizing key activities, an introductory script, and questions related to each module. The write-up template provides a structured format for site visitors to document site visit findings.

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YARH Process Study: Annotated Protocol

January 2, 2015

Introduction

This document includes a summary table; the basic introductory script; and then modules. Each module includes the name of the key activity as listed by CB, when CB anticipated the work would be done, and the possible questions for each module. We identified the documentation that we have to help inform site visitors on where the grantees are with each activity.

We are envisioning semi-structured interviews – that is the questions provided here are suggestions and do not need to be asked verbatim. Nor do the questions need to be asked in the order presented.

A draft annotated reporting template is here. A final version, and a clean version, will be created once the reporting template is finalized in late January 2015.

Summary Table

This summary table may help site visitors manage the tailoring of protocols in a manner that will ensure coverage of all key activities while not overwhelming any particular respondent. Activities marked by a * may cause concern to respondents as they could be viewed as overly technical or sensitive as it could be seen as evaluating their progress.

You will note that the Project Leadership is listed as a likely respondent for every activity. It will not be possible to discuss all 12 activities in the 60 minute interviews. The # indicates that you may be able to cover the activity without including the project leadership.

The column on the far right is to help site visitors ensure they have covered every key activity.

Key Activity (Time) ***Description***	**Likely Respondents**	**Covered**
1. Data analysis to define and refine the target population* (Oct 2013 – Mar 2014) Grantee Funding Opportunity Announcement, p. 25 Extensive data analysis. Who are the youth/young adults? How many in each population? Demographic characteristics? Trajectories towards homelessness Needs across outcome areas Comprehensive knowledge of available data, including limitations Data analysis to inform/refine definition of at-risk	Project Leadership (PD, PM)# Data Analysts Evaluator Subgroup chairs or members	
2. Identify youth most at-risk from data analysis (Jan – June 2014) Grantee Funding Opportunity Announcement, p. 25 Level of risk should be assessed based on a set of risk and protective factors Evidence partners in agreement with definition	Project Leadership# Data Analysts Evaluator Subgroup chairs or members	
3. Conduct needs assessment of the target youth (Jan – June 2014) Grantee Funding Opportunity Announcement, p. 25-6	Project Leadership Data Analysts Evaluator	
4. Determine, align, and develop effective partnerships (Oct 2013 – Sept 2015) Grantee Funding Opportunity Announcement, p. 27 Formal links Strengthening partnerships for implementation Management of Phase II	Project Leadership Agency Heads (Child Welfare and others) Subgroup chairs	
5. Assess services and gap analysis (Apr – Sept 2014) Grantee Funding Opportunity Announcement, p. 25-6	Project Leadership Data Analysis Evaluator	

Key Activity (Time) ***Description***	**Likely Respondents**	**Covered**
6. Develop and finalize the plans to adapt, modify, or create the subset of the service interventions identified from the needs assessment (Jul – Dec 2014) Grantee Funding Opportunity Announcement, p. 26-7 Time line for implementation Description of programs, models, etc. Training and technical assistance to support implementation (initial and on-going) Systematic and periodic screening of youth/young adults	Project Leadership# Subgroup chairs or members	
7. Review, refine, and develop screening/assessments* (Jul – Dec 2014) Grantee Funding Opportunity Announcement, p. 25-6 Collecting and analyzing data to determine eligibility Evidence that screening and assessment tools are the most effective	Project Leadership# Evaluators Subgroup chairs or members	
8. Develop theory of change and logic model (Jul – Dec 2014) Grantee Funding Opportunity Announcement, p. 28 Logic model should show connections Theory of change guides proposed activities	Project Leadership Evaluators Subgroup chairs or members	
9. Prepare the evaluation plan* (Oct 2014 – June 2015) Grantee Funding Opportunity Announcement, p. 27 Plan for progress monitoring and program evaluation Indicators for youth- and system-level outcomes Indicators for implementation at participant, program, agency/organization, partner, and community levels Clear and detailed data collection plans Detailed data analysis plan	Project Leadership# Evaluators Agency Heads (Child Welfare and others)	
10. Conduct a comprehensive readiness assessment* (Jan – June 2015) Grantee Funding Opportunity Announcement, p. 26 Assess system readiness Assess fit within current system	Project Leadership Evaluators Agency Heads (Child Welfare and others)	
11. Conduct an analysis and determine the referral and selection process (Jan - June 2015) Test the referral and selection process (Jul – Sep 2015) Sources for referral and referral process	Project Leadership Subgroup chairs or members Evaluator	
12. Address sustainability and dissemination* (Jul – Sep 2015)	Project Leadership Agency Heads (Child Welfare and others)	

Things to Consider When Tailoring Protocols

Site visit teams should tailor the protocol for their particular visit and interviews. There is a lot to cover but not all groups will have the same level of information on all key activities. Depending on the amount of information respondents have, it seems reasonable to cover 3 or 4 activities per group interview. You will likely be able to cover 5 or 6 activities in an individual interview.

Using the table above, the site team should be able to identify the key activities (and related questions) for each interview. We encourage the site visit team to identify a second tier of questions to ensure they make the most of their interview time.

Some things to consider when tailoring the protocol:

- How long is the interview?
- How many people are in the interview?
- Do they have similar roles for the grant?
- Are there particular activities respondents may have led?
- Are there particular activities respondents may not have been involved in?
- Are there better respondents for the particular activity?
- What can you learn from the SAR and one-on-one notes that can help prompt or seek confirmation rather than starting the conversation from the ground up?
- Have you planned to cover the activity at different points in time during the site visit? This may help you get general responses earlier and more detailed responses later.

Resources

The following documents may assist the site visit team in preparing for the visit and tailoring the protocol. They should be reviewed by all members of the site team.

- Grantee Profile, based on initial application.
- April 2014 SAR, as submitted and data extraction in SharePoint
- Summary of August 2014 one-one-one meeting
- October 2014 SAR, as submitted and data extraction in SharePoint
- Summary of November 2014 one-on-one meeting
- Evaluability Assessment Template (detailed table) and Report (narrative)

Introductory Script

The following scripts will not be read verbatim. As the interviewer, you need to be sufficiently familiar with the script to introduce the study and the focus group process effortlessly. We suggest that you familiarize yourself thoroughly with the text in advance. Your manner should be relaxed and your tone conversational throughout the discussion.

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this conversation. Your participation is very important to the study. I'm _____ and I work for Mathematica Policy Research, an independent social policy research company.

We are conducting a study for the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation at the Administration of Children and Families (ACF) at the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. The major goal of the study is to understand how the planning grant supported the work of local communities in building a comprehensive service model to serve youth and young adults at-risk of homelessness. We will analyze survey results, documents submitted as part of the grant—such as semi-annual reports—and notes from conversations like this to understand the activities grantees planned and completed, what grantees see as the major outcomes of the planning process, the target populations for whom the comprehensive service model is designed, the interventions that will be part of the comprehensive service model, and the partnerships and integration that were supported for or rose from the planning grant activities.

We would like to talk with you about your experiences and perceptions of the planning grant process and activities. Our team will use your responses in conjunction with other data sources to identify themes to describe the planning grant experience. Comments will not be attributed to specific individuals or grantees, and no individuals will be quoted by name. Your participation in this discussion is voluntary.

Although the discussion will be free-flowing there are particular activities we are interested in learning about. You'll see there is a common set of questions we're interested in for each activity. These questions focus around when your planning team worked on a particular activity, who worked on it, how the work was done, lesson learned, assumptions confirmed, challenges encountered and how they were addressed, and strengths your team brought to the activity.

I am going to moderate the discussion. It is really important for everyone to speak up so we can have a lively and informative discussion. It will also be helpful if you speak one at a time, so everyone has a chance to talk. We ask that you respect each other's point of view.

Your responses will be kept private and used only for research purposes.

There are no right or wrong answers. You are the experts, and we want to learn from you.

We will not share your comments with anyone other than members of the research team. We will not attribute any statements to you, or your organization, in the final report submitted to ACF.

We have many topics to cover during the discussion. At times, I may need to move the conversation along to be sure we cover everything.

I would like to record our discussion with a digital recorder so I can listen to it later when I write up my notes. No one besides our research team will listen to the recording. If you want to say anything that

you don't want recorded, please let me know and I will be glad to pause the recorder. Does anyone have any objections to being part of this interview or to my recording our discussion?

We want to reiterate that being part of this discussion is up to you, and you may choose not to answer a question if you wish. Being part of this discussion will not affect your employment or your involvement with the YARH planning grant.

The discussion will last no more than one and a half hours, and we will not take any formal breaks. Please feel free to get up at any time if you need to do so.

Since there are several of us participating in this discussion, please be sure to speak clearly, and one at a time—this will help ensure that everyone gets a chance to participate, and should minimize the number of times we need to ask people to repeat what they said. If you have a different perspective from the one being presented that is completely fine, and we are absolutely interested in hearing different sides of the issues we will be discussing today. Please allow other group members time to finish speaking before you provide input. We have a number of topics to discuss during our time together, and we want to be sure to hear from everyone today. I will manage the discussion so that we cover everything and hear from everyone in the time we have together today. This may require me to interrupt you to allow another person to speak; I apologize for that in advance but it is necessary to accomplish our goals.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 0970-0445 and it expires 04/30/2016.

After answering any questions

Good, let's begin.

Once again, thank you for agreeing to meet with us today. Let's go around the room now and introduce ourselves. Please say your name and the name of the organization you represent.

Standard Questions

The following questions are the key questions that should be address with each activity. We present them in a general form here; the modules have tailored them for each activity. We think this basic set of questions will help address the research questions of the process study.

1. Did the planning team complete the activity?

2. If so,
    a. When?
    b. Who did it?
    c. How was it done?
    d. Did the timing, staff, or process differ by population?
    e. What was learned? (both confirmed and new information)
    f. What challenges were encountered? How were they addressed?
    g. What strengths did the team have to do the work?
    h. Did the planning team need technical assistance or support? If so, who provided what type of technical assistance or support?

3. If not, what has limited the planning team's ability to complete the activity as identified by the CB?

1. Data analysis to define and refine the target population

(Oct 2013 – Mar 2014)

Possible data sources: SAR Items 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 (April 2014 SAR; October 2014 SAR; SAR Tracking Data Extractions). One-on-one notes (August; November).

- Did the planning team conduct a data analysis to define and refine the target populations?
- If so,
    - When was it conducted?
    - Who conducted the analysis?
    - How was the analysis conducted?
    - Did the timing, staff, or process differ by population?
    - What did the analyses confirm for the planning team?
    - What new information did the analyses provide?
    - What challenges were encountered in this activity? How were they addressed?
    - What strengths helped the planning team do the data analysis?
    - Did the planning team use technical assistance or support to conduct the analyses? If so, who and for what?
- If not, what limited the planning team's ability to conduct a data analysis?

<u>About the Data</u> – *probably for the data analysts or evaluators or project leadership*

- What data were used?
- Were different data sources used for the different populations?

- How did the planning team select that data for analysis?
- How difficult was it to develop MOUs or other agreements to get the data?
- What data did the planning team have at the beginning of the grant process?
- What data did the planning team want to include in the analysis but couldn't?
- What are the strengths of the data accessed?
- What are the limitations of the data accessed?

Data Analysis – *probably for the data analysts or evaluators or project leadership*

- Did the data analysis strategy differ for different populations?
- What type of analysis was done? (options include descriptive, predictive risk modeling)
- Who conducted the actual analysis? Member of the planning team? Staff at a planning team organization? Consultant?
- Have the findings been shared with the larger community? If so, reaction?
- Did the data analysis plans change over time? Why?

Using Data – *probably for the work groups more so than the "how did they do it?"*

- How is the planning team using the data and data analysis findings?
- Has there been a change among either the planning team members or larger community about the use of data?
- How will this data be used in the future? (For example, continue to add to it and use it "real-time"; continue to add and use at regular intervals; never again).

2. Identify youth most at-risk from data analysis

(Jan – June 2014)

Possible data sources: SAR Items 16 and 17 (April 2014 SAR; October 2014 SAR; SAR Tracking Data Extractions). One-on-one notes (August; November). Evaluability Assessment Template Items 3, 5, 5a, 5b, 5c, 7, 7a, 7b, 7c, 8, and 9.

- Did the planning team develop a definition of "at-risk for homelessness" to help identify youth most at-risk from the data analysis?
- If so,
  - When was it developed?
  - Who developed the definition? And identification process?
  - How was the definition developed?
  - Did the timing, staff, or process differ by population?
  - How is the definition different from what was used in the past?
  - What challenges were encountered in this activity? How were they addressed?
  - What strengths helped the planning team come up with a definition and use it to identify youth?
  - Did the planning team use technical assistance or support to develop a definition? If so, who and for what?
- If not, what limited the planning team's ability to develop/revise a definition?

Definitions

- How has your planning team defined "at-risk"? Does it differ for each population?
- How did your data analysis inform your definition of "at-risk"?
- Do you feel your community will support the definition of "at-risk" developed by the planning team? If so, why? If not, why not?

Identification

- How will it be determined if a particular youth meets the definition?
- Does the planning team have any estimates for the number of youth who meet the definition in each of the three target populations?

3. Conduct needs assessment of the target youth

(Jan – June 2014)
Possible data sources: SAR Items 18 and 19 (April 2014 SAR; October 2014 SAR; SAR Tracking Data Extractions). One-on-one notes (August; November). Evaluability Assessment Template Items 2, 2a, 2b, and 2c.

- Did the planning team conduct a needs assessment of the target youth?
- If so,
  - When was it conducted?
  - Who conducted the needs assessment?
  - How was the needs assessment developed?
  - Did the timing, staff, or process differ by population?
  - What challenges were encountered in this activity? How were they addressed?
  - What strengths helped the planning team conduct a needs assessment?
  - Did the planning team use technical assistance or support to conduct a needs assessment? If so, who and for what?
- If not, what limited the planning team's ability to conduct a needs assessment?

4. Determine, align, and develop effective partnerships

(Oct 2013 – Sept 2015)
Possible data sources: SAR Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 (April 2014 SAR; October 2014 SAR; SAR Tracking Data Extractions). Evaluability Assessment Template Items 1 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

- Did the planning team build the needed effective partnerships?
- If so,
  - When?
  - Who worked on developing the partnerships?
  - How were partners identified?
  - What was learned? (both confirmed and new information)

- ➢ What challenges were encountered in conducting the assessment? How were they addressed?
- ➢ What strengths did the team have to do the work?
- ➢ Did the planning team need technical assistance or support? If so, who provided what type of technical assistance or support?

❖ If not, what has limited the planning team's ability to develop effective partnerships?

Structure and Membership

- How many organizations are members of the planning team?
- Does the partnership differ by population?
- Is this a new partnership? Or does it build on an existing partnership?
- Who is missing from the partnership? Why are they missing?
- Have there been changes in membership at the organization- or individual-level over the life of the planning grant? If so, why?
- Do you see the same partnership moving to Phase II?

Relationship between Respondent and Planning Team

- How did you become a member of the planning team?
- Have you been a part of something like this before? If so, was it with the same people?
- Are you compensated for your work on the planning team? (This may include "release time" to do planning team work, or compensation to the individual or their home organization).
- Do you feel you were able to engage to the degree that you wanted? If not, why not?
- Do you feel the planning team leadership listened to your viewpoint?

Planning Team Functioning

- Do you think there is shared vision that is driving this work?
- Who do you think is driving this work?
- How do members of the planning team communicate with each other? With the larger community?
- What is the decision-making process used by the planning team?
- Do you think there is joint accountability for the work by the planning team?
- Who provides oversight to the planning team? Do you feel it is provided at an appropriate level?

5. Assess services and gap analysis

(Apr – Sept 2014)
Possible data sources: SAR Items 18 and 19 (April 2014 SAR; October 2014 SAR; SAR Tracking Data Extractions). One-on-one notes (August; November). Evaluability Assessment Template Item 12.

❖ Did the planning team conduct an assessment of services or a gap analysis?

❖ If so,

- ➢ When was it conducted?
- ➢ Who conducted it?

- How was the assessment conducted?
- Did the timing, staff, or process differ by population?
- What challenges were encountered in this activity? How were they addressed?
- What strengths helped the planning team conduct this assessment?
- Did the planning team use technical assistance or support to conduct the assessment? If so, who and for what?

- If not, what limited the planning team's ability to develop/revise a definition?

6. Develop and finalize the plans to adapt, modify, or create the subset of the service interventions identified from the needs assessment

(Jul – Dec 2014)
Possible data sources: SAR Items 20, 21, and 22 (April 2014 SAR; October 2014 SAR; SAR Tracking Data Extractions). One-on-one notes (August; November). Evaluability Assessment Template Items 13, 13a, 13b, 13c, 14, 15, and 16.

- Did the planning team identify services, including identifying needed adaptations or modifications?

- If so,

  - When was this work done?
  - Who did it?
  - How was it done?
  - Did the timing, staff, or process differ by population?
  - What strengths did the team have to do the work?
  - Did the planning team need technical assistance or support? If so, who provided what type of technical assistance or support?
- If not, what has limited the planning team's ability to identify services, including identifying needed adaptations or modifications?

<u>Use of Evidence-Based or Evidence-Informed Interventions</u>

- When you started the planning grant to what extent were evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions used in your community?
- Will the planning team make any recommendations for changes related to the use of evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions in your community?
- What was the definition of evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions that your community used?
- What was the process for identifying evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions?

<u>Specific Interventions</u>

- What evidence-based or evidence-informed interventions is the planning team considering/recommending for Phase II?
- Are these interventions in use already?
- Will these interventions replace other services currently provided? If so, what will be replaced?

7. Review, refine, and develop screening/assessments

(Jul – Dec 2014)
Possible data sources: SAR Items 23 and 24 (April 2014 SAR; October 2014 SAR; SAR Tracking Data Extractions). One-on-one notes (August; November). Evaluability Assessment Template Item 4.

- Did the planning team review and select screening and/or assessment measures?
- If so,
  - When did the process occur?
  - Who identified possible measures? Who reviewed possible measures? Who selected possible measures?
  - How where measures selected for inclusion?
  - Did the timing, staff, or process differ by population?
  - Are the measures different than those currently used? If so, how?
  - What challenges were encountered in this activity? How were they addressed?
  - What strengths helped the planning team identify and select measures?
  - Did the planning team use technical assistance or support for this work? If so, who and for what?
- If not, what limited the planning team's ability to identified, review, and select screening/assessment measures?

<u>Purpose and Use of Measures</u>

- What characteristics are the focus of the screening or assessments?
- Will you use the same tools for all three populations? If not, why not?
- What training will be needed for staff to use the tools? Have staff reviewed the tools?

<u>Identification vs. Development of Measures</u>

- Did you develop your own measures?
- If so,
  - Why?
  - Did you use any existing measures as a starting point?

8. Develop theory of change and logic model

(Jul – Dec 2014)
Possible data sources: SAR Items 25, 26, and 27 (April 2014 SAR; October 2014 SAR; SAR Tracking Data Extractions). One-on-one notes (August; November). Evaluability Assessment Template Item 17.

- Did the planning team develop a theory of change? A logic model?

- If so,
  - When was the theory of change developed? When was the logic model developed?
  - Who developed the theory of change? Who developed the logic model?
  - How was the theory of change developed? How was the logic model developed?
  - Did the timing, staff, or process differ by population?
  - What is the theory of change? The logic model? (Accept copies if offered.)
  - What challenges were encountered? How were they addressed?
  - What strengths did the team have to do the work?
  - Did the planning team need technical assistance or support? If so, who provided what type of technical assistance or support?

- If not, what has limited the planning team's ability to develop the theory of change or logic model?

Theory of Change

- Did the theory of change change over time?
- Is there support for the theory of change among planning team members? Among the larger community?
- How is the theory of change shaping the work the planning team is doing?

Logic Model

- Is the same logic model guiding the work with all three populations?
- Did the logic model change over time?
- Is there support for the logic model among planning team members? Among the larger community?
- How is the logic model shaping the work the planning team is doing? (screening, selection of intervention, selection of outcomes)

9. Prepare the evaluation plan

(Oct 2014 – June 2015)

Possible data sources: SAR Items 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37 (April 2014 SAR; October 2014 SAR; SAR Tracking Data Extractions). One-on-one notes (August; November). Evaluability Assessment Template Items 11, 18, 19, 27, 28, 28a, 28b, 28c, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, and 40.

- Does the planning team have an evaluation plan?

- If so,
  - When did you start it? When was it finished?
  - Who participated in the development of the evaluation plan?
  - How was the evaluation plan developed?
  - Does the evaluation plan differ by population?
  - Did the timing, staff, or process differ by population?
  - What challenges were encountered? How were they addressed?
  - What strengths did the team have to do the work?

- ➢ Did the planning team need technical assistance or support? If so, who provided what type of technical assistance or support?

❖ If not, what has limited the planning team's ability to develop an evaluation plan?

Leadership/Owner

- Who is the lead for the evaluation plan?
- What is their experience with this type of evaluation?

Focal Intervention(s)

- What is the evaluation testing? What is the comparison condition?

Outcome Evaluation

- Design (RCT, QED – if QED what kind of comparison group)?
- Is there community support for the design?
- If an RCT, what is the planned randomization process? Is there community support for this process?
- Does any of this differ for different populations?
- Has the planning team considered sample size (or power)? If so, what is the estimated target sample size? Does that seem feasible?
- How will youth and young adults be recruited into the study? What will be the consent and assent processes?
- Do you know how/where you will need to get IRB approval?
- What type of data collections are planned? Baseline (screening)? On-going? Follow-up?

Overall Evaluation

- What do you think will make the evaluation plan possible in your community?
- Has the planning team discussed the various pieces of an evaluation raised in the Phase I FOA (impact, implementation, and cost)?

10. Conduct a comprehensive readiness assessment

(Jan – June 2015)
Possible data sources: SAR Items 23 and 24 (April 2014 SAR; October 2014 SAR; SAR Tracking Data Extractions). One-on-one notes (August; November). Evaluability Assessment Template Items 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and 38.

❖ Did the planning team complete a comprehensive readiness assessment?

❖ If so,

- ➢ When?
- ➢ Who did the assessment?
- ➢ How was the assessment conducted?
- ➢ What was learned? (both confirmed and new information)
- ➢ What challenges were encountered in conducting the assessment? How were they addressed?

- What strengths did the team have to do the work?
- Did the planning team need technical assistance or support? If so, who provided what type of technical assistance or support?

❖ If not, what has limited the planning team's ability to conduct a readiness assessment?

Gut-Check

- Do they think the intervention and evaluation are feasible?

11. Conduct an analysis and determine the referral and selection process

(Jan - June 2015)

Test the referral and selection process

(Jul – Sep 2015)
Possible data sources: SAR Item 31 (April 2014 SAR; October 2014 SAR; SAR Tracking Data Extractions). One-on-one notes (August; November). Evaluability Assessment Template Items 6, 6a, 6b, 6c, and 10.

❖ Does the planning team have plans to test the referral and selection process?

❖ If so,

- When with the pilot occur? What will be piloted?
- Who will conduct the pilot?
- Did the timing, staff, or process differ by population?
- If completed,
  - What was learned? (both confirmed and new information)
  - What challenges were encountered? How were they addressed?
  - What strengths did the team have to do the work?

- Did the planning team need technical assistance or support? If so, who provided what type of technical assistance or support?

❖ If not, what has limited the planning team's ability to plan or start a test of the referral and selection process?

12. Address sustainability and dissemination

(Jul – Sep 2015)
Possible data sources: SAR Item B-04 (April 2014 SAR; October 2014 SAR; SAR Tracking Data Extractions). One-on-one notes (August; November).

❖ Has the planning team started to address sustainability and dissemination?

- If so,
  - When did sustainability and dissemination become a focus for the planning team?
  - Who has been involved in the sustainability and dissemination planning?
  - How was the sustainability and dissemination plan developed?
  - What challenges were encountered? How were they addressed?
  - What strengths did the team have to do the work?
  - Did the planning team need technical assistance or support? If so, who provided what type of technical assistance or support?

- If not, what has limited the planning team's ability to complete the activity as identified by the CB?

Community Support

- If so, how do you think your community will support this work continuing?
- If you don't think the community will support continuing this work, why not?
- Has the planning team shared the intervention(s), theory of change, logic model, and evaluation plan with a larger community?
- If so, what was the reaction? Was the reaction what you expected? If not, how was it different?

Wrap-Up

- What do you think are the biggest strengths of the planning team?
- What were the biggest challenges? Were these the challenges you anticipated or new ones?
- What is the biggest surprise of the planning grant?
- What is the biggest disappoint of the planning grant?

YARH Process Study: Reporting

January 30 2015

Summary of Site Visit

Date of Visit	
Site Visitors	
Number of Interviews Conducted	
Evaluability Assessment Updated (Yes | No)	
Link to Evaluability Assessment Template	[insert link]
Link to N drive notes and recordings	[insert link]

Summary of Interviews

Interview Number	Description of Respondent(s)
1	[General descriptor for respondent like Project Director, Evaluator, Social Well-Being Work Group, etc.]
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	

Summary of Key Activities

Key Activity and expected time period	Started			Completed			Notes
	Early	As Indicated	Late	Early	As Indicated	Late	
1. Data analysis to define and refine the target population (Oct 2013 – Mar 2014)							
2. Identify youth most at-risk from data analysis (Jan – June 2014)							
3. Conduct needs assessment of the target youth (Jan – June 2014)							
4. Determine, align, and develop effective partnerships (Oct 2013 – Sept 2015)							
5. Assess services and gap analysis (Apr – Sept 2014)							
6. Develop and finalize the plans to adapt, modify, or create the subset of the service interventions identified from the needs assessment (Jul – Dec 2014)							
7. Review, refine, and develop screening/assessments (Jul – Dec 2014)							
8. Develop theory of change and logic model (Jul – Dec 2014)							
9. Prepare the evaluation plan (Oct 2014 – June 2015)							
10. Conduct a comprehensive readiness assessment (Jan – June 2015)							
11a. Conduct an analysis and determine the referral and selection process (Jan - June 2015)							
11b. Test the referral and selection process (Jul – Sep 2015)							
12. Address sustainability and dissemination (Jul – Sep 2015)							

1. Data analysis to define and refine the target population

Summary.

[Please provide a one or two paragraph summary that gives an overview of the data analysis. This should include the data they accessed, the methods, whether it differed by population, the main take away points from the analysis, and the strengths and challenges their project has related to the data analysis. If some respondents had different opinions/experiences please capture that here.]

Data Analysis.

[Please provide additional detail on what data they accessed, who conducted the analysis, and the lessons learned or confirmed. Also, if they used additional technical assistance or support to do the data analysis that should be noted here as well. Please feel free to use separate paragraphs and headers to capture the details.]

Moving Forward with the Data Work.

[Please provide additional detail on whether the grantee's community is committed to an integrated data system, how they are going to do that, etc.]

2. Identify youth most at-risk from data analysis

Summary.

[Please provide a one or two paragraph summary that gives an overview of the grantees work related to identifying the most at-risk youth. This should include the definition of at-risk they are using. You can reference information in activity 1 as well, no need to duplicate. Please be sure to discuss technical assistance, strengths, challenges, and alternative opinions/experiences.]

Definition.

[Please provide the definition the grantee is using. In particular, discuss if it varies by population.]

Identification.

[Please provide additional detail on how they identified the youth in the data and how they plan to identify them for Phase II. Please feel free to use separate paragraphs and headers to capture the details.]

3. Conduct needs assessment of the target youth

Summary.

[Please provide a one or two paragraph summary that gives an overview of the needs assessment of target youth the grantee conducted. Please be sure to discuss technical assistance, strengths, challenges, and alternative opinions/experiences.]

Needs Assessment.

[Please provide additional detail on the needs assessment – who conducted it? what were the data sources? What did they learn? How will they use that information to inform Phase II? Please feel free to use separate paragraphs and headers to capture the details.]

4. Determine, align, and develop effective partnerships

Summary.

[Please provide a one or two paragraph summary that gives an overview of how the grantee has built effective partnerships in the community over the course of the grant. Please be sure to discuss technical assistance, strengths, challenges, and alternative opinions/experiences.]

Needs Assessment.

[Please provide additional detail on the partnerships – have partners changed? Are there partners missing from the table? Who leads the effort? Are all voices and opinions heard and respected? Will the same partnership be proposed for Phase II? Is there a shared vision for the work? Is there joint accountability? Please feel free to use separate paragraphs and headers to capture the details.]

5. Assess services and gap analysis

Summary.

[Please provide a one or two paragraph summary that gives an overview of the assessment of services and gap analysis conducted by the grantee. What did they do? What did they learn? How has this informed Phase II? Please be sure to discuss technical assistance, strengths, challenges, and alternative opinions/experiences.]

Assessment of Services and Gaps.

[Please provide additional detail on how the grantee identified and assessed current services, conducted a gap analysis, and how that information informs Phase II. Please feel free to use separate paragraphs and headers to capture the details.]

6. Develop and finalize the plans to adapt, modify, or create the subset of the service interventions identified from the needs assessment

Summary.

[Please provide a one or two paragraph summary discussing the intended interventions. If possible, please both name and describe the intervention as well as discuss how that intervention/service was

selected. Please be sure to discuss technical assistance, strengths, challenges, and alternative opinions/experiences.]

Intended Interventions.

[Please provide additional detail on the intended interventions – do they have experience with the intervention? How different is the intervention from current practice? What training and support is available to ensure the intervention is implemented with fidelity? Do they need to modify or adapt an intervention to fit their population? Are the interventions evidence-based or evidence-informed? Please feel free to use separate paragraphs and headers to capture the details.]

7. Review, refine, and develop screening/assessments

Summary.

[Please provide a one or two paragraph summary that gives an overview of the screening or assessments the grantee is planning to use in Phase II. Please be sure to discuss technical assistance, strengths, challenges, and alternative opinions/experiences.]

Assessments.

[Please provide additional detail on the assessments the grantee is thinking of using for Phase II – what are they? Did they develop the assessments themselves? Are the assessments currently used? If not, are they being added to the intake process or will they replace existing assessments? Will they use the same assessments for all three populations? Please feel free to use separate paragraphs and headers to capture the details.]

8. Develop theory of change and logic model

Summary.

[Please provide a one or two paragraph summary that gives an overview of whether the grantee is using a theory of change and/or logic model to guide their Phase II planning. Please discuss how they were developed and whether they changed over the course of the project. Please indicate whether they are part of a larger initiative in the community. Please be sure to discuss technical assistance, strengths, challenges, and alternative opinions/experiences.]

Theory of Change.

[Please provide additional detail on the theory of change. What is it? Has it changed? Is there support for it? How has it informed their work? Please feel free to use separate paragraphs and headers to capture the details.]

Logic Model.

[Please provide additional detail on the logic model. What is it? Is there more than one? Has it changed? Is there support for it? How has it informed their work? Please feel free to use separate paragraphs and headers to capture the details.]

9. Prepare the evaluation plan

Summary.

[Please provide a one or two paragraph summary that gives an overview of their current evaluation plans. Key features for the summary include: who developed the design, design, support for and experience with the design, and the contrast between the intervention and comparison groups. Please be sure to discuss technical assistance, strengths, challenges, and alternative opinions/experiences.]

Design.

[Please provide additional detail on the design. You can include how groups will be formed, support for the design, and whether it will differ by population.]

Contrast.

[Please provide additional detail on the intended contrast. What are they testing the effectiveness of? What will the intervention group get? What will the comparison group get? Will it differ by population?]

Sample.

[Please provide additional detail on the intended sample. How many are they intending to have in each condition? Have they conducted a power analysis? How will youth/young adults be recruited? Do they anticipate issues with consent or assent?]

Data Collection.

[Please provide additional detail on the intended data collection. What data are they going to collect? Who will collect the data? Do they need IRB approval?]

Elements that are not Outcome-Focused.

[Please provide information regarding the grantees thoughts for implementation and cost evaluations in addition to the outcomes (impact) evaluation.]

10. Conduct a comprehensive readiness assessment

Summary.

[Please provide a one or two paragraph summary that gives an overview of the readiness assessment. Key features for the summary include: what did they do, what was the conclusion, and how are they using that information to move into Phase II. Please be sure to discuss technical assistance, strengths, challenges, and alternative opinions/experiences.]

Readiness Assessment.

[Please provide additional detail on the readiness assessment. You should provide more details on who conducted the readiness assessment, what they looked at, and how that information has informed planning for Phase II.]

11. Conduct an analysis and determine the referral and selection process

Test the referral and selection process

Summary.

[Please provide a one or two paragraph summary that gives an overview of the referral and selection process. Key features for the summary include: what is the referral and selection process and whether it has been (or will be) tested prior to Phase II. Please be sure to discuss technical assistance, strengths, challenges, and alternative opinions/experiences.]

Referral and Selection Process.

[Please provide additional detail on the referral and selection process. How many referring organizations will there be? Is there a single intake point? How will youth/young adults be selected for the project? When will consent occur in relation to the referral and selection process? Has their community used such a process previously?]

12. Address sustainability and dissemination

Summary.

[Please provide a one or two paragraph summary that gives an overview of work focused on sustainability and dissemination. This could be work related to the partnerships but should also be focused on the larger community. Please be sure to discuss technical assistance, strengths, challenges, and alternative opinions/experiences.]

Sustainability.

[Please provide additional detail on the plans for sustainability. This may include the decision to pursue Phase II or other funds.]

Dissemination.

[Please provide additional detail on the plans for or activities completed related to dissemination. This should be focused on dissemination beyond the planning team.]

Highlights by Research Question

If you have any high level thoughts for things related to the research questions, please note them below.

1. What were grantees' initial plans, expectations, and resources?

There is probably nothing to summarize from the site visit here. However, if you heard something that can help inform this question beyond the grantee profile, please summarize here.

2. What did each grantee do during Phase I?

You should be able to quickly summarize what the grantee did. Did they develop stronger partnerships? Did they develop an integrated data system? Did they change their definition of at-risk? Did they develop a comprehensive intervention? Did they tinker around the edges? Did they get support for a rigorous evaluation (i.e., comparison group either RCT or QED)?

3. What planning outcomes did grantees achieve?

Please summarize if there are outcomes that stood out to you either because of how they were done or the fact that they were not done.

4. What factors may have influenced the planning outcomes?

Please summarize the positive and negative factors that affected the planning grant work. For example, did they have strong leadership at the state or county/tribal level? Did they have dedicated staff? Did they have integrated data already? Have they participated in rigorous evaluations previously? Did they struggle with maintaining commitment to the project? Did they struggle with finding leadership? Did their community not agree on the issue? Or the factors associated with homelessness?

APPENDIX D:
TECHNICAL APPENDIX

The appendices present detailed information on the data collection and analysis. Appendix D discusses each type of data collection, variable creation, and analysis. Prior appendices include the data collection tools used.

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Three types of data collections

The process study used data collected through three types of data collections. We used one of these more than once, resulting in six unique data collections.

Mathematica reviewed **grant applications** using a standard template (see Appendix A) to systematically capture information about the grantee, partners, and proposed approach. We compiled to information into profiles that summarized key features of the grantee. We then shared the profiles with grantees for revision. We coded grantee profiles to support describing the grantees at the beginning of the grant period.

Grantees submitted **semi-annual reports** (or SAR) to the CB every six months (see Appendix B). In each SAR grantees reported on the work accomplished and challenges and surprises encountered during the reporting period. The SAR ends with an indication of intended activities during the upcoming reporting period. The analysis team compiled information reported in each SAR using a data extraction tool. We analyzed SAR data to describe the grantees at various points in time and to examine associations between grantees and outcomes.

Two-person teams conducted **interviews with partners** over a two-day period. The teams conducted the interviews using a semi-structured protocol (see Appendix C). Each team wrote up a site visit report that integrated data from all interviews. We analyzed site visit reports to identify themes across grantees. The initial set of themes, and corresponding grantees, were shared with the full group of site visitors. Following confirmation of the themes, we conducted additional coding in the write-ups.

Grantee profile: a snapshot of when the projects began

We developed the grantee profile from the grant application using a standard template (see Appendix A). The purpose of the grantee profile was to document what each grantee had in place at the time of the grant application and proposed accomplishing in the two–year period.

Grantee profiles informed both TA and the process study. They helped to orient the TA team to the grantee and shape the evaluation TA programming. Using information in the grantee profile, Mathematica invited grantees to present as part of webinars focused on data and data analysis.

The process study drew on the profile when describing grantees and to characterize them. The number and type of partners is based on the partners listed in the grant applications, which were captured in the grantee profile and categorized as community-based or non-governmental, governmental, or philanthropic or business.

SARs: a continual check-in on progress

The SAR suggested template was developed in collaboration with CB and OPRE (see Appendix B). CB intended the SAR's to summarize past and future activities to help CB monitor grantee progress, tailor TA provided by Mathematica, and enable multiple point-in-time descriptions of the grantees for the process study. The SARs used the activities identified by CB as the organizing framework and asked about progress and future plans related to each activity. The format of and questions in the SARs did not change between reporting period.

We extracted data from each SAR using a SharePoint list and an accompanying Excel workbook. The SharePoint list captured responses to close-ended questions. For example, one question asked "In the last six months, did your planning grant identify and/or engage planning team members?," we recorded response options of "yes" or "no" in SharePoint. The Excel workbook summarized information that could not be captured in a close-ended format, such as the names of partner organizations added to the team in the last six months.

In preparation for an August 2014 meeting with grantees and site visits in winter 2015, the staff meeting the grantee reviewed each SAR and its accompanying data extraction. This review enabled the YARH team to have an understanding of the grantee's progress and future plans.

A two-person team conducted site visits between January and March 2015

A two-person team from Mathematica visited each grantee to conduct interviews with a range of grantee staff and partners. We determined the particular individuals interviewed in conjunction with the grantee leadership. Semi-structured interview protocols used the activities that CB had identified as the organizing framework (see Appendix C-1). The team asked interviewees about activity completion, timing, strengths in accomplishing the activity, and challenges faced. Team members took notes during interviews and made audio recordings, if the interviewees agreed. The site teams wrote up site summaries using the activities as the organizing feature (see Appendix C-2 for the site write-up template).

Four experienced site visitors conducted the open coding of the site write–ups. Each individual read site write–ups and identified common themes related to the activities. Fourteen of the grantees had been visited by at least one of the experienced site visitors involved in the open coding. The common themes focused on progress, strengths, lessons learned, and challenges. These site visitors shared common themes with the full group of site visitors for discussion and revision. We performed more detailed coding, or analytic coding, on the site visit write-ups after identifying the final set of themes. Writers relied on the coded site visit summaries to draft the process study, although they returned to individual interview notes if needed.

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