

## **Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP)**

The \$5.2 million federal grant requires the Austin community to implement a coordinated strategy that applies both evidence-based practice and “outside the box thinking” to test new programming and break barriers for young people experiencing homelessness.

To lead this local effort, ECHO collaborated with LifeWorks to convene key informants across the community, including several young adults with lived experience of homelessness to develop a data-driven plan to achieve this vision. Over 100 community members participated across the various planning committees, providing an unprecedented opportunity for local collaboration. Multiple agencies that serve youth along with state agencies such as the Texas Department of Family Protective Services and the Texas Juvenile Justice Department have come together with young leaders who have lived experience of homelessness. The collaboration resulted in the ***Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness*** that includes the following elements:

- Our Shared Vision to End Youth Homelessness
- Timeline of Progress to Address Youth Homelessness
- Community Data on Youth Experiencing Homelessness
- Existing Response System for Youth: Needs and Gaps
- The Strategies to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness by 2020

### ***Four core goals of the Plan***

**Goal 1** – The community has a system in place to identify all unaccompanied youth who are experiencing homelessness and/or are unsafe and at-risk of becoming homeless

**Goal 2** – The community continues to implement a Coordinated Entry and Triage system that effectively links youth to housing and services that are youth focused and driven by youth choice

**Goal 3** - The community offers an array of program options available for youth and young adults to best meet their needs

**Goal 4** - The community maintains the system and programs, working towards sustainability, and makes improvements as needed

By working together as community, we are dedicated to accomplishing these goals and achieving our vision to prevent and end homelessness for young people in Austin/Travis County.

ECHO is proud to partner with LifeWorks, who leads implementation of the three new projects seeded by the YHDP grant, which include prevention, transitional housing, and housing services to provide youth with homes. Services aim to give youth the best possible chance to build wellbeing and stability early on.

This powerful partnership had moved 76 youth to permanent housing in the first six months the program started in October 2018. We were delighted to see a 56 percent reduction in unsheltered homelessness among young adults through our 2019 Point in Time Count. We will continue our work to ensure that the homelessness response system is strong and that every young person that faces homelessness receives appropriate intervention early.