Housing Instability & Juvenile Justice:
What we know and what we need to know.

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A Safe, Affordable Home:
The Foundation of Opportunity

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Connections:
JJPOC and Housing Stability

- The JJPOC statute speaks to assessing **community-based services** and **collaboration to reduce number of children who enter the juvenile justice system**.

- Data & case examples point to the overlap between system-involved youth (both child welfare & criminal justice) & homelessness

Connections:
Juvenile Justice & Housing Stability

"Targeting release from the juvenile justice system as a point to combat youth homelessness can both benefit youth who are at-risk of displacement and reduce rates of youth recidivism."

(Alone Without a Home, September 2012, National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty & National Network for Youth)

Youth Who Are Homeless

- At risk for sexual abuse, being lured into prostitution, physical abuse, criminal justice involvement, illness and suicide

- Costly Trajectory

(National Network for Youth Issue Brief,
Consequences of Youth Homelessness)

Peer Reviewed Data

- Identified sample of 10 quality studies from 2006-2014

- Overall ~ 50 to 75% of homeless youth had been arrested, while 50 to 60% had been incarcerated

- Drug abuse, mental health issues, and lack of access to services are associated with increased criminal activity for homeless youth

Peer Reviewed Data

- Length of time homeless/disconnected = more frequency and likelihood of being involved with the criminal justice system

- Services that included housing, employment, and behavioral health supports were most effective

(A summary of the research available upon request)
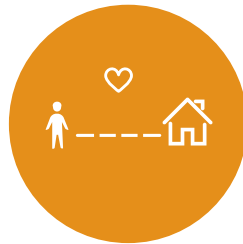
Housing Stability, Diversion, Recidivism

Addressing housing stability has been shown to reduce recidivism and prevent use of crisis/ emergency systems.

Example in CT for adults

- CT Collaborative on Re-entry (CCR)

- 99% decrease in shelter days; 73% decrease in jail episodes (Corporation for Supportive Housing, 2013)

Addressing Youth Homelessness in Connecticut

- 2013 "Invisible No More"
- 2014 State Opening Doors for Youth Plan
- 2015 First statewide count of homeless youth
- 2016 Implementing first phase of five strategies

CT Data: Invisible No More, 2013

- **27%** received special education services; **32%** dropped out

- **53%** had contact with DCF; **37%** had been removed from the home by DCF

- **49%** moved more than 6 times in their lifetime

- **50%** were arrested at least once in their lifetime; **39%** reported having been incarcerated in jail, prison, juvenile detention or a residential facility

Derrick Gordon, PhD and Bronwyn Hunter, PhD, Consultation Center, Yale School of Medicine

CT Data: Invisible No More, 2013

- **89%** of the young people were sexually active with an average of 5.6 sexual partners.
- **23.5%** first experienced sexual intercourse at age 12 or under.
- **19.4%** reported they had traded sex for money, a place to stay or drugs/alcohol.

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CT Data: Statewide Youth Count 2015

- Estimated **3,000 homeless/housing unstable youth** in our state

- Self report

- **1/3rd** have history of involvement with DCF

- Youth involved with DCF or foster care system **6 times more likely to be involved with the criminal justice system**

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CT Data: Statewide Youth Count 2015

- Youth involved with the criminal justice system were **5 times more likely** to have moved two or more times in the last 6 months,

- and **3 times more likely** to be living outside/in a place not meant for human habitation.

CT Data: Statewide Youth Count 2015

Of the 585 homeless/housing unstable youth surveyed:

Ages:

< 21: 395

18-21: 209

< 18: 248

Justice involved:

< 21: 81

18-21: 46

< 18: 51

Next Steps

1.
Collect better data from state agencies and utilize it

Collect and utilize better data

2.
Fill gaps in the housing continuum for youth/young adults

Address Gaps

3.
Integrate housing solutions into discharge planning

Create a joint DCF and JJ plan for youth leaving the system

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Collect Better Data

- Accurately and regularly count, and assess progress, as is done with other populations through Point In Time Count and annual HMIS data

- Identify homelessness/housing instability upon entry into state systems and address prior to exit

- Share data across systems to better understand and target interventions to the population

Fill Gaps in Housing Continuum

- Access to safety is paramount – outreach; crisis response services and housing options

- Crisis options for 18 and older

- Crisis options for under 18

- Short-longer term models specialized for 18 and older

Planning with JJPOC

Develop comprehensive, statewide, multi-system recommendations:

- to assure youth are not released into unsafe or unstable living situations that could lead to homelessness

- to identify and begin to plan for housing needs immediately upon entry

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