



**Runaway and Homeless Youth Program Grantees Webinar:**  
*Opening Doors and What it Means for Youth*



# Introduction

## **Curtis Porter**

Acting Associate Commissioner  
Administration on Children, Youth, and Families  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

## **Jennifer Ho**

Deputy Director  
U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness

## **Barbara Poppe**

Executive Director  
U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness



# Listener Response

Submit questions and comments at any time during today's webinar using the question box.

We will address these questions as well as ask for your participation in poll surveys throughout the presentation .





# USICH

## **Mission**

To coordinate the federal response to homelessness and to create a national partnership at every level of government and with the private sector to reduce and end homelessness in the nation while maximizing the effectiveness of the Federal Government in contributing to the end of homelessness.

## **Interagency Collaboration**

- 19 federal agencies
- Coordinate with state and local governments, advocates, service providers, and people experiencing homelessness



# Opening Doors

*Opening Doors* is the first federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness: [http://www.usich.gov/opening\\_doors](http://www.usich.gov/opening_doors).

## Goals of the Plan

1. Finish the job of ending chronic homelessness by 2015
2. Prevent and end homelessness among veterans by 2015
3. Prevent and end homelessness for families, youth, and children by 2020
4. Set a path to ending all types of homelessness



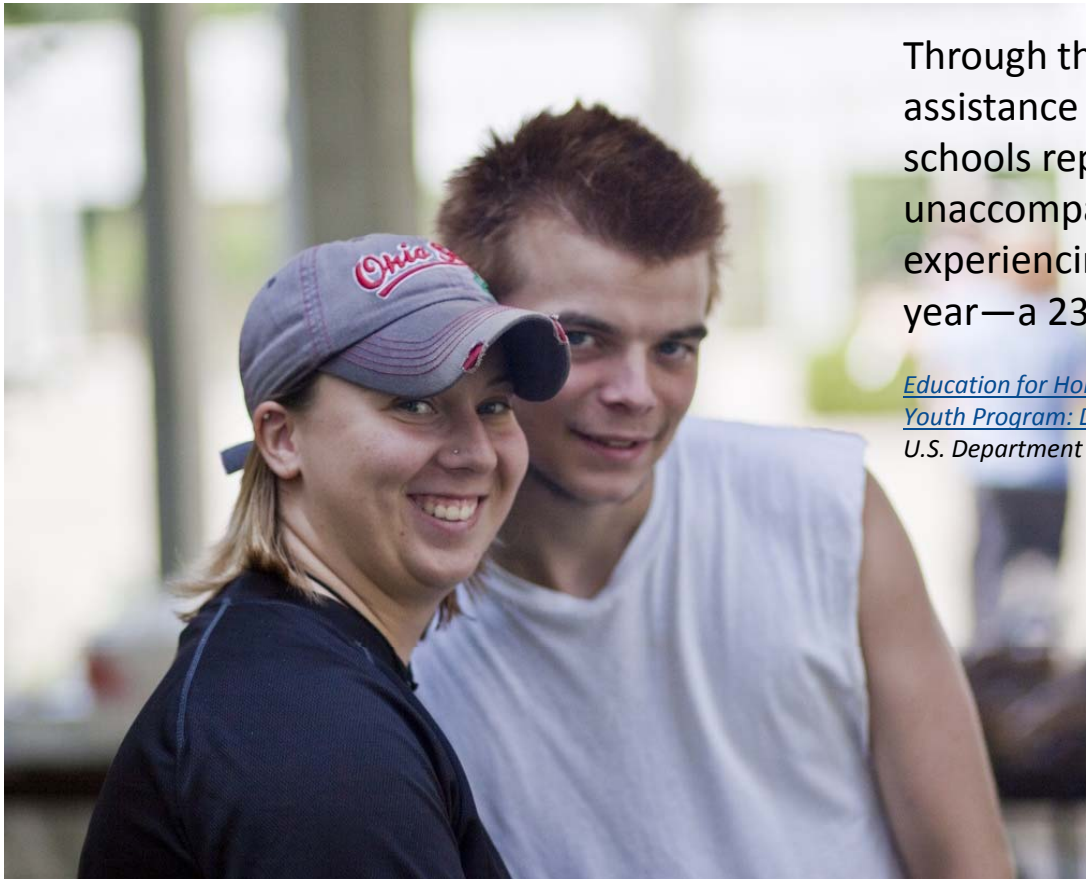
# *Opening Doors* for Clients

What do we know (and not know) about what works for youth?

- Prevention: family stabilization and discharge planning
- Emergency shelter
- Family reunification
- Rapid re-housing
- Transitional housing
- Affordable housing
- Permanent supportive housing
- Youth-specific services



# Listener Response



Through their homeless assistance programs, public schools reported 65,317 unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness last year—a 23% increase from 2009.

*[Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program: Data Summary, 2011](#),  
U.S. Department of Education*



# RHYA Grantee on Client Practice

## **Bob Mecum**

President and CEO

Lighthouse Youth Services

Cincinnati, Ohio

## **Mission**

To advance the dignity and well-being of children, youth, and families in need. Encourage good citizenship, responsible behavior, and self-reliance.





## *Opening Doors as a Community*

- Include youth in your local strategic plan
- Get involved in the local Continuum of Care
- Be diligent about counting youth in the point-in-time (PIT) count
- Encourage all youth service providers to use the local Homeless Management Information System (HMIS)
- Monitor local progress using HMIS data



# RHYA Grantee on Community

## **Bob Mecum**

President and CEO

Lighthouse Youth Services

Cincinnati, Ohio

The agency is part of the local homeless youth strategy through the:

- Continuum of Care (CoC),
- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), and
- State Interagency Council on Homelessness (SICH).



# Listener Response

According to HUD, 14,678 unaccompanied youth spent at least one night in emergency shelter or transitional housing last year.

*[Annual Homeless Assessment Report, 2010, U.S. Housing and Urban Development](#)*





# Conclusion

- Challenge yourself and your agency – don't assume what your agency is doing now is the best solution
- Apply best practices learned from other service providers and use evidence based practices
- Form non-traditional partnerships to engage homeless youth who may not be accessing your current programs
- Get involved in the local HMIS, Continuum of Care, and other planning bodies – push them to adopt goal of ending youth homelessness by 2020 (if not sooner)
- Help make the case for increased investment and smarter use of local resources to create real solutions for youth
- Involve homeless youth in everything you do – be sure they have a meaningful voice in their future and the future of the community



No one should experience homelessness—no one should be without a safe, stable place to call home.