

California Cohort 2: 100-Day Challenge Summary

Sonoma County

100-Day Challenge Goal

In 100 days, we will connect 65 Transitional Age Youth (TAY) to housing with a special focus on (28%) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) youth and (65%) Black, Indigenous or People of Color (BIPOC) youth. In addition to housing TAY, the Sonoma County 100 Day Challenge will reshape and reimagine our homeless response system in order to ensure housing accessibility to the maximum number of youth possible.

100-DAY CHALLENGE CONTEXT & FOCUS AREAS

ACCEPTING THE 100-DAY CHALLENGE: WHY AND WHY NOW?

Sonoma County has demonstrated a commitment to serving youth experiencing homelessness in an empowering manner. The County's Homeless Youth Task Force has elevated youth voices for years to help provide policy recommendations and guide local strategy on preventing and ending youth homelessness. Sonoma County also publishes an annual Homeless Youth Needs Assessment that provides insights into the distinct experiences and needs of local youth in unhoused situations. The Sonoma County 2020 Homeless Youth Needs Assessment identified an urgent need for increased housing options, as 84% of youth experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County were found to be unsheltered.¹ The assessment also found that youth who are Hispanic/Latinx, African American, Native American, and who identify as LGBTQ+ are disproportionately impacted by homelessness.

Sonoma County accepted the 100-Day Challenge as an unprecedented opportunity to build upon and harness the strong commitment of key local stakeholders around preventing and ending youth homelessness to achieve a new level of systems change. The community not only set out to increase housing placements for youth, but also set an ambitious goal of completely reimaging how the homeless response system can work for youth experiencing homelessness, with a particular focus on improving accessibility for LGBTQ+ and BIPOC youth.

100-DAY CHALLENGE FOCUS AREAS

System leaders from across Sonoma County came together to help identify the following areas of focus for their 100-Day Challenge:

- Significantly advance the County's efforts to ensure that TAY are safely and stably housed;
- Dedicate particular attention to the LGBTQ+ TAY population and young people of color; and
- Utilize the 100-Day Challenge to better understand what system changes are needed for young people with substance abuse and/or mental health concerns.

¹ Sonoma County Office of Education, "Homeless Youth: Sonoma County," 2020, https://www.scoe.org/files/SC_Homeless_Youth_Needs_Assessment_Infographic_2020_2.pdf

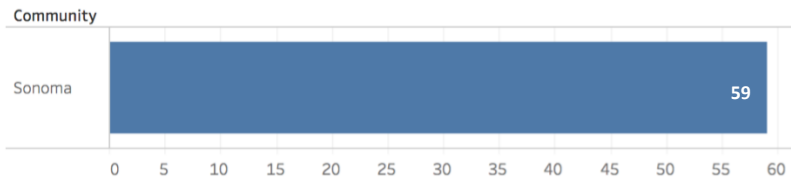
100-DAY CHALLENGE SUCCESSES, ACCOMPLISHMENTS & INNOVATIONS

SNAPSHOT OF 100-DAY CHALLENGE PROGRESS

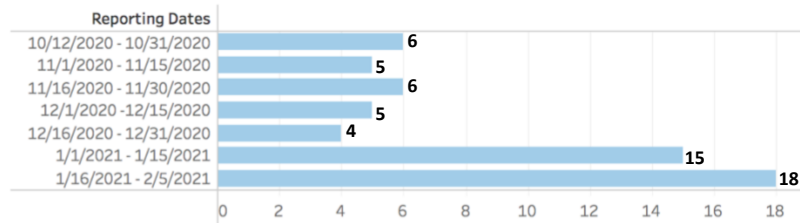
100-Day Challenge Goal: In 100 days, we will connect 65 Transitional Age Youth (TAY) to housing with a special focus on (28%) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) youth and (65%) Black, Indigenous or People of Color (BIPOC) youth. In addition to housing TAY, the Sonoma County 100 Day Challenge will reshape and reimagine our homeless response system in order to ensure housing accessibility to the maximum number of youth possible.

Total Exits to Safe and Stable Housing

Santa Barbara Goal: 75 Veterans Housed; Sonoma Goal: 65 Transition Age Youth Housed
San Francisco Goal: 175 SIP Single Adult Guests Housed



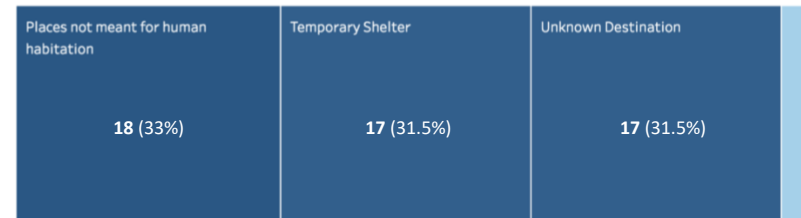
Biweekly Exits to Safe and Stable Housing



Exit Destinations



Other Exits



BNL/SIP Race



White: 46%
Black or African American: 8%
Hispanic/Latino: 29%
Asian: <1%
American Indian or Alaska Native: 16%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 1%

Housed Race



White: 47%
Black or African American: 5.5%
Hispanic/Latino: 26.5%
Asian: 2%
American Indian or Alaska Native: 17%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 2%

BNL/SIP Gender



Male: 60%
Female: 38%
Gender Non-Conforming: 1%

Housed Gender

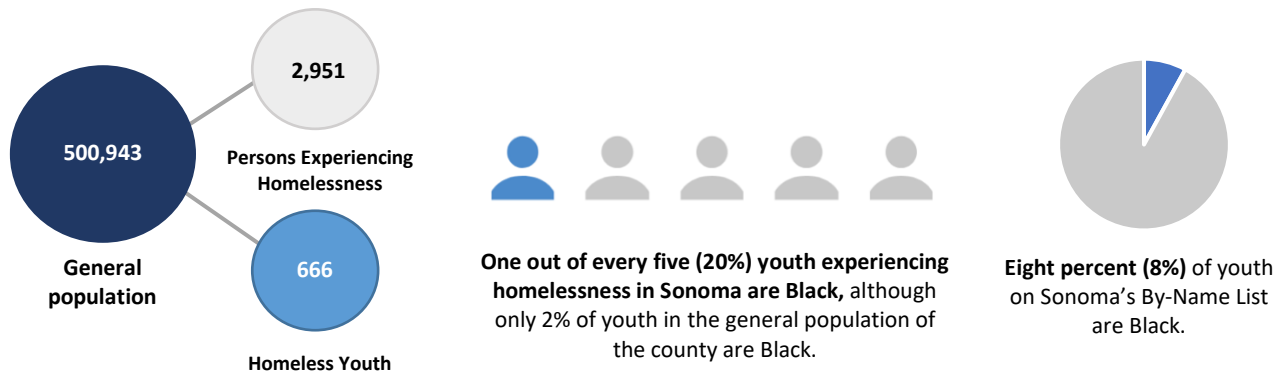


Male: 56.5%
Female: 42.5%
Gender Non-Conforming: 1%

Full interactive data dashboard available at: <https://www.rapidresults.org/cac2dash>

RACIAL EQUITY DURING THE 100-DAY CHALLENGE

RACIAL EQUITY ANALYSIS IN SONOMA



Data obtained from CoC Racial Equity Analysis Tool (version 2.1) and RRI 100-Day Challenge

INTEGRATING RACIAL EQUITY PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES INTO THE 100-DAY CHALLENGE

Sonoma took a number of key steps to apply an equity-driven approach to their 100-Day Challenge to connect TAY experiencing homelessness to safe and stable housing, including:

- **Comprehensive efforts to bring Transitional Aged Youth (TAY) with lived experience to the table.** Sonoma County has worked to authentically engage youth with lived experience in all ongoing youth homelessness efforts, including the Homeless Youth Task Force, the 100-Day Challenge Team, and a new TAY Working Group. Engaging persons with lived experience as authentic partners in developing housing solutions, making policy recommendations, and undertaking systems change processes is crucial for ensuring authentic, appropriate, equitable and sustainable action on youth homelessness. Sonoma County has placed a particular focus on engaging LGBTQ+ and BIPOC youth who are disproportionately impacted by homelessness and provides compensation to ensure youth are equitably recognized for their time and contributions to the work.
- **The development of cross-system partnerships with youth-serving agencies.** Expanding and establishing partnerships with youth-serving agencies outside the homeless response system provides new opportunities to think about how BIPOC and LGBTQ+ youth are disproportionately impacted within other systems as well, such as the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. These cross-systems partnerships allow for deeper systems-level conversations around equity and allow communities to begin addressing issues that disproportionately impact BIPOC and LGBTQ+ youth such as housing instability and homelessness in more preventative ways.
- **Increased data tracking for BIPOC youth and the identification of data gaps for LGBTQ+ youth.** Sonoma County improved its ability to track and utilize data on racial inequities and disparities, including tracking race/ethnicity data for youth on the by-name list (BNL) as well as youth connected to permanent housing options to ensure equitable access to housing resources for BIPOC youth. At the same time, Sonoma County was able to identify existing data gaps for LGBTQ+ youth. This information will help the community move forward and think about improved data collection processes to ensure equitable outcomes for LGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN SYSTEMS CHANGE

CROSS-SYSTEMS COLLABORATION

Sonoma County's 100-Day Challenge helped break down interagency silos and encourage organizations throughout the community to collaborate in new ways to serve TAY experiencing homelessness. The 100-Day Challenge brought about new cross-systems collaborative partnerships between non-profit organizations and government agencies, including non-profit TAY service providers, the Housing Authorities for both the City of Santa Rosa and the County of Sonoma, and the Sonoma County Health Department, Probation Department, and Office of Education. One of the Team Leads for Sonoma County was a representative from the Housing Authority of the County of Sonoma, helping to strengthen the agency's partnership with the homeless response system and share critical insights into existing housing options for TAY experiencing homelessness.

The 100-Day Challenge Team found that meeting with stakeholders from across TAY-serving systems and agencies was fundamental to building a comprehensive community approach to addressing youth homelessness. Increased cross-systems collaboration allowed for improved identification, utilization, and coordination of resources. As a result, 100-Day Challenge Team members were able to better serve TAY experiencing homelessness by knowing exactly what resources and services were available through which partner organizations in real-time. Sonoma County plans to continue this work to "de-silo" their homeless response system and create a cross-systems youth service network as part of their 100-Day Challenge sustainability efforts.

NEW PERMANENT HOUSING SOLUTIONS

Sonoma County leveraged the 100-Day Challenge to identify new permanent housing options and increase housing placements for TAY experiencing homelessness. The 100-Day Challenge Team found that housing resources exist in Sonoma County for TAY experiencing homelessness, including housing vouchers made available through local Housing Authorities. Once housing resources were identified, youth-serving partners from across the community were able to help identify and refer TAY experience homelessness for housing placements. All TAY experiencing homelessness who were referred to housing during the 100-Day Challenge were connected with supportive services teams to help with housing search activities, transitioning into housing, and maintaining housing stability.

Additionally, the Sonoma 100-Day Challenge Team developed a landlord engagement strategy to help identify housing units available for TAY experiencing homelessness. The Team was able to secure incentive funding for landlords willing to house TAY with vouchers through the local Housing Authorities and utilized flyers and interviews with local new media to help recruit interested landlords. Sonoma plans to continue its landlord engagement efforts and hopes to identify housing owned and managed specifically by LGBTQ+ and BIPOC individuals in the community to better support these TAY populations in securing safe, stable housing.

RESHAPING AND REIMAGINING THE YOUTH HOMELESS RESPONSE SYSTEM

The Sonoma County 100-Day Challenge Team set an ambitious goal to reshape and reimagine the local homeless response system in order to ensure housing accessibility to the maximum number of youth possible. The Team achieved significant systems change throughout the 100-Day Challenge, including improving TAY-specific data collection and sharing processes and creating new TAY-focused organizational structures. Early on in the 100-Day Challenge, the Team identified the need to create a Release of Information (ROI) to include agencies not currently entering data into HMIS. This ROI included all of the non-profit and government entities that work with TAY in Sonoma County, helping to break down silos between HMIS and non-HMIS entering agencies and improve systems-level data collection on TAY experiencing homelessness. The Team built upon local expertise from the

Veterans system to develop a youth-specific by-name list (BNL) that helps to more accurately capture the prevalence of TAY homelessness in Sonoma County. The community also established a weekly case conferencing call during the 100-Day Challenge that involves all youth-serving agencies in the County in conversations around the coordination of housing and services for TAY.

Sonoma County also created a robust and committed TAY Working Group that met weekly during the 100-Day Challenge and will continue to meet monthly to address the micro and macro level needs of TAY experiencing homelessness in the community. The working group includes TAY with lived experience and representatives from both local Housing Authorities; Sonoma County Community Development Commission (CDC); the Family, Youth and Children's Division (FYC) of the Human Services Department; the Juvenile Division of the Probation Department; local health services; and six non-profit agencies. The TAY Working Group helps address issues facing individual TAY clients as well as larger issues such as identification, outreach, and service coordination.

UNDERSTANDING & RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF TAY EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

The 100-Day Challenge provided an opportunity for Sonoma County to build greater understanding around the distinct needs and experiences of TAY experiencing homelessness and develop population-specific housing and service approaches. The 100-Day Challenge Team created a survey specifically for LGBTQ+ and BIPOC youth experiencing homelessness to help better understand the barriers to services and housing these populations face. Recognizing the importance of creating safe environments for LGBTQ+ and BIPOC youth to access housing and services, Sonoma County secured a commitment from the top leadership of all TAY-serving organizations to adopt a policy requiring all-staff policy participation in sensitivity and competency trainings to work with LGBTQ+ youth. Sonoma County is working in partnership with a local nonprofit that specializes in working with LGBTQ+ youth to develop and provide these trainings to all TAY-serving organizations.

The Team's weekly case conferencing calls also assisted the team in identifying needed documentation for every TAY on the BNL to help them move quickly into available housing options. Additionally, Sonoma County has identified two Team members with lived experience and a facilitator who are interested in hosting focus groups with TAY. This direct feedback from TAY with lived experience will help the community shape its efforts beyond the 100-Day Challenge to continue creating a more effective and responsive homeless system of care for TAY.

MAINTAINING 100-DAY CHALLENGE MOMENTUM

In order to lock in their gains and maintain the momentum around connecting TAY experiencing homelessness to safe and stable housing options, the Sonoma 100-Day Challenge Team plans to focus on the following priorities moving forward:

1. Facilitate monthly meetings of the TAY working group to address TAY needs at all levels;
2. Continue utilization of the youth By-Name list, making improvements as needed; and
3. Determine a schedule for youth-specific case conferencing.

Additionally, the team has established the following priority system shifts needed to sustain performance and proposed actions to make those system shifts a reality.

Priority System Shifts	Action Areas for System Shifts & Sustainability
<p>Policies and guidelines that need to be amended to facilitate sustained progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore viability of continued vouchers for TAY • Once Youth Action Board (YAB) is created, have them inform the CoC’s policies and guidelines on youth homelessness • Keep youth homelessness at the forefront of the CoC • Secure more CoC funding allocations • Identify ways to serve TAY who are couch surfing and therefore not included in HUD’s definition of homelessness • Plan for utilization of beds that are limited to chronically homeless TAY
<p>Tools and processes that enable progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Figure out the best tool for youth by-name list • Continue youth-specific case conferencing • Develop a Release of Information (ROI) for beyond the 100-Day Challenge
<p>Relationships, roles and skills necessary to sustain progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a YAB that is culturally diverse • Identify resources to create and sustain the YAB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reach out to foundations to help with funding for staff and supplies ○ Consider having agencies take turns support YAB costs if no other funding source is identified • Rebrand and continue all youth efforts • Engage and utilize juvenile/adult justice as referrals for housing when appropriate
<p>Ways to promote equity and client engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with TAY to develop and implement ideas • Prioritize BIPOC and LGBTQ+ TAY through targeted resource and engagement efforts • Continue to compensate TAY for time/expertise • Conduct focus groups and share data with the CoC • Reach out to new County Office of Equity for guidance on how to engage and prioritize BIPOC and LGBTQ+ youth
<p>Ideas to increase housing stock and landlord engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De-silo landlord engagement efforts • Identify incentives for landlords and long-term support for clients • Engage housing navigators to help with this process • Develop a plan for shared housing in Sonoma <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explore staff training in understanding bias against shared housing as an option