



LOCAL CROSS-SYSTEM COLLABORATIVES (LCSC)

a project of the National Network for Youth

WASILLA/MAT-SU VALLEY, AK

WHO IS INVOLVED?

- Wasilla and Mat-Su Valley established an interagency group in late 2018 that meets regularly to discuss ways to address youth homelessness. They have regular attendance and have developed a clear, coordinated plan of action that multiple agencies participate in jointly.
- The organizations that are regularly involved in the LCSC include: young people with lived experience, community based youth service providers, Continuum of Care members, child welfare agencies, other housing providers, and other service providers (not youth specific).

COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

Population: 106,532

Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness*: 175

Youth and Young Adult Population Experiencing Homelessness** : 57

Youth Service Provider:

My House Mat-Su (not RHYA funded)

Wasilla, AK

Phone: (907) 373-4357

<http://myhousematsu.org>

CHALLENGES THEY ARE EAGER TO TACKLE:

- Contacts in the Mat-Su Valley identified a large need for more youth-centric shelters for both 12- 17 and 18-24 year olds including: emergency shelter, transitional living programs, and host homes. They also noted that rapid rehousing and other forms of rental assistance (such as permanent supportive housing) were not as large of a need or priority for the community, given the ways that young people in the Valley experience homelessness.
- Other service gaps in the Mat-Su Valley that were identified included: legal services, mental health services, and family counseling and/or reunification services. The community also identified challenges for specific subpopulations, including:
 - For 18-24 year-olds: mentoring, access to showers, and training and employment services outside of the school setting.
 - For minors: parental consent necessary for access to services, or simply being too young to access services.
 - For young people of any age: a general shortage of services and transportation in a rural area, fear of child welfare and/or law enforcement involvement, a lack of access to vital documents or inability to provide necessary eligibility documentation.
- The Mat-Su Valley is the size of the State of West Virginia and often in the top 5 in the nation for suicide, sexual assault/domestic violence and addiction. There is a large heroin and methamphetamine epidemic, yet more funding is going to corrections, juvenile justice and child welfare programs, in spite of the area's lack of necessary funding for youth services and safe spaces for youth to recover and thrive.