

Proposed YHDP CoC Geography

The West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care (MN-508) is requesting participation as a **rural community** in the YHDP Competition through this competition.

This application covers the entire MN-508 geography. The MN-508 geography covers the following counties:

- Becker,
- Clay,
- Douglas,
- Grant,
- Otter Tail,
- Pope,
- Stevens,
- Traverse,
- Wilkin, and
- Wadena.

Lakes and Prairies Community Action, Inc is the Collaborative Applicant for MN-508.

West Central MN CoC (MN-508) YHDP Narrative 2024

MN-508 serves the 10 contiguous rural counties of Becker, Clay, Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Traverse, Wilkin, and Wadena. A portion of the White Earth Tribe (WET) is located in Becker County. While the WET is a member of the CoC and both tribal and non-tribal homeless programs coordinate services, the CoC & WET are still working on a resolution.

While our region may not have the extent of youth homelessness that many regions do, we feel that ending youth homelessness is achievable with YHDP resources. In 2017, the CoC was the second CoC in the state to successfully end veteran's homelessness thanks to having the right tools, strategies, partnerships, and resources in place. Since then, we have strengthened our partnerships, improved our tools, integrated equity planning and YABs into our CoC structure, launched a dynamic training program that is growing, and increased data driven planning, but we have not secured all the resources to fulfill our plan. We believe that YHDP could help us become the first CoC in our state to end youth homelessness.

For this application, note that all references to youth include youth ages 18-24, unaccompanied youth, and parenting youth, unless specifically listing one of the populations and all references to youth or persons with lived experience of homelessness will be denoted as YLE, PLE, or LE.

YAB Integration

1. **YAB role in the CoC.** The CoC Board is the governing body of the CoC and includes 13 voting seats. Of the 13 seats, 4 are elected officers, 7 are committee positions selected by the respective committees or boards listed in the chart below, and 1 is an appointed White Earth Tribal representative. Note that currently one member is both a LE representative and chair

of the Performance Evaluation and Ranking Committee. Of the 13 board seats, 4 members have LE, 2 as unaccompanied youth. Each committee representative role, including the YAB representative, is responsible for supporting two-way coordination and communication between the committee they represent and the board, and integrating the perspectives of the committees they represent into all aspects of board work.

Homeless to Housed Task Force (HTH): CoC membership elects board officers and non-appointed seats and approves the Collaborative Applicant and Governance Charter.
Board of Directors: Governing body responsible for CoC Governance.
COMMITTEES: The following committees have representatives on the CoC Board. Regional Homeless Cmte. The 3 regional committees are responsible for implementing CoC goals and policies within their region, operating at YAB, CAB, and LEAEB, assuring LE members have voting rights. One regional committee has a chair with LE. LE Advisory Boards: Responsible for identifying regional goals, policies, and priorities to end youth homelessness and advance equity. Work with the CoC to prioritize and implement goals. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Youth Advisory Boards (YAB)• LE Advancing Equity Advisory Boards (LEAEB)• Consumer Advisory Boards (CAB) Performance Evaluation Committee: Responsible for reviewing all ESG and CoC funded projects and System Performance Measures. The chair of this committee has LE, as do 3 other members. Ranking Committee: Responsible for scoring and ranking

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HUD applications as part of the local CoC Competition. The chair of this committee has LE, as does 1 other member.

2. YAB membership vs. population of youth experiencing homelessness in the community?

a. Population. LSA* data shows that 39.34% of youth served in our homeless response system were Bi-Racial, Indigenous, or Persons of Color (BIPOC), with 20.49% reported as Indigenous and 18.85% Black, whereas Census data reports that 10.66% of the population in West Central region is BIPOC. Coordinated Entry (CE) data shows that 10.8% assessed were Indigenous, 19% Multiracial, and 10% Black. LSA* data shows that 5% of youth identified as Transgender, .7% as Non-binary, and 5.8% as Multi-gender. Comparably, on the CE list .6% identified as Transgender and 4.4% as No Single Gender.

b. YAB recruitment and representation. Each sub-region recruits their own YAB members. Recruitment happens via the CoC website, meetings, word of mouth, and email blasts to community partners. YAB members, school liaisons, and youth program staff have recruited a majority of the members. YAB members must have LE of homelessness, be aged 17 and 24 years, commit to attending training, participate in YAB meetings, be respectful of other members, and keep healthy boundaries. About 1/3 of all YAB members are BIPOC. We do not ask gender identity, but we know that some participants are LGBTQIA+ or gender non-conforming via self-disclosure.

3. YAB training & preparation. PowerPoint orientation slides are used to orient new members, providing information on the purpose of the lived experience engagement, overview of the YAB, and CoC geography, structure, youth data, programs, performance

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measures, mission, and goals. YAB members have access to and can set-up their own profile on the CoC's online training site. The site was established to train homeless programs staff, but thanks to a negotiated flat fee, this year we were able to expand use for other CoC partners including committee and board members. Courses include: Coordinated Entry (access, assessment, stabilization), Homelessness 101 (Intro to Homelessness, Definitions, Core Principles to Ending Homelessness, Income First, Trauma Informed Care, Housing First, Cultural Competency, Self-care, Roberts Rules of Order), Fair & Safe Housing (Fair Housing, Equal Access and Gender Identify Rule, Safe Harbor, VAWA, Sex Trafficking, Non-violent engagement & De-escalation, Homelessness 201 (Professional Ethics and Boundaries, Leadership & Engagement, Roberts Rules & Committee Participation, Housing Stability Tools), CoC Policies & Program Guidance, Mainstream & Community Resources. YAB members are also invited to browse the CoC website which includes links to other MN trainings, resources, and data. Youth have requested additional training topics like advocacy and peer leadership, as well as additional stabilization resources. Our LE equity board is currently auditing classes which will also result in additional updates to our training site. In July, the CoC also applied for a \$200,000 capacity building grant to expand educational and leadership opportunities for PLE.

- 4. Support for youth engagement.** Each YAB has staff dedicated to supporting the YAB including sending meeting reminders, compensating members, scheduling rooms, note taking, onboarding, and managing conflicts that might affect participation (i.e., childcare, transportation, technology, disagreements, etc.). YAB members sign a participation agreement that establishes guidelines for successful group dynamics including regular attendance, preparation for meetings, respecting and honoring differing opinions, honesty,

and listening to and learning from other members. Time is spent at each meeting identifying action times (who is doing what between meetings), future agenda items, and addressing communication issues or conflicts (personal or time related). Youth attending other CoC committees, the CoC board, or membership meetings are provided with an opportunity to meet pre or post meeting. The CoC Coordinator holds regular check-ins with PLE who serve on the CoC Board or hold leadership roles on committees. Also see the list of courses above.

5. **Youth involvement in new project design and implementation.** Goals identified by youth in the 2022 Youth survey and initial YAB were integrated into our CoC Plan. Youth identified a need for master leasing of units due to challenges with finding landlords who would rent in the community and not wanting to utilize units in the border town of Fargo, ND due to challenges with maintaining support staff in MN. Youth identified a need for outreach directly to the school during specific hours. This resulted in Youthworks, a ND based youth service and housing agency, securing MN Office of Economic Opportunity funding to expand to MN-508 on 7/1/23 opening a new 8-bed youth transitional housing program and expanding street outreach. The Clay YAB requested their host agency, CAPLP, apply for funding to increase the stipend pool, transportation assistance, and staff support. A \$11,605 grant was received in June 2024 to support the YAB for 2 years and led to the YAB having the resources to finish creating a resource directory. Two regional Community Action Agencies, MAHBUE-OTWA and CAPLP applied for and received MN funded Local Community Aid to counties to support outreach to schools and fund Access Navigators for youth and families. While youth input led to the development of these projects, only Youthworks has employed youth with LE.

- 6. YAB lead initiative.** Besides those listed above, the CAPLP/Clay YAB identified a need for a youth friendly resource guide that was available via text, QR code, flyer, and online. They felt that existing resources guides (via online, 211, and paper) were not comprehensive or formatted in a youth friendly manner. Youth worked on reviewing and editing existing resource directories to create a guide that has imbedded links to websites and emails, was more colorful, and included additional details that youth felt were needed to understand the resources available (i.e., eligibility criteria, length of appointment). In May 2024, the youth published their Outreach Resources Guide online and distributed printed copies at schools and to outreach staff and peers. The YAB wants to expand to make this resource guide into an interactive App. Members of the CAPLP YAB and CAB (the adult equivalent to the YAB) requested that they share their recommendations with the agency board and agency leadership which has led to integrating feedback into agency policies and program design, including meeting with a developer of a new permanent housing facility to make suggestions that were integrated into the plan. The WCMCA YAB decided to utilize a portion of their meetings to expand their knowledge and scheduled presentations from community partners including a Car Care field trip to a local garage, energy savings tips, Workforce Center presentation on employment and education for youth, Tax education, ID's and driver's licenses. They also participated in MN Dept. of Human services video project to educate on the needs and challenges of justice involved youth. Youth requested that WCMA apply for the microgrant and helped write it.
- 7. YAB Compensation.** YAB members are compensated \$30/hour via gift cards for YAB meetings/work. Youth have identified this as the preferred method due to not all having bank accounts to receive check or direct deposits. PLE attending CoC meetings (i.e., designated

Board, HTH, and committee meetings) are also compensated at a rate of \$30/hour, but have the choice of a check, cash or gift card. The CoC applied for a capacity grant that would allow us to designate at least one regional LE advisor who would receive a consulting fee for contractual services vs. hourly stipends. We hope to start this in Spring 2025 unless additional resources are secured to implement earlier. We are open to other options if youth identify a desire to be compensated differently.

8. Our definition of authentic youth collaboration. Authentic youth engagement means centering the voice of youth with lived experience in all aspects of planning to prevent and end youth homelessness including developing annual goals, establishing actions steps, developing tools and policies, educating the public, and evaluating outcomes. The CoC recognizes that YLE are uniquely qualified to lead efforts to end homelessness for several reasons. YLE possess firsthand knowledge and understanding of the complexities and challenges associated with youth homelessness. This is especially true for youth who are also BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, gender non-conforming, have language barriers, or are disabled. These perspectives are invaluable in shaping effective strategies and policies that address the causes and solutions to end homelessness. YLE are better able to identify potential obstacles to policies or practices that agency administrators or staff may miss. YLE can provide a level of credibility and trust to support improved outreach, connections, engagement, and peer support, as they may seem more relatable, non-judgmental, and understanding than traditional service providers. Their experience can also provide encouragement, warning, hope, inspiration, and practical guidance to others who are in or coming out of a housing crisis. Their stories of resilience can inspire hope and empower others facing similar situations to believe in their own capacity for change and improvement. YLE can identify

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and articulate real barriers that they have faced and/or continue to face. Personal stories and experiences can serve as powerful advocacy tools to raise awareness, influence public perception, and advocate for policy changes. These stories and voices can humanize the issue and highlight the urgent need for solutions. Having YLE centered in planning helps provide a level of accountability and helps ensure that regional plans, programs and policies are responsive, equitable, and effective.

Community Need

1. Needs Assessment findings.

- a. **# of youth experiencing homelessness.** Our 2023 priority list showed a record number of youth in a calendar year with 127 youth households, including 99 single and 28 parenting youth households. Of those, 6 were unaccompanied households, 5 being singles and 1 parenting. Historic data shows that in 2020 there was 54 youth households, in 2021-110, and in 2022-103. The first two quarters of 2024 continued to trend high with 92 youth households in the 1st quarter, 7 of which were unaccompanied, and 95 unduplicated youth households in the 2nd quarter, 72 were singles and 23 were parenting. Of those, 8 were unaccompanied youth (6 single and 2 parenting). About 40-65% of youth households are assessed in Clay County. We recognize this increase is largely due to identifying additional youth through improved outreach and coordination with the schools and counties, but it also aligns with a current trend of increasing homeless youth in our school systems and more youth entering our system than exiting. The last MN McKinney-Vento report identified 22 unaccompanied students in the region, with 59% coming from Becker

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County, whereas our priority list only shows 9.6% of youth from Becker. CoC program data shows that 472 people were served in youth households in the past year, 390 of which were youth and 82 of which were dependents of youth. Of the youth served, 36 were under age 17 (as reported on HMIS APR for 4/1/23-3/31/24). Previous years data shows 363 people served in youth households, 32 of which were under age 17.

b. Identified disparities. U.S. Census data shows that two counties, Stevens County at 52.4% and Clay County at 46.2% fall above the MN and federal poverty rate for youth in poverty. The last comprehensive youth specific needs assessment was conducted from April 11 to June 13, 2022. Twenty-eight (28) unduplicated youth with lived experience responded via online surveys, small group interviews, and YAB focus groups. An additional seven 7 adults, including 1 with YLE, attended focus groups. 21 agencies completed the online survey (i.e., 11 homeless providers, 3 public child welfare agencies, 2 schools, 1 faith community partner, 3 juvenile justice agencies, and 1 extended foster youth program), including 3 respondents with LE. Note that some of the agency respondents represented multiple staff. Opportunities to participate were shared broadly, with an invitation for all respondents to share with their contacts. In the online survey, 5 youth reported identifying as LGBTQIA+, 4 as BIPOC, 2 as disabled, 5 as survivors, 3 as engaged in the foster care system, 2 as parenting youth, and 1 with justice system involvement. 11 were scared to reach out for help due to fear for safety, 6 reported abusers restricted their access to services and housing choices, and 8 reported being discriminated against, 4 because of race and 4 because of gender. CoC APR data for 4/1/23-3/31/24 shows that 12% of youth

came from a place not meant for human habitation, 1% from foster care, 1% from substance abuse treatment, .3% from justice involvement, .6% from hospitalization. The final 2023-2024 school year report from the MN Dept. of Education (MDE) McKinney-Vento reported that 57% of homeless youth served were BIPOC (note MDE does not report on gender other than male or female or race specific to unaccompanied youth).

- c. **Key findings.** Findings from the 2022 Youth Survey include: All survey respondents (providers and youth) reported that accessing housing and transportation were the greatest obstacles. 22 responded that youth didn't know enough about services, and 20 felt that landlords won't rent to youth and that resources for deposits and application fees were an obstacle. 18 responded that youth need assistance searching for housing and 9 felt rental histories posed obstacles. Youth respondents identified that virtual access was the ideal way to access services, followed by public locations, schools, drop-in centers, and groups meetings. Providers and youth reported rental assistance, with or without roommates, was the greatest need (26 respondents), with an identified target of 25 vouchers, which we have adjusted to 75 vouchers based on current data. Respondents prioritized mainstream shared housing (14), master lease units (11), kinship care (10), host homes (9), and drop-in housing (1). YAB participants favored housing with support staff in close proximity. Our VSP partners have noted that recruiting host homes for persons who are trafficked is currently a challenge so additional incentives are needed. All respondents said staff to support access and stability (i.e., peer mentors, outreach and housing stability staff) is a priority. Education and training were the second greatest needs (finding employment

(25), basic living skills (25), tenant education (23), budgeting (22), job training (21), getting GED (21), setting boundaries (20), and post high school education (19).

Ongoing rental assistance (24) was the fourth greatest need, followed closely by mental health services (22), needing to set boundaries (20), crisis planning (15), legal advocacy (13), substance abuse services (14), victim/violence support (13), and credit repair (10). No challenges related to physical health disparities were noted, but there were no specific questions related to health in the survey. When reviewing survey results, YAB members emphasized challenges with accessing mental health services because they did not have money or insurance, stigmas, not knowing how to access and because of their parents not allowing access, not following up, or not providing insurance information.

The CoC conducts additional annual and bi-annual surveys that LE Committees are encouraged to participate in. WCMCA YAB spent time at their meetings responding to the survey as a group. In addition to what was mentioned above, youth identified the following needs: appropriate clothing and transportation for employment, meeting transportation needs (anywhere from obtaining a license to paying fines and insurance), better access to food (including a community garden, more accessible food shelves, and help getting food stamps), assistance with legal documents (many youth did not have vital documents needed to get benefits, enroll in school, open financial accounts, get drivers licenses), safe places to stay in a crisis (shelters were not always available in rural areas and hotels would not let youth under age 25 stay there), crisis/24 hour staff to respond to emerging issues where a *“live person helps verses sending you to other places”*, healthy social opportunities, access to fun stuff,

donation boxes, phones (access at public location or assistance with a obtaining one), and skills classes (cooking, washing clothes, paying bills). Current YAB goals listed below were developed from youth looking at, discussing, and prioritizing this survey.

d. Youth involvement in the needs assessment All questions were vetted by YLE.

Youth feedback led to adding three open-ended questions (i.e., *What are the biggest barriers in our system? What could help end youth homelessness? Are there any other comments or suggestions?*). Note we just started YABs in 2022 so did not involve YABs to the degree we should have in the creation and timing of the Youth Survey. We will be more authentic in the development of our next survey, including having youth decide when this should occur.

- 2. Youth-focused interventions we wish to pursue or improve.** One of the primary needs identified in the survey and express by youth in YAB meetings since then is the challenge of understanding and accessing homeless and community services. Youth wanted more youth friendly access including virtual access points and service delivery options which lead to personalized follow-up. They state that improving access to services is crucial. Essential services are not being accessed because youth are either not aware of available services OR, if they are, they do not know how to access or feel comfortable accessing them. This lack of knowledge can affect youth's safety and length of time homeless. As one youth stated, *"if we don't know, what we don't know, so how are we even supposed to ask for what we need?"*. Youth want a phone app and text line that allows youth to initially explore options in an interactive way as *"we might think we need one thing but need something else"*. Initial access should allow for anonymity for those who are fearful of reaching out for various reasons (e.g., stigmas, abuse, shame, etc.). The ap should lead to a live person they can text or call

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back and who will reach out to them longer term with help accessing and building education, stabilization services, and building independent living skills. The ap should also have features that support improved communication, collaboration, and support (e.g., group texts with all workers a youth is engaged with, reminders of appointments, opportunities, etc.) The ap needs to be youth friendly and easily recognizable (e.g., logo with graffiti art that youth will know is associated with a safe, welcoming, and accessible support). Host homes or kinship care were identified as an equally important need then and is the second priority of the current YABs. Regional host homes will provide needed access to shelter and housing. No youth only shelters exist in our region and finding properties (motels, hotels, and apartments) that will rent to youth is a challenge. Youths expressed discomfort with staying in adult shelters, stating they opt to stay in vehicles, doubled-up, or in unsafe conditions, where “*they know they can control the risks*” vs. encountering unknown risks. Additionally, units that rent to youth are often sketchy or located in areas that are less accessible (i.e., not near public transportation, schools, or services). Youth and providers feel that building or renovating a building for dedicated fixed site youth shelter or transitional housing is not reasonable and is cost prohibitive. Youth want homes to have comprehensive training, be vetted, and have regular check-ins with staff for safety reasons. Youth identified wanting a profile of the home including likes and dislikes of the hosts so youth can choose someone they feel they will feel comfortable with and have common interests with. Resources for the development of the ap and resources for establishing and sustaining a host home project (development, training, compensation, management) are our primary need.

- 3. Factors contributing to youth homelessness.** The CoC believes the principal cause of youth homelessness is family conflict and instability. Numerous studies show that youth who

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become homeless have experienced poverty and homelessness as a child and come from homes where abuse, neglect, and assault occur. One such report found that ‘the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) varied by housing status, with 34.1% of housed youth experiencing ≥ 1 ACE vs. 56.3% of family-homeless and 85.5% of unaccompanied-homeless youth.’ (Barnes, Gower, Sajady, and Lingras 2021). These youth do not have the skills or resources to live independently because of the lack of support and trauma they have experienced. When trauma is not recognized and dealt with, it can lead to other risk factors like untreated mental health and substance abuse disorders and juvenile crime. The second most contributing principal is that our mainstream systems, charged with protecting, nurturing, and supervising youth when their immediate families cannot, are under resourced. Besides the citations list, the 2018 MN Youth Study, 2019, 2023 MN Study of Unsheltered Homelessness, and LSA data were used to identify the key contributing factors. LSA: 2023 LSA data shows that 32% of youth ages 18-24 report being a survivor of domestic violence, but not fleeing. An additional 14% report fleeing. Wilder: The MN Youth study found that 84% of youth had experienced at least one ACE, including trauma and abuse. On average, youth had experienced 3.2 ACEs, putting them at greater risk of health issues as adults. The most common adverse childhood experiences among homeless youth were having lived with someone who abused substances (61%), witnessing the abuse of another family member (60%) had a parent with mental health problems (59%). This study also found 11% of youth identified as LGBTQ vs. 4% of Minnesotans as a whole. The 2019 MN Homeless Study reported that 57% of homeless youth are experiencing serious mental health challenges, of these anxiety and panic disorders are the most common at 37%. This study also found that 11% of Minnesotan’s who were homeless identified as LGBTQIA+, compared to 4% of the

overall population (*Gates, 2017*). Among homeless youth aged 24 and younger the percentage rose to 23%. Interpersonal issues (37% problems getting along and 32% abuse) was reported as the primary factor for leaving their last permanent housing. Youth in our focus group also reported not being able to access mainstream resources since their parents or guardians were fraudulently still claiming them despite the youth having moved out. The youth expressed concern about reporting to their parents or asking for help due to fear of retribution or the strain on their already strained relationships with family. In the 2023 Study, 51% of adults interviewed were first homeless as a child or youth, 50% of unaccompanied minors were Trans, non-binary, or ‘other gender’ identify, 80% had at least one ACE, 47% had three or more ACE’s, and 28% reported first being pressed or forced to work in the sex industry at age 15-17years of age.

4. **CoC response to needs of persons who are BIPOC.** LSA* data shows that persons of color are overrepresented in our homeless response system. The racial representation of youth served is 20.5% American Indian-Indigenous, 18.9% Black-African American and 60.70% White compared to on 3.7% of 18–24-year-olds on the Census reported as BIPOC. The 2023 Stella P. report showed that Indigenous parenting youth returned to homelessness at a higher rate after 12 months (All Households is 8% compared to 33% for Indigenous). For 12-24 months, All Households returned at 13% compared to 50% for Indigenous Parenting Youth. Recognizing that inequities exist in our system, the CoC developed the Advancing Equity Together (AET) structure in fall of 2021 as a vehicle to help build a more equitable homeless response system. AET planning is led by persons with lived experience (LE) of homelessness (i.e., LE AE Board or LEAEB). The LEAEBs operate like the YABs. The LEAEB’s are responsible for identifying equity related goals and measurable action steps that increase

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equity in our homeless response system. From the fall of 2021 to the spring of 2022, the CoC hosted five focus groups for Indigenous or persons of color who have lived experience of homelessness. After taking a year off due to staffing transitions, the LEAEB has identified 7 goals and is currently working on two. Two youth currently serve on the LEAEBs. The two goals align with YAB priorities, these include a Lived Experience Academy (increasing advocacy and leadership roles for Indigenous and persons of color with lived experience) and an interactive resource app with live support. MAHUBE-OTWA has hired an Indigenous and Latino outreach coordinator to help with these populations accessing services.

5. CoC response to needs of transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary youth.

The CoC requires annual equal access and anti-discrimination training for all members homeless program staff. Training is online and verified by agency directors and the CoC. In 2018, the CoC programs participated in the True Colors assessment and receive follow-up support to improve their score. The CoC annually reviews CoC & ESG funded project policies and forms for compliance with CoC policies (fair housing, Housing First, non-separation, anti-discrimination, equal access, and client centered practices). This annual review includes assessment of agencies staffing ratio (assessing for representation of diverse populations that reflect the diversity of those served), documentation of how the agencies support equal access (PR materials, signage, pronoun usage, bathroom access/signage, and outreach), and the agencies equity plan. The CoC membership includes service and advocacy organizations serving LGBTQAI+ populations, two of which serve as coordinated entry Access and Assessment sites. Youth are not required to share their gender identify to receive services and are asked their pronouns. Youth representing these populations serve on YABs and provide input into service delivery, forms, and policies.

6. N/A

7. N/A

Collaboration

- 1. Coordination w/ PHAs.** Two of our PHA's operate Foster Youth Initiative (FYI) programs which are integrated into CE. These PHA's also have homeless preferences. One PHA is fiscal host and lead partner for MN funded the Homework Starts with Home program (HSWH) which strives to increase success in school (stay enrolled, increase attendance, increase grades) with housing and support services for school aged youth including unaccompanied and parenting youth. HSWH partnership utilizes a formal MOU to define partnerships between the 20 school districts, 10 counties, 4 homeless providers, 8 community partners, 14 housing partners, and the CoC. The PHAs provide rental assistance. Partners meet quarterly to review outcomes and identify areas to strengthen the program. Our current CoC chair is a PHA staff.
- 2. Coordination w/ education providers.** The CoC has five formal partnerships that support stronger collaboration with schools. 1) A SEA MOU outlines roles of CoCs and MDE in our collaborative efforts to ensure that students & their families are informed of their rights under McKinney Vento and have access to resources they need to be stably housed through improved communication, data, education, training, and referrals. 2) CoC Membership Agreement: School liaisons are CoC members and participate in CoC planning at the CoC level and as members of our homeless coalitions/committees. This participation was vital in the planning of the plan to end youth homelessness. The Moorhead Public School liaison represented the schools on the steering committee. 3) The regional Homework Starts with Home (HWSWH) MOU defines relationships between housing, educational and service

partners. Rental assistance and support services are provided to families with school age children to stabilize them in housing and increase success in school (stay enrolled, increase attendance, increase grades). Twenty school districts, ten counties, four homeless providers, eight community partners, fourteen housing partners, and the CoC are signatures on the agreement and meet quarterly, along with program participants/former participants meet to review outcomes and identify areas to strengthen the program. Meetings have been held in conjunction with CoC meetings to increase alignment with goals to end youth and family homelessness. 4) The CoC has a sample MOU to help local coalitions seek MOUs with early childhood and public schools to outline partner roles and responsibilities. Ideally, these MOU's would be with the entire CoC but we recognize that some agencies, SEA's, LEA's, and early childhood providers need individual agreements.; and 5) The Moorhead Schools are a signed CARES partners to serve as Access, Outreach, and Assessment sites for homeless students and their families. They also agree to provide monthly data to the FM CARES data commit

- 3. Coordination w/ Tribes & Tribal organizations.** The White Earth Tribe (WET) is a member of the CoC and holds two seats on the CoC Board, one voting and one advisory. As such WET is engaged in CoC planning meetings. LE/YAB alignment is a standing meeting agenda. The WET operates various homeless programs from shelter to permanent housing which receive referrals from our coordinated entry system (note WET referrals are done outside of HMIS). The WET has provided culturally specific training and contributed to policy and Governance Charter policies changes, including integrating Tribal Sovereignty into our CoC Governance Charter and CE Guiding Principles and policies. WET staff attend local homeless coalitions and CoC committees (i.e., performance evaluation, coordinated

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entry, and ranking). As a CoC partner, WET receives YAB recruiting emails. Moorhead Schools and MAHUBE-OWTA Community Action both have Indigenous liaisons who work with homeless programs to outreach to and coordinate services for homeless youth.

4. Coordination w/ health insurance and services. Our CE Triage/Access tool assesses for health coverage and health related needs/goals (including linkage to vaccinations, free clinics, condoms, educational materials, health care facilities (mental health, substance abuse, physical health)). Referrals are made when health care is identified as a need by either the individual or assessors. Two local healthcare chains, Sanford and Essentia, utilize Resourceful, a referral app used by medical facilities that screens for shelter and prevention needs and make referrals to CE. All regional Community Action agencies, which are also CE sites, have certified MNSure (MN's health insurance marketplace) Navigators to help apply for public and private insurance free of charge. Our region's largest shelter and two permanent housing programs with Sanford, Essentia, a local nursing school to provide onsite nursing care, screenings, testing, education, and vaccines. Most housing providers have MOU's with at least one substance abuse or mental health provider to enhance stability services (e.g., providing case consults, DA's, crisis care, Comprehensive Assessments, LSCMI's, etc.).

5. Coordination w/ institutions to reduce release to homelessness. Our CE system screens for current and past engagement with the following system, making and receiving referrals from these partners as well as directly coordinating services.

- **Child welfare (Foster Care)** County staff, including PWC, participate in CoC and local coalition meetings engaging in discussion vital to regional system coordination. Providers actively work to support youth's stability goals related to PCW engagement

(reunification, respite care, and transitions from foster care). The CoC Coordinator has provided in-services and education to county directors and staff, including PCW to improve awareness of and coordination with our homeless response system. MN County Local Prevention Aid currently funds grants to homeless programs for outreach and access navigators for families who are homeless or at risk in two counties and direct prevention assistance in 5 counties.

- **Justice system (juvenile and adult)** County jail and regional corrections staff are members of the CoC and local homeless coalitions, participating in vital planning meetings and sharing input on system design. Outreach staff visit corrections facilities to complete assessments and coordinate planning to prevent exits to homelessness.
- **Institutions of mental and physical health.** MH and SA providers serve on the CoC Board and are CoC and local homeless committee members, attending vital planning meetings. In February of 2022, the CoC incorporated Housing Stabilization Services (HSS is MN’s medical assistance benefit for people with disabilities who are MA eligible) into our coordinated entry system to have rapid and aligned access to housing stabilization, consultation, and sustaining services. Counties and treatment facilities use our online link to refer individuals ready for discharge or who are at risk of homelessness to HSS services. The CoC has 11 HSS providers who select and track referrals through Podio, our online data system used for prioritizing shelter, prevention assistance, and HSS.

6. PCWA commitment. Attached

Youth Collaboration

**Longitudinal System Analysis data used in this narrative is for 10/1/22-9/30/23.*

The CoC has uploaded the YAB video from the YAB board representative. Below are responses collected via interviews at the August YAB meetings, including four members of the Clay YAB and one member of the WCMCA YAB. Note our third sub-region, MAHUBE-OTWA, currently does not have an active YAB due to lack of staff leadership to coordinate, childcare (as many participants were parenting youth), and transportation (as youth live in various communities across their 3-county region and internet is not reliable in all areas). Parentheses are used below to clarify which YAB responded.

1. **What is the mission of your YAB?** To use our experience to help end youth homelessness. (Clay) To talk about youth homelessness . . . help other youth who are homeless. (WCMCA)
2. **How long has your YAB been in existence?** Our YAB started in 2022. (WCMCA) The Clay YAB restarted in April. (Clay)
 - a. **How many members does your YAB have?** Our YAB can have 10 members. Only 4 members have been regularly attending over the summer. It's easier to attend during school. (Clay) Our YAB used to have lots of members but has only had a few recently . . . partly because of moving, jobs, which is good, and because of a fight. (WCMCA- note an active youth couple recently broke up and people took sides and didn't want to attend a meeting where opposing sides were participating. Staff are working on using it as a learning experience and adjusting to times due to those who got jobs.)
 - b. **How often do you meet?** Monthly. (Clay) Sometimes monthly, sometimes every other month depending on what we discuss and schedules, I believe. (WCMCA).
 - c. **How is your YAB included in decision-making and leadership in the homeless response system?** Our YAB gets to set goals and share what we think is most important. (Clay) We identify what we want to accomplish. (WCMCA)

- d. How could your YAB's impact be increased?** Someone to remind us of meetings so we don't miss meetings. Have more youth regularly attend. (Clay). Get more people to attend. (WCMCA).
3. **What are the biggest challenges or barriers to sustaining a YAB?** Our personal issues that compete with meetings . . . energy needed to participate . . . people not regularly attending. (Clay) Conflict between members . . . finding times that work for everyone. (WCMCA)
4. **What projects or interventions to address youth homelessness do you think are most needed in your community?** More housing. Staff that provide support to help us become independent. A youth friendly way to know about and connect with services we need. Childcare (Clay). I agree with what the Clay YAB said. (WCMCA-this question was asked after reviewing the goals of the Clay YAB and CoC Youth goals developed last year. When asked if there were other needs specific to her regions she said, "not that she could think of").
5. **If selected as a YHDP community, how would you define success?** Reach our goals. Help other youth know where to go if they are in a crisis. (Clay) Unsure. (WCMCA)

Data Evaluation and Capacity

1. **HMIS youth beds, excluding DV.** The CoC reported 16 Youth beds out of 1,002 beds on the 2024 HIC, or 16% of beds. Of the 16 beds, 2 are PSH, 13 are TH, and 1 ES. Most rural and scattered site projects do not have target populations so can serve youth, including unaccompanied youth. Youth make up 7.2% of our total population according to our CoC APR dated 4/1/23-3/31/24. Parenting youth make up 1.5%.
2. **Data gathered from other sources.** The CoC participates in a tri-annual Homeless Survey in MN. The comprehensive surveys are conducted by trained volunteers and participants are

paid for their time. Data from that survey is included in this narrative. The CoC also uses a database called Podio, mentioned above. This data base allows for secure, real time, cross-border data sharing for system access (i.e., diversion, shelter, prevention, and HSS data). We plan to upload data into HMIS once our state completes a transfer to our new software system which began this summer. For data from VSPs, unaccompanied minors, and those not wishing to share their data due to safety reasons, the CoC operates an Alternative Priority List and utilizes a security feature in Podio.

- 3. Use of data to prevent and end youth homelessness.** The CoC values data informed planning. Data is used to help set annual targets and monitor outcomes for CoC goals established by the board and committees. The CoC board reviews and reports on System Performance Measures (SPM) quarterly and CE data monthly to evaluate system equity, regional inflow and outflow, outcomes, population (household type, DV status, disability status, length of homelessness, etc.), and trends (changes in population, sub-population, flow, and outcomes). CoC and sub-regional data is shared with CoC the CoC membership, regional homeless committees and other CoC committees, including the YABs. The CoC also presents year end data at our annual meeting where annual goals are approved.
- 4. Youth involvement in evaluation and quality improvement.** Our CoC YAB representative to the board has the largest role in data evaluation, as the board reviews CE data monthly, SPM data quarterly, and an CoC APR annually, as well as project performance reports, HIC, PIT, LSA and quarterly Stella reports. No youth are currently on the Performance Evaluation or Ranking committees, but youth are welcome. Annual youth data is included in the YAB orientation PowerPoint and data reports were shared with YABs are part of YHDP planning, but to date, youth have not had the opportunity to comprehensively analyze data, partially

because our old HMIS software reports did not customize youth data so regular analysis is not feasible. With our software transition the CoC will be requesting various customizable reports, including data for YABs. We will include YABs in helping to identify what data they wish to receive and how frequently. We anticipate it will be the software transition will be complete and ready to allow customized reports by the end of the year.

5. Definition and measures of success. Within the goal of reaching USICH benchmarks and System Performance matrix, SMART goals would be established during the Coordinated Community Planning Process. Current YAB goals would be integrated into this process to assure youth input to date was not lost. Current measures are:

- Access & Linkage-100% of youth encountered will conduct a CARES Access triage and be Assessed as needed. By March '25, create a 'fun & youth friendly' PR campaign to reach those who are least likely to reach out themselves or don't know who/what to ask by March '25. By January of '26, create youth specific CE Access and Assessment Tools and add at least 3 youth outreach positions, two of which are filled or accompanied by YLE. By March '26, create an interactive app that supports easier access and linkage to coordinated entry and mainstream services.
- Shelter-TBD, create designated youth shelter rooms in each subregion and create a Host Home network for emergency and transitional housing for youth in all 10 counties.
- Housing Stability-55% of youth encountered will exit Outreach to stable housing. 90% of youth housed will maintain housing stability one year after entry in permanent housing. Create peer stabilization specialist roles and training/support

Cohort by March 2026. Employment-12% of youth will have earned income. 80% of youth with employment goals will obtain or retain employment.

- Income-33% of youth will maintain or increase their income at annual assessment.
- Education-90% of school age youth will be enrolled in school or GED program within three weekdays.
- Training-At a minimum, training offered to youth and staff serving youth will include: USICH Framework, Positive Youth Development, Trauma Informed Care, Housing First principles, income now series, cultural competency series, anti-discrimination series, housing case management series, healthy boundaries, VAWA, Motivational Interviewing, and Harm Reduction. YAB-Regional YAB meetings will be held at least quarterly. YAB representatives will serve on the YHDP Steering Committee and CoC Board. Funding will be secured for authentic youth engagement.
- Evaluation-Six-month and annual evaluations of performance and goals will be conducted.

Rural Bonus

MN-508 is requesting participation as a rural community in the YHDP competition.

Advancing Racial Equity Narrative

The CoC performs an annual equity analysis to identify regional needs and to identify any inequities in our system. CoC and ESG funded projects participate in an annual project review using a Scorecard tool to determine whether all projects comply with the HUD and CoC Thresholds, including assessing Advancing Racial Equity. Agency forms and policies are reviewed during this process. Under-performing projects must complete a performance improvement plan. Equity related criteria reviewed includes: Training-Agency has completed required Diversity, Anti-Discrimination, VAWA, and Equal Access courses in the past year; Anti-discrimination-Agency has an anti-discrimination policy; Diversity-Staff & Leadership ratios reflect diversity of those served; Equal access-Agency provides or collaborates to provide translation and interpretation services. Agency utilize TRS services. Offices are accessible to those with physical disabilities. Agency outreaches to people of color, disabled, and LGBTQIA+ using outreach, print, and online marketing materials; and Equity in service delivery-Agency has an equity plan with timeline, steps and assignments. Agency has special policies or practices that document how they will better serve those from underserved populations (i.e., responding to serve engagement based on culture, race, age, gender identity, or disability including providing reasonable accommodations, smudging policies, non-separation policies, partnerships with culturally specific programs, etc.)

Recognizing that inequities exist in our system, the CoC developed the Advancing Equity Together (AET) structure in 2021 to help build a more equitable homeless response system. LE Advisory Boards meet monthly, acting similarly to YABs, identifying, prioritizing, and monitoring goals and action steps. Six goals were established and are being worked on.

Affirmative Marketing and Outreach

The CoC performs an annual equity analysis to identify regional needs and to identify any inequities in our system. CoC and ESG funded projects participate in an annual project review using a Scorecard tool to determine whether all projects comply with the HUD and CoC Thresholds, including assessing Advancing Racial Equity. Agency forms and policies are reviewed during this process. Under-performing projects must complete a performance improvement plan. Equity related criteria reviewed includes: Training-Agency has completed required Diversity, Anti-Discrimination, VAWA, and Equal Access courses in the past year; Anti-discrimination-Agency has an anti-discrimination policy; Diversity-Staff & Leadership ratios reflect diversity of those served; Equal access-Agency provides or collaborates to provide translation and interpretation services. Agency utilize TRS services. Offices are accessible to those with physical disabilities. Agency outreaches to people of color, disabled, and LGBTQIA+ using outreach, print, and online marketing materials; and Equity in service delivery-Agency has an equity plan with timeline, steps and assignments. Agency has special policies or practices that document how they will better serve those from underserved populations (i.e., responding to serve engagement based on culture, race, age, gender identity, or disability including providing reasonable accommodations, smudging policies, non-separation policies, partnerships with culturally specific programs, etc.)

Additionally, the CoC worked with True Colors to assess, rank, and support agencies on access and marketing for LGBTQUI+ households. The CoC provides examples of Affirmative Marketing and Outreach best practices on our CoC website Resource Directory. Additionally, projects are reviewed and scored annually using the Scorecard tool mentioned above.

Experience Promoting Racial Equity

The White Earth Tribe (WET) is a member of CoC and has two appointed seats on the CoC Board, one voting and one advisory. WET homeless program staff and directors participate in CoC committees as well including, local homeless committees, the Performance and Evaluation committee, and Ranking committee.

Our Coordinated Entry system asks individuals to identify their tribal representation so referrals can be made to tribal homeless and support services if requested. Tribal and non-tribal programs coordinate services when appropriate.

Three agencies who serve black and brown New Americans are members of the CoC and operate within our Coordinated Entry system, one providing outreach and housing assistance, and two providing support services through MN Housing Stabilization Services (MN Medicare). These agencies participate in CoC and local planning meetings.

The CoC has hosted two DEI training courses for housing providers. The CoC also annually requires CoC and ESG funded projects to share their project policies and Equity Plans with timelines, steps, and assignments.

The CoC coordinates regional Lived Experience Advancing Equity Together Advisory Boards and shares insights and priorities from these boards with the CoC Board and membership, which include homeless projects. These boards are comprised of members with lived experience of homelessness who are Biracial, Indigenous, or Persons of Color. These boards are responsible for setting equity goals for the CoC.

Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

The CoC supports and monitors projects to help assure they affirmatively furthers fair housing in compliance with the Fair Housing Act and other state and federal fair housing policies, laws, and practices. Providers must document completion of mandatory online training courses host by the CoC annually including Diversity, Anti-Discrimination, VAWA, Fair Housing, and Equal Access. The CoC reviews project forms and policies annually. CoC and ESG funded projects also must certify annually that they are in compliance with state and federal fair housing and anti-discrimination laws, policies, and regulations.

The CoC also conducts an annual equity evaluation to help identify and respond if any protected class is being discriminated against. Any disparities found are followed up on by the Performance Evaluation Committee. The CoC Equity Boards have also identified goals, including additional training and monitoring that will help decrease disparities.

Public Child Welfare Letters of Support

Attached are letters of support for all ten counties in our region. Please note that

County	Page
Becker	32
Clay	33-34
Douglas	35
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Traverse	42
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Wilkin	44



Becker County Human Services

712 Minnesota Avenue • Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
218-847-5628 • Fax: 218-847-6738 • www.co.becker.mn.us/dept/human_services



Adult Services

Administration

Child & Family Services

Child Support Services

Public Health

Financial Services

Behavioral Health

August 20, 2024

West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care, MN-508
% Clay County Housing and Redevelopment Authority
116 Center Ave East
Dilworth, MN 56529

Dear Ms. Solem,

We have read the information on the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) and we are committed to participating in the development and implementation of the coordinated community plan. We will to the best of our ability participate as a stakeholder with other agencies and individuals to bring our experience and knowledge to the process.

We look forward to working with the CoC and the YHDP team. Please accept this letter as documentation that we are dedicated to supporting the YHDP team.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Denise Warren".

Denise Warren
Director

The mission of Becker County Human Services is to promote safety, health and self-sufficiency by delivering comprehensive, fiscally responsible services to individuals and families.

Clay County Social Services

(218) 299-5200



West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care, MN-508
Clay County Housing and Redevelopment Authority
116 Center Ave East
Dilworth, MN 56529

August 8, 2024

Dear Ms. Solem,

Clay County Social Services is pleased to provide this Letter of Commitment (LOC) to the MN-508, the West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care (WC-CoC), in its application to the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) grant. Our county understands that if awarded this grant will support all 10 communities in the West Central region with over \$1 million in funding (with the exact amount determined by population size and poverty level) to create and implement a Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness. We also understand that a threshold requirement of the grant is collaboration with a state or local Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA). The CoC must include the state or local PCWA as a CoC member and must confer with the PCWA concerning the development of the community's application for the YHDP funding.

Please let this letter serve as verification that our county is a member of the CoC and is committed to participate in the creation of the Coordinated Community Plan. We recognize that county input is vital to creating a Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness and the submittal of this grant application.

In addition to this LOC, our county agrees to execute a memorandum of understanding with the CoC at the time funding is received outlining the following commitments:

- Signed membership in the Continuum of Care including participation in quarterly membership meetings
- Participate in YHDP coordinated community planning meetings.
- Providing input, expertise, and recommendations to CoC and YHDP Steering Committee
- Integrate recommendations made in the Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness.
- Rally community and programmatic support behind youth aging out of foster care and include these youth in future planning and funding to end youth homelessness in the CoC region.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Continuum of Care to improve outcomes for children and families experiencing homelessness in our region.
Sincerely,

Sincerely,



Quinn Jaeger
Director
Clay County Social Services
715 11th St. N. Suite 502
218-299-7114

DOUGLAS COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES

809 Elm Street, Suite 1186
Alexandria, MN 56308-1772
dcss@co.douglas.mn.us

Tabitha Kremmin, Director

320-762-2302
1-844-204-0012
Fax : 320-762-3833
TDD: 320-762-8151

August 9, 2024

Ms. Carla Solem
West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care, MN-508
% Clay County Housing and Redevelopment Authority
116 Center Avenue East
Dilworth, MN 56529

Dear Ms. Solem,

I am writing in support of the West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care in its application for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) grant.

Douglas County is committed to participating in the development and implementation of the coordinated community plan with the goal of ending youth homelessness in the CoC region.

As a public welfare agency, we are invested in providing input, support and recommendations to the YHDP grant team.

If you have further questions, do not hesitate to contact me at (320) 762-3815 or tabithak@co.douglas.mn.us.

Sincerely,



Tabitha Kremmin
Community Human Services Director



WESTERN PRAIRIE

HUMAN SERVICES

211 Minnesota Ave E • Glenwood, MN 56334 • 320.634.7755 • Fax: 320.634.0164
15 Central Ave, PO Box 1006 • Elbow Lake, MN 56531 • 218.685.8200 • Fax: 218.685.4978

August 5, 2024

West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care, MN-508
% Clay County Housing and Redevelopment Authority
116 Center Ave East
Dilworth, MN 56529

To Whom it May Concern,

Western Prairie Human Services is a joint powers entity that is delegated all of Grant and Pope Counties human Services Authorities. As such, Western Prairie Human Services is pleased to provide this Letter of Commitment (LOC) to the MN-508, the West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care (WC-CoC), in its application to the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) grant. It is our understanding that, if awarded, this grant will support all 10 communities in the West Central region with over \$1 million in funding (with the exact amount determined by population size and poverty level) to create and implement a Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness. We also understand that a threshold requirement of the grant is collaboration with a state or local Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA). The CoC must include the state or local PCWA as a CoC member and must confer with the PCWA concerning the development of the community's application for the YHDP funding.

Please let this letter serve as verification that our agency is a member of the CoC and is committed to participating in the creation of the Coordinated Community Plan. We recognize that local input is vital to creating a Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness and the submittal of this grant application.

In addition to this LOC, our agency agrees to execute a memorandum of understanding with the CoC at the time funding is received outlining the following commitments:

- Signed membership in the Continuum of Care including participation in quarterly membership meetings
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- Rally community and programmatic support behind youth aging out of foster care and include these youth in future planning and funding to end youth homelessness in the CoC region.

westernprairiemn.us

"It is our mission to be a person centered agency that partners with and empowers individuals and families, and promotes safe, healthy communities."

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



WESTERN PRAIRIE

HUMAN SERVICES

211 Minnesota Ave E • Glenwood, MN 56334 • 320.634.7755 • Fax: 320.634.0164
15 Central Ave, PO Box 1006 • Elbow Lake, MN 56531 • 218.685.8200 • Fax: 218.685.4978

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Continuum of Care to improve outcomes for children and families experiencing homelessness in our region.

Sincerely,

Stacy Hennen Digitally signed by Stacy Hennen
Date: 2024.08.05 14:26:15 -05'00'

Stacy Hennen, Director
Western Prairie Human Services
211 Minnesota Avenue East
Glenwood, MN 56334

westernprairiemn.us

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July 31, 2024

West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care, MN-508
% Clay County Housing and Redevelopment Authority
116 Center Ave East
Dilworth, MN 56529

Dear Ms. Solem,

We have read the information on the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) and we are committed to participating in the development and implementation of the coordinated community plan.

We will to the best of our ability participate as a stakeholder with other agencies and individuals to bring our experience and knowledge to the process.

We look forward to working with the CoC and the YHDP team. Please accept this letter as documentation that we are dedicated to supporting the YHDP team.

Sincerely,



Deb Sjostrom
Director, Otter Tail County Social Services





WESTERN PRAIRIE

HUMAN SERVICES

211 Minnesota Ave E • Glenwood, MN 56334 • 320.634.7755 • Fax: 320.634.0164
15 Central Ave, PO Box 1006 • Elbow Lake, MN 56531 • 218.685.8200 • Fax: 218.685.4978

August 5, 2024

West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care, MN-508
% Clay County Housing and Redevelopment Authority
116 Center Ave East
Dilworth, MN 56529

To Whom it May Concern,

Western Prairie Human Services is a joint powers entity that is delegated all of Grant and Pope Counties human Services Authorities. As such, Western Prairie Human Services is pleased to provide this Letter of Commitment (LOC) to the MN-508, the West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care (WC-CoC), in its application to the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) grant. It is our understanding that, if awarded, this grant will support all 10 communities in the West Central region with over \$1 million in funding (with the exact amount determined by population size and poverty level) to create and implement a Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness. We also understand that a threshold requirement of the grant is collaboration with a state or local Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA). The CoC must include the state or local PCWA as a CoC member and must confer with the PCWA concerning the development of the community's application for the YHDP funding.

Please let this letter serve as verification that our agency is a member of the CoC and is committed to participating in the creation of the Coordinated Community Plan. We recognize that local input is vital to creating a Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness and the submittal of this grant application.

In addition to this LOC, our agency agrees to execute a memorandum of understanding with the CoC at the time funding is received outlining the following commitments:

- Signed membership in the Continuum of Care including participation in quarterly membership meetings
- Participate in YHDP coordinated community planning meetings.
- Providing input, expertise, and recommendations to CoC and YHDP Steering Committee
- Integrate recommendations made in the Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness.
- Rally community and programmatic support behind youth aging out of foster care and include these youth in future planning and funding to end youth homelessness in the CoC region.

westernprairiemn.us

"It is our mission to be a person centered agency that partners with and empowers individuals and families, and promotes safe, healthy communities."

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WESTERN PRAIRIE

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15 Central Ave, PO Box 1006 • Elbow Lake, MN 56531 • 218.685.8200 • Fax: 218.685.4978

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Continuum of Care to improve outcomes for children and families experiencing homelessness in our region.

Sincerely,

Stacy Hennen Digitally signed by Stacy Hennen
Date: 2024.08.05 14:26:15 -05'00'

Stacy Hennen, Director
Western Prairie Human Services
211 Minnesota Avenue East
Glenwood, MN 56334

westernprairiemn.us

“It is our mission to be a person centered agency that partners with and empowers individuals and families, and promotes safe, healthy communities.”

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



HUMAN SERVICES
LIBERTY SLEITER, LICSW
Director

400 Colorado Ave, Suite 104, Morris, MN 56267

O 320.208.6600
F 320.589.3972

T 800.950.4429
libertysleiter@co.stevens.mn.us

July 29, 2024

West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care, MN-508
% Clay County Housing and Redevelopment Authority
116 Center Ave East
Dilworth, MN 56529

Dear Ms. Solem:

Stevens County Social Services is pleased to provide this Letter of Commitment (LOC) to the MN-508, the West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care (WC-CoC), in its application to the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) grant. Our county understands that if awarded this grant will support all 10 communities in the West Central region with over \$1 million in funding (with the exact amount determined by population size and poverty level) to create and implement a Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness. We also understand that a threshold requirement of the grant is collaboration with a state or local Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA). The CoC must include the state or local PCWA as a CoC member and must confer with the PCWA concerning the development of the community's application for the YHDP funding.

Please let this letter serve as verification that our county is a member of the CoC and is committed to participating in the creation of the Coordinated Community Plan. We recognize that county input is vital to creating a Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness and the submittal of this grant application.

In addition to this LOC, our county agrees to execute a memorandum of understanding with the CoC at the time funding is received outlining the following commitments:

- Signed membership in the Continuum of Care including participation in quarterly membership meetings
- Participate in YHDP coordinated community planning meetings.
- Providing input, expertise, and recommendations to CoC and YHDP Steering Committee
- Integrate recommendations made in the Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness.
- Rally community and programmatic support behind youth aging out of foster care and include these youth in future planning and funding to end youth homelessness in the CoC region.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with Continuum of Care to improve outcomes for children and families experiencing homelessness in our region.

Sincerely,

Liberty Sleiter
Stevens County Human Services Director



TRAVERSE COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

202 8th Street North
PO Box 46
Wheaton, MN 56296
Stacy Hennen, Director

Telephone: 320-422-7777
Toll Free: 855-735-8916
Fax: 320-563-4230
TDD: 320-422-7800

August 5, 2024

West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care, MN-508
% Clay County Housing and Redevelopment Authority
116 Center Ave East
Dilworth, MN 56529

To Whom it May Concern,

I have reviewed the information on the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) and Traverse County Social Services is committed to participating in the development and implementation of the coordinated community plan. We recognize and acknowledge the commitment that this means after the grant is received and we are committed to helping West Central meet all necessary requirements for the grant.

Traverse County Social Services will to the best of our ability participate as a stakeholder with other agencies and individuals to bring our experience and knowledge to the process. We look forward to working with the CoC and the YHDP team. Please accept this letter as documentation that we are dedicated to supporting the YHDP team.

Sincerely,

Stacy Hennen
Digitally signed by Stacy Hennen
Date: 2024.08.05 14:32:35 -05'00'

Stacy Hennen, Director
Traverse County Social Services

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



Wadena County Human Services

124 1st Street SE / Wadena, MN 56482 / 218-631-7605 / FAX: 218-631-7616

August 8, 2024

West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care, MN-508
% Clay County Housing and Redevelopment Authority
116 Center Ave East
Dilworth, MN 56529

Dear Ms. Solem,

Wadena County Human Services has reviewed the information on the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) and we are committed to participating in the development and implementation of the coordinated community plan. We will to the best of our ability participate as a stakeholder with other agencies and individuals to bring our experience and knowledge to the process.

We look forward to working with the CoC and the YHDP team. Please accept this letter as documentation that we are dedicated to supporting the YHDP team.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Westrum, MS, LP

Wadena County Human Services Director

Health and Human Services

227 6th St. North | PO Box 369 | Breckenridge, MN 56520
T. 218-643-7161 | F. 218-643-7166 | Toll Free: 844-994-5546



July 25, 2024

West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care, MN-508
% Clay County Housing and Redevelopment Authority
116 Center Ave East
Dilworth, MN 56529

Dear Ms. Solem:

Wilkin County Health and Human Services is pleased to provide this Letter of Commitment (LOC) to the MN-508, the West Central Minnesota Continuum of Care (WC-CoC), in its application to the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) grant. Our county understands that if awarded this grant will support all 10 communities in the West Central region with over \$1 million in funding (with the exact amount determined by population size and poverty level) to create and implement a Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness. We also understand that a threshold requirement of the grant is collaboration with a state or local Public Child Welfare Agency (PCWA). The CoC must include the state or local PCWA as a CoC member and must confer with the PCWA concerning the development of the community's application for the YHDP funding.

Please let this letter serve as verification that our county is a member of the CoC and is committed to participating in the creation of the Coordinated Community Plan. We recognize that county input is vital to creating a Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness and the submittal of this grant application.

In addition to this LOC, our county agrees to execute a memorandum of understanding with the CoC at the time funding is received outlining the following commitments:

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- Participate in YHDP coordinated community planning meetings.
- Providing input, expertise, and recommendations to CoC and YHDP Steering Committee
- Integrate recommendations made in the Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness.
- Rally community and programmatic support behind youth aging out of foster care and include these youth in future planning and funding to end youth homelessness in the CoC region.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Continuum of Care to improve outcomes for children and families experiencing homelessness in our region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Becky Tripp".

Becky Tripp, Director

Wilkin County Health and Human Services

"Enhancing our County Community by delivering exceptional outcomes and outstanding service"