

CT BOS Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program – guidance on serving youth with additional household members

There have been several questions regarding the eligibility of serving different family compositions, including families with a household member over 24, through CT BOS' YHDP Diversion/Rapid Exit Fund or YHDP Rapid Rehousing program. According to HUD requirements, YHDP eligibility is limited to unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness, including pregnant or parenting youth, who are not accompanied by their parent or guardian during their episode of homelessness and **where no member of the household is older than 24**. Recent guidance from HUD further clarifies that this restriction means that youth can add this older member to the household, but YHDP programs cannot serve the older member with supportive services or house the family in a larger unit based on this additional older household member.

*See general CoC guidance below about program participants defining their family and accommodating changing family composition. Please note the nuance in youth defining their family. Simply because a youth has an older significant other, does not necessarily mean that the youth is presenting for assistance with that older partner.

Whether presenting together as a family (one household) or adding a new member to an existing household, it is important that providers enter all required intake and discharge information regarding all household members who are aged 24 and younger into HMIS. Age documentation must be attached in the file for all members of the household who are aged 18 and older and who will be included on the subsidized lease. If serving more than one youth as a family, then case management and services must be designed to assist the household (all members) with obtaining and sustaining housing. The housing stabilization plan should build on the strengths and resources of the entire household.

If the youth is presenting for assistance alone, but chooses a shared living situation (i.e. renting an apartment with another YHDP participant(s) or a non-YHDP person(s)), then the roommate should **not** be entered into HMIS as part of the youth's household.

Some common scenarios are outlined below:

Scenario	Eligibility	How it is administered
Two youth present as a family seeking assistance together as one household and both youth are currently experiencing homelessness (according to the eligible HUD categories)	Both are eligible for YHDP assistance as one household.	Would be served as one household on the same lease. For purposes of YHDP RRH, their combine income would be considered for the rental calculation, and for purposes of YHDP Div/RE they would receive up to \$5k in assistance as a household.

<p>Two youth present as a family seeking assistance together as one household. Only one of the two is currently experiencing homelessness (according to the eligible HUD categories)</p>	<p>In general, when <i>determining the homeless status</i> of families where the individual members are not residing together when they present for intake into the project (e.g. one parent is staying in an emergency shelter and the other parent is staying with a child at a friend’s house), eligibility must be assessed based on the homeless status of the head of household (family can choose HoH). Therefore, both are eligible for YHDP assistance as one household if choose eligible youth as HoH).</p>	<p>Would be served as one household on the same lease. For purposes of YHDP RRH, their combine income would be considered for the rental calculation, and for purposes of YHDP Div/RE they would receive up to \$5k in assistance as a household.</p>
<p>One youth, who is experiencing homelessness (according to the eligible HUD categories), presents for assistance. After program entry, the youth wishes to add another youth to their household (adding a member to their family).</p>	<p>As an added family member to the household, it does not matter whether this second youth is experiencing homelessness or not (according to the eligible HUD categories). The HoH can add this youth to their household with permission from service provider and landlord as long as the unit is large enough to accommodate additional family member in accordance with applicable federal, state and local standards, the services required to meet the needs of a new family member are available (if meet age requirement), and housing the family together does not present an imminent health and/or safety risk.</p>	<p>Would be served as one household and added to the same lease with landlord approval. For purposes of YHDP RRH, their combined income would be considered for the rental calculation, and for purposes of YHDP Div/RE they would receive up to \$5k in assistance as a household.</p>
<p>Two youth, who are both experiencing homelessness (according to the eligible HUD categories), present for assistance separately but wish to roommate together.</p>	<p>Both are eligible.</p>	<p>Would be served as separate households with separate leases that clearly state each person’s rent obligation (pro-rated share) and each person’s right to remain in the unit, even if the roommate leaves. For purposes of YHDP Div/RE, each youth would receive up to \$5k in assistance as separate households.</p> <p>For YHDP RRH, CANs can make an exception to prioritization to accommodate roommate of choice but both roommates should be assessed to determine they need this level of intervention and are eligible.</p>

<p>One youth, who is experiencing homelessness (according to the eligible HUD categories), presents for assistance. This youth wishes to roommate with a non-YHDP participant (regardless of age).</p>	<p>The youth is eligible. The roommate will not receive services or financial assistance from the program.</p>	<p>The youth participant would be served as a separate household from the roommate with a separate lease that clearly states the youth participant's rent obligation (pro-rated share) and right to remain in the unit, even if the roommate leaves. For purposes of YHDP Div/RE, the eligible youth would receive up to \$5k in assistance.</p>
<p>One youth presents with another person, who is age 25 or older, seeking assistance together as a family. Both are experiencing homelessness (according to the eligible HUD categories).</p>	<p>The CAN should seek to serve this family with other resources that can provide services and assistance to the entire family.</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>One youth, who is experiencing homelessness (according to the eligible HUD categories), presents alone for assistance. After program entry, the youth wishes to add another member to their household who is over 24.</p>	<p>Per recent HUD guidance, the youth participant can add this older member to their household and lease with provider and landlord approval. This applies even if the older member is a parent or guardian. But, YHDP programs cannot serve the older member with supportive services or house the family in a larger unit based on this additional older household member. The rent would <i>not</i> need to be pro-rated and the entire household's income would be considered when calculating rental assistance. However, if the inclusion of an additional household member necessitated a larger unit size**, then you would treat this as shared housing (pro-rata share). Or, when appropriate, the youth and their new household member(s) could consider another assistance program that would serve them together.</p>	<p>If adding the older household member does not necessitate a larger unit, then can add the household member to the lease with landlord approval. Only the youth would receive services so the older member wouldn't be added to HMIS. But, the rent would not need to be pro-rated.</p> <p>If the additional household member necessitated a larger unit, then they can pursue this as a shared living situation. The youth participant would be served as a separate household from the roommate with a separate lease that clearly states the youth participant's rent obligation (pro-rated share) and right to remain in the unit, even if the roommate leaves.</p> <p>Or, when appropriate, the youth and their new household member(s) could consider another assistance program that would provide services to them together.</p>

*Changing Household Composition

The CT BOS CoC recognizes that household composition may change during the course of a homeless episode. (For example, a family may enter emergency shelter as a parent with two teenage children but the plan is to reunite in permanent housing with a younger child who is currently staying with a relative.) To the greatest extent possible, the CoC wants to accommodate changes in family composition.

In accordance with the CT BOS Client Bill of Rights, participants in or applicants to any emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid rehousing, or permanent supportive housing project operating within the CT BOS CoC have the right to decide for themselves who is a member of their families and to be served together with their families. A family may include adults and children or just adults of any age, disability, marital status, actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity. This requirement applies whether the family initially presented together upon admission or the family composition changed post admission. It is the intent of the CT BOS CoC to allow families to form and change composition during their participation in projects, however that may not be feasible in every situation. When circumstances prevent a project from accommodating changes to family composition, projects should assist the family in accessing a different unit or work with their CAN and assist the family in accessing a different project that meets their needs and can accommodate them together as a family.

**Unit is not large enough to accommodate additional family members in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local standards (Note that CoC funded programs are required to have at least one bedroom or living/sleeping room for each two persons and may not require children of the opposite sex, other than very young children, to occupy the same bedroom or living/sleeping room).