



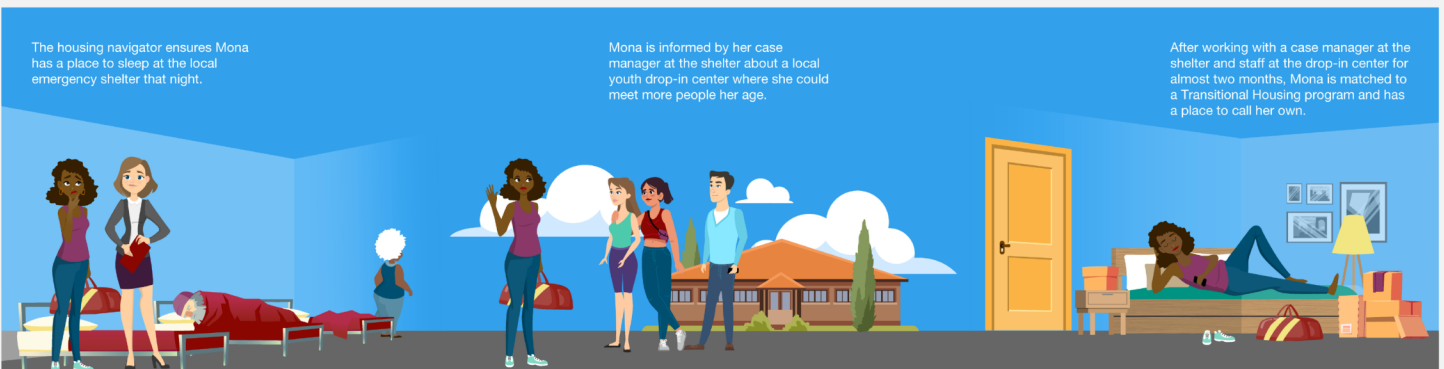
Transitional Age Youth and Homelessness

In Tulsa, 10% of the 2023 Point in Time count respondents were between the ages of 18-24.

In 2023, Tulsa saw a 3% decline in the count of young adults, ages 18 – 24, experiencing homelessness surveyed during the 2023 Point in Time (PIT) count. (1) This encouraging trend can be attributed to heightened attention directed towards this specific demographic. Another term for this sub-population is transitional age youth, and these individuals meet many challenges due to their age and the circumstances that frequently contribute to their homelessness experience. Transitional age youth make up 10% of all PIT count respondents, showing this is problem faced by a sizable group of individuals.

Among this youth population experiencing homelessness, relationship breakdown is reported as the leading cause of their homelessness. Interestingly, it appears as the third most common cause of homelessness among all PIT respondents, highlighting its profound impact on youth individuals. This often translates into the distressing experience of being forced out of their homes, leading to strained relationships with their loved ones. Nearly 80% of youth respondents reported that this was not their first instance of homelessness; their struggles had been ongoing for quite some time. More than 40% of youth respondents reported experiencing chronic homelessness.

Mona's story



The difficulties met by transitional age youth are often intensified when they also confront the challenges of homelessness. Essential experiences such as pursuing education, securing employment, and developing a sense of identity are often overshadowed by their ongoing struggle to secure a stable living situation. Two-thirds of these youth respondents reported having a disabling condition, while over a third disclosed struggles with their mental health. For a young person facing homelessness, the obstacles to stability appear to be endless.

Nearly half[1] of transitional age youth respondents report earlier experiences with the foster care system before their homelessness. Data research shows that 20% of youth (2) aging out of foster care begin to experience homelessness the day they age out. With approximately 20,000 (3) kids aging out of foster care each year, that is an estimated 4,000 youth becoming homeless annually. Those who have found themselves exiting the foster care system only to end up experiencing homelessness are set up for cycles of hardship. It can be traumatizing, as exiting that system only to be met with little-to-no resources and an overwhelming lack of affordable housing leaves little opportunity for stability.

Recently there has been a noticeable surge in attention (4) towards youth homelessness, particularly in Tulsa, accompanied by an increase in funding (5) to bolster programs aimed at addressing this issue. In 2022, it was announced that A Way Home for Tulsa (AWH4T)[2] was awarded more than \$5 million to combat youth homelessness. (6) Tulsa was one of only 17 communities to get this funding from HUD (Housing and Urban Development), specifically from HUD's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP.) (7)

This funding can be put towards implementing more housing opportunities and diversion programs for young adults facing homelessness. Young adults experiencing homelessness often have unique needs than older adults facing the same issue, calling for different diversion tactics. Taking proactive measures to address homelessness early in an individual's life and implementing proper supportive services can effectively prevent them from being trapped in a recurring cycle. Extensive supportive services and the provision of stable housing have proven their efficacy in combating youth homelessness.

Increased access to affordable, accessible housing empowers people, including those with disabling conditions, to live without the fear of homelessness or housing insecurity.

References

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