

Understanding Racial Inequities in Youth Homelessness:

Learning from HUD's Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program

Issue Brief



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Issue Brief

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Introduction

To address the growing rates of homelessness among unaccompanied youth, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) launched the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) in 2016, granting funds to selected Continuums of Care (CoCs) to plan, develop, and implement coordinated community responses aimed at preventing and ending youth homelessness. Westat, an independent research firm, conducted a longitudinal cross-site evaluation of the initial set of 10 CoCs to receive YHDP awards (see exhibit 1).¹ The research team compared the 10 YHDP CoCs with 3 “matched” peer CoCs that did not receive YHDP funding in the first round, as well as all CoCs nationally that did not receive YHDP funding (see exhibit 2). The evaluation found that YHDP led to several key changes that were not experienced to the same degree or as consistently by the three peer sites and other non-YHDP CoCs nationally.² These changes include increases in—

- The development of youth-specific governance and strategic planning.
- Engagement of youth in decisionmaking.
- Coordination with other systems.
- The range and amount of housing available to youth.
- The number of youth receiving specific services, including navigation and rapid rehousing.
- The number of youth receiving permanent housing (coupled with decreases in the number receiving crisis housing).

Exhibit 1. Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program Evaluation

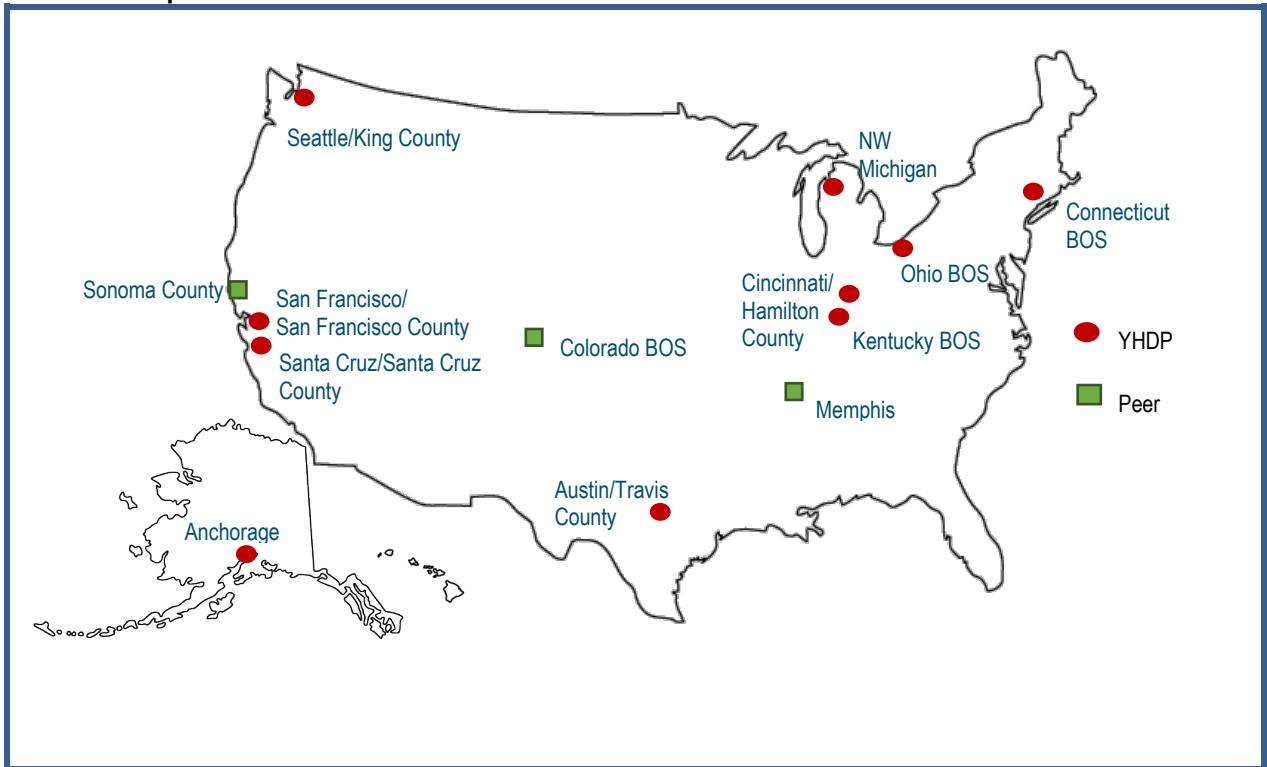
- Multiple comparative case study design.
- Compared 10 Round 1 YHDP CoCs to 3 “matched” peer sites and all CoCs nationally.
- Data sources—
 - Three rounds of “site” visits, including key informant interviews and youth focus groups.
 - HMIS data from 2017 and 2020.
 - Two waves of a web-based survey of all CoCs nationally.

HMIS = Homeless Management Information System. YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

¹To date, HUD has funded 76 CoCs through five rounds of funding, totaling nearly \$300 million, to implement a variety of interventions to prevent and end youth homelessness. At the time of this publication, HUD was considering applications for a sixth round of funding.

²Other evaluation reports are at <https://www.huduser.gov/portal/Youth-Homelessness-Demonstration-Program.html>.

Exhibit 2. Map of the Round 1 YHDP and Peer Sites



BOS = Balance of State. YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

Source: Developed for the YHDP Evaluation

The 10 Round 1 YHDP CoCs that were part of the evaluation represent a diverse set of sites in terms of geography, urban versus rural status, and the size of the youth homeless population. In addition, as the following describes, youth of color are overrepresented their populations. Although promoting racial equity in the delivery of services and outcomes, homelessness assistance did not become an explicit objective of the demonstration until the fourth and fifth rounds of funding. Awarded in 2021, the Round 1 CoCs implemented several strategies to address racial and ethnic disproportionality in youth homelessness and service receipt. The evaluation provides some insight into those experiences.

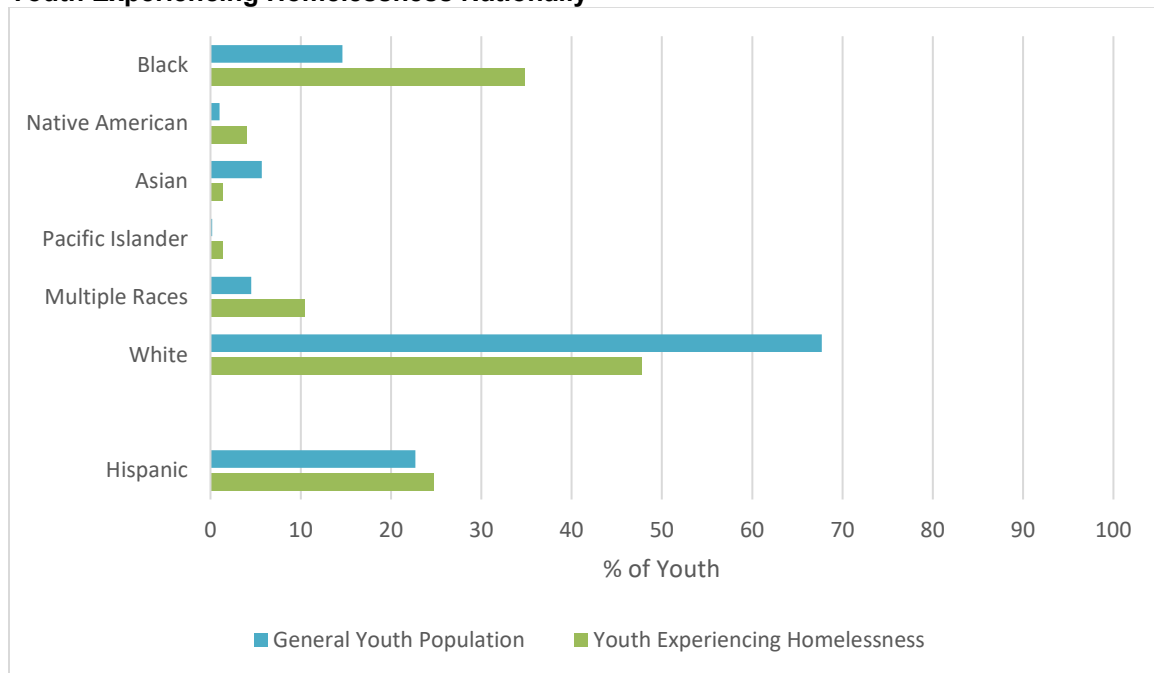
To set the context, this brief begins with comparing the racial-ethnic composition of youth experiencing homelessness across the country relative to the overall national youth population. The report then presents the racial and ethnic composition of youth in the 10 YHDP sites and discusses the ways in which the composition changed during the course of the demonstration in these sites compared with the 3 non-YHDP peer sites. This brief also discusses changes in the ways youth were served over time and shares the strategies that the YHDP sites took to promote racial equity during the course of the demonstration.

Setting the Context: What Is Known About Racial Disproportionality Among Youth Experiencing Homelessness

According to the 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR), Black, Native American, Pacific Islander, and Hispanic youth were disproportionately represented among the more than 34,000 unaccompanied youth who were experiencing homelessness

on a single night in January, a pattern reflected by all populations experiencing homelessness (Henry et al., 2021). As exhibit 3 shows, Black youth compose 35 percent of all youth aged 24 and younger experiencing homelessness, despite composing less than 15 percent of the overall youth population (Henry et al., 2021; Census Bureau, 2020). Native Americans and Pacific Islanders compose 4 and 1.4 percent, respectively, of youth experiencing homelessness, yet compose only 1 and 0.2 percent of the national youth population.

Exhibit 3. Comparison of Racial and Ethnic Composition of General Youth Population and Youth Experiencing Homelessness Nationally



Sources: 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report; 2019 American Community Survey

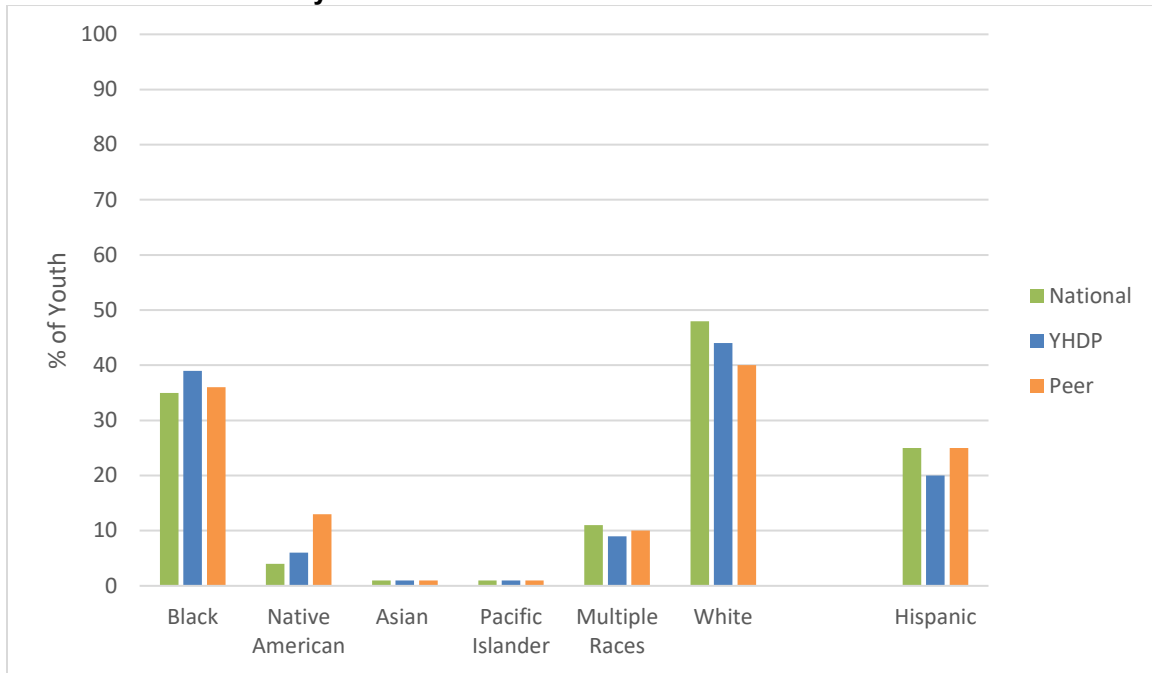
In addition, like the overall population experiencing homelessness, Hispanic youth are slightly overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness (25 versus 23 percent). In contrast, White and Asian people are underrepresented among homeless populations relative to their overall share of the population (Henry et al., 2021; Census Bureau, 2020) (exhibit 3). Similarly, in one of the few nationally representative studies of youth experiencing homelessness, the Voices of Youth Count survey found that Black and Hispanic youth have relative risks of homelessness that are 83 and 33 percent higher, respectively, than White, non-Hispanic youth (Morton et al., 2018).³

³It is important to note that the AHAR and Voices of Youth Count used different methodologies and definitions of homelessness. AHAR data are based on Point-In-Time Count data, an annual inventory on a single night in January to count the number of people experiencing homelessness (sheltered and unsheltered). Estimates from the Voices of Youth Count came from telephone surveys of a nationally representative sample of households that asked the head of household to recount if a youth in their household had (1) run away, (2) left home because they had been asked to leave, (3) couch surfed, or (4) been homeless in the past 12 months.

Racial and Ethnic Composition of Youth in YHDP

The population served across the 10 Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) Continuums of Care (CoCs) and the 3 non-YHDP CoCs selected as peer sites for the evaluation—Sonoma County, Memphis, and Colorado Balance of State (BOS)—are comparable in racial composition to the population of youth receiving homeless services from CoCs nationally, with a few exceptions (that is, higher rates of Black youth, lower rates of White and Hispanic youth) (exhibit 4). These two exceptions may be due to differences between the YHDP and peer sites and sites nationally in the racial-ethnic composition of their overall populations.⁴ Differences may also result from the two different data sources used for the analysis. National statistics, taken from the 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR), include all youth experiencing sheltered and unsheltered homelessness on a single night in January in communities across the country. In contrast, YHDP and peer site data come from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which includes all youth receiving services from the CoCs over time. In addition, the AHAR data do not include an unreported category for race or ethnicity, whereas the HMIS data do.⁵

Exhibit 4. Comparison of Racial and Ethnic Composition of Youth Experiencing Homelessness Nationally and in YHDP Sites and Peer Sites



YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

Sources: 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report; 2020 Homeless Management Information System

⁴Appendix A presents a comparison of the racial-ethnic composition of youth experiencing homelessness with the composition of the overall youth population in each of these CoCs.

⁵For comparison purposes, youth with unreported race in the YHDP and peer sites are excluded from the proportions presented in exhibit 4.

Not surprisingly, given the range of sites in YHDP with respect to geography, size, and overall racial composition, the racial composition of youth experiencing homelessness varies widely across the sites (appendix A). Youth of color were the most experiencing homelessness in one-half of the sites and overrepresented in all sites, even in those sites where youth experiencing homelessness were predominately White. In six YHDP sites, the rates of Black youth experiencing homelessness was more than twice as high as in their proportion of overall population. The discrepancy is highest in Cincinnati/Hamilton County, where more than 70 percent of youth in the HMIS identified as Black compared with 26 percent of youth in the general population. In addition, in Anchorage, three times as many youth in the HMIS identify as American Indian and Alaska Native than in the general population.

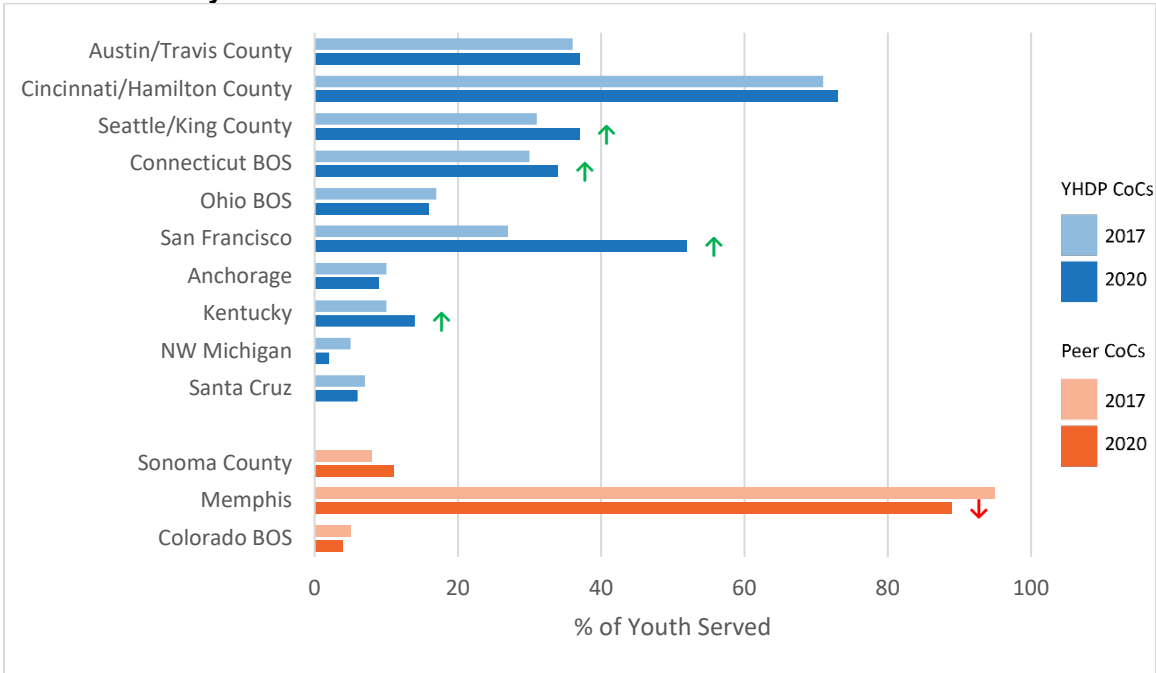
In the three peer sites, youth of color were also disproportionately represented in the HMIS when compared with their overall population. Black youth were overrepresented in both Sonoma County and Memphis. American Indian and Alaska Native youth and Hispanic youth were overrepresented in Sonoma County and Colorado BOS.

Changes in the Racial and Ethnic Composition of the YHDP Population Over Time

Over time, the racial composition of youth served in Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) Continuum of Care (CoC) changed, generally in the direction of serving more youth of color and Hispanic youth (exhibits 5, 6, 7, and 8).⁶ Six sites (Seattle/King County, San Francisco, Anchorage, Connecticut BOS, and Kentucky BOS) experienced significant increases in the share of youth identifying as Black. Nearly all CoC engaged a greater share of Hispanic youth in homelessness assistance, with statistical increases in five sites (Austin/Travis County, Connecticut BOS, Santa Cruz, San Francisco, and Seattle/King County). Anchorage and San Francisco also engaged a greater proportion of American Indian and Alaska Native youth over time, with Anchorage increasing from 31 to 38 percent and San Francisco increasing from 2 to 3 percent. Further, three sites (Seattle/King County, Connecticut BOS, and San Francisco) increased the proportion of youth identifying as multiracial, whereas Anchorage decreased (exhibit 33 in appendix B). During the same time, six sites experienced decreases in the proportion of White youth served, with significant decreases in four sites (Anchorage, Kentucky BOS, San Francisco, and Seattle/King County).

⁶Exhibits showing the change over time for youth identifying as multiracial, Asian, and Hawaiian and Pacific Islander are in appendix B.

Exhibit 5. Percentage of Black Youth Served in YHDP and Peer CoCs in Calendar Years 2017 and 2020 by Site

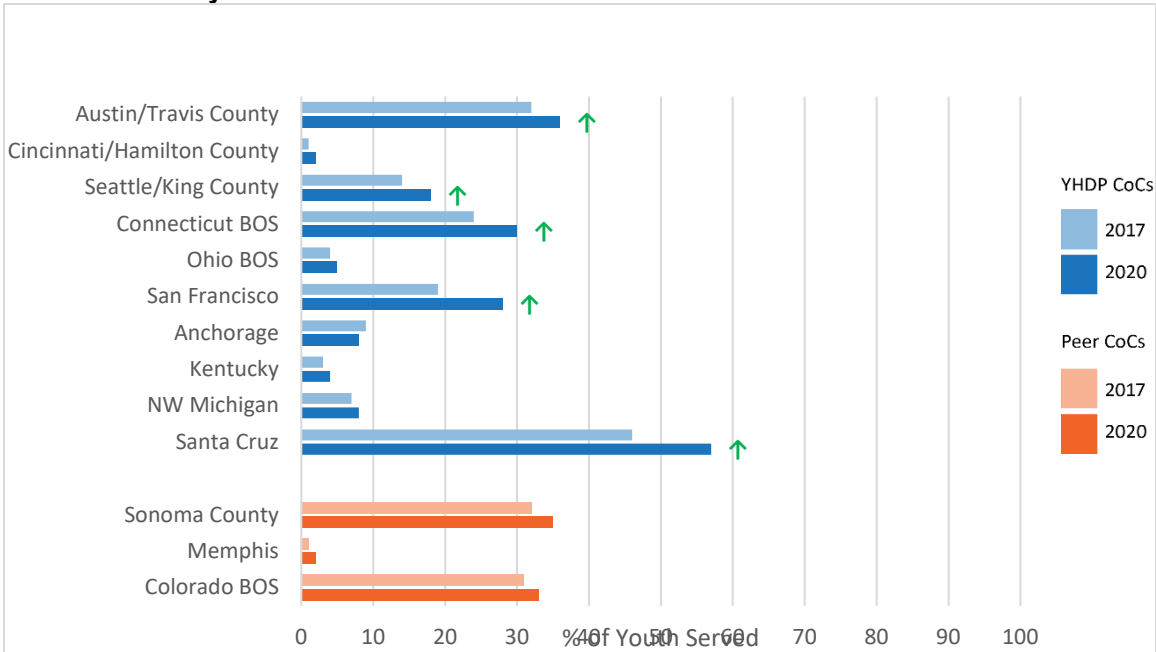


BOS = Balance of State. CoC = Continuum of Care. YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

Note: Arrows indicate statistically significant increase (↑) or decrease (↓).

Sources: 2017 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); 2020 HMIS

Exhibit 6. Percentage of Hispanic Youth Served in YHDP and Peer CoCs in Calendar Years 2017 and 2020 by Site

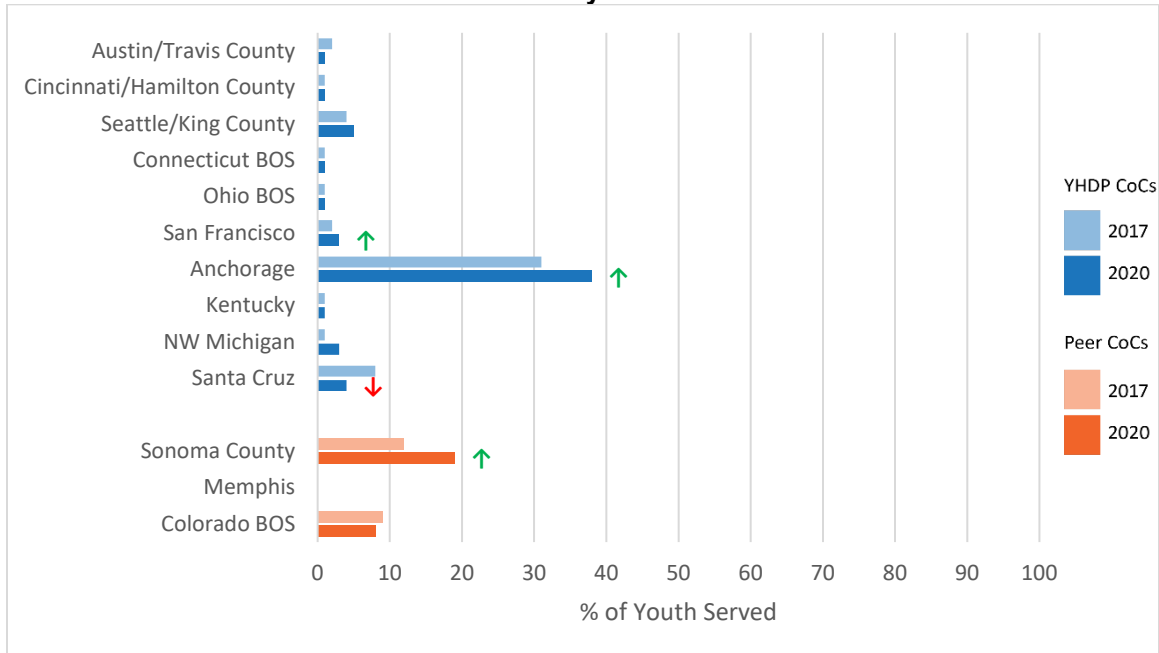


BOS = Balance of State. CoC = Continuum of Care. YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

Note: Arrows indicate statistically significant increase (↑).

Sources: 2017 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); 2020 HMIS

Exhibit 7. Percentage of American Indian and Native Alaska Youth Served in YHDP and Peer CoCs in Calendar Years 2017 and 2020 by Site

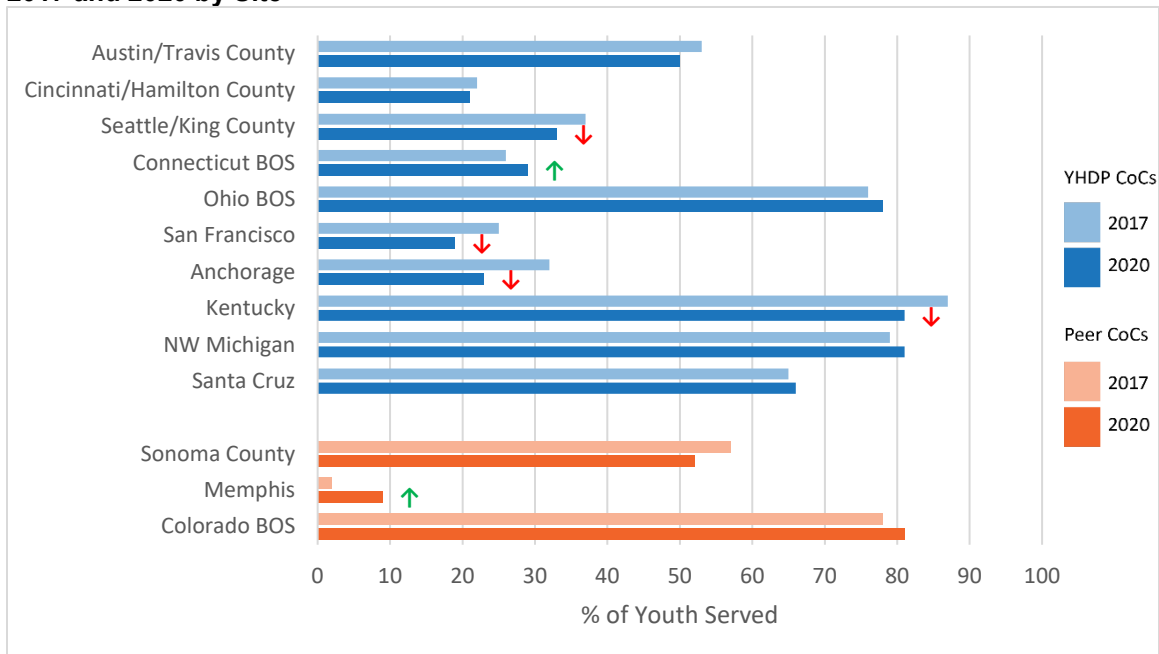


BOS = Balance of State. CoC = Continuum of Care. YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

Note: Arrows indicate statistically significant increase (↑) or decrease (↓).

Sources: 2017 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); 2020 HMIS

Exhibit 8. Percentage of White Youth Served in YHDP and Peer CoCs in Calendar Years 2017 and 2020 by Site



BOS = Balance of State. CoC = Continuum of Care. YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

Note: Arrows indicate statistically significant increase (↑) or decrease (↓).

Sources: 2017 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); 2020 HMIS

In contrast, the racial composition of youth in Sonoma County experienced small changes among American Indian and Alaska Native and Asian youth. Memphis experienced an increase in the proportion of White youth served and a decrease in the proportion of Black youth served (although with Black youth still comprising 89 percent of the youth served). Colorado BOS did not experience significant changes over time in the racial composition of youth served. Finally, although the general trend across the three sites was an increase in serving youth identifying as Hispanic, none of the increases were statistically significant.

The racial composition of the youth experiencing homelessness nationally changed very little during this period, with less than a 1 percent change in any racial-ethnic category (exhibit 9). Furthermore, between 2017 and 2020, increases over time were only among Black and multiracial youth. Decreases were in the proportion of Native American and Alaska Native and Hispanic youth in addition to White and Asian youth served between 2017 and 2020. These decreases suggest that the changes observed among YHDP CoCs reflect their increased efforts to identify and engage youth of color in homelessness assistance, rather than an overall trend toward more youth of color experiencing homelessness.

Exhibit 9. Racial and Ethnic Composition of Youth Experiencing Homelessness Nationally

Racial and Ethnic Group	Percentage of Youth 2017	Percentage of Youth 2020
White	48.6	47.8
Black	33.9	34.8
Asian	1.9	1.4
Native American	4.2	4.0
Pacific Islander	1.4	1.4
Multiple Races	10.0	10.5
Hispanic	25.2	24.7

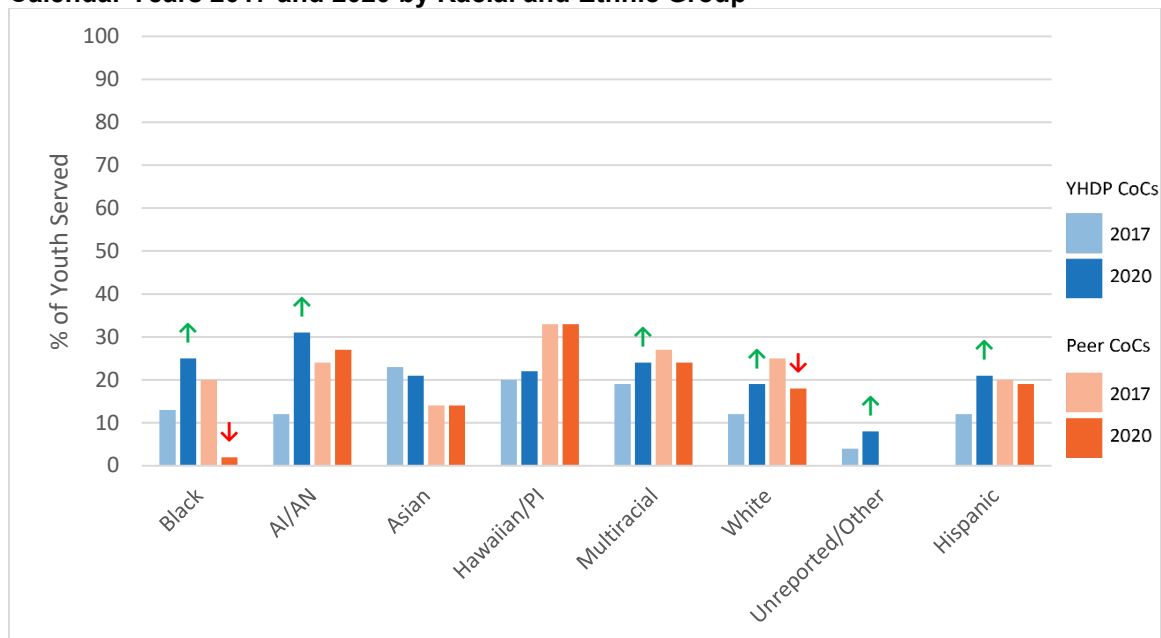
Sources: 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR); 2020 AHAR

How Youth Were Served

During the course of the demonstration, Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) sites increased youth-specific outreach services and access to drop-in centers, improved their coordinated entry systems for youth, increased use of navigation assistance to strengthen youth’s access to housing and services, and increased youth’s access to permanent housing through rapid rehousing and permanent supportive housing while decreasing the use of crisis housing. All increases in YHDP sites were greater than the changes experienced by the three peer sites and non-YHDP sites nationally (Henderson et al., 2022).

Exhibits 10 through 12 show how youth of different racial-ethnic groups experienced changes in service receipt.⁷ Among YHDP Continuums of Care (CoCs), increases in receipt of navigation assistance and rapid rehousing, as well as decreases in the use of emergency shelter, were observed across racial and ethnic groups. Greater percentages of youth identifying as Black, American Indian and Alaska Native, multiracial, Hispanic, and White received navigation services in 2020 than in 2017, with the largest increases among Black and American Indian and Alaska Native youth. In addition, greater percentages of youth in every category received rapid rehousing assistance in 2020 than in 2017, with increases ranging from 4 to 14 percent. Consistent with the demonstration’s focus on permanent housing, use of emergency shelter decreased across all racial-ethnic groups, with the largest decreases realized among youth identifying as American Indian and Alaska Native and Asian. Although some variation existed across sites, these findings are not driven by one or two large CoCs. Instead, they are comparable across most CoCs for which there is data.

Exhibit 10. Receipt of Navigation Assistance by Youth Served in YHDP and Peer CoCs in Calendar Years 2017 and 2020 by Racial and Ethnic Group



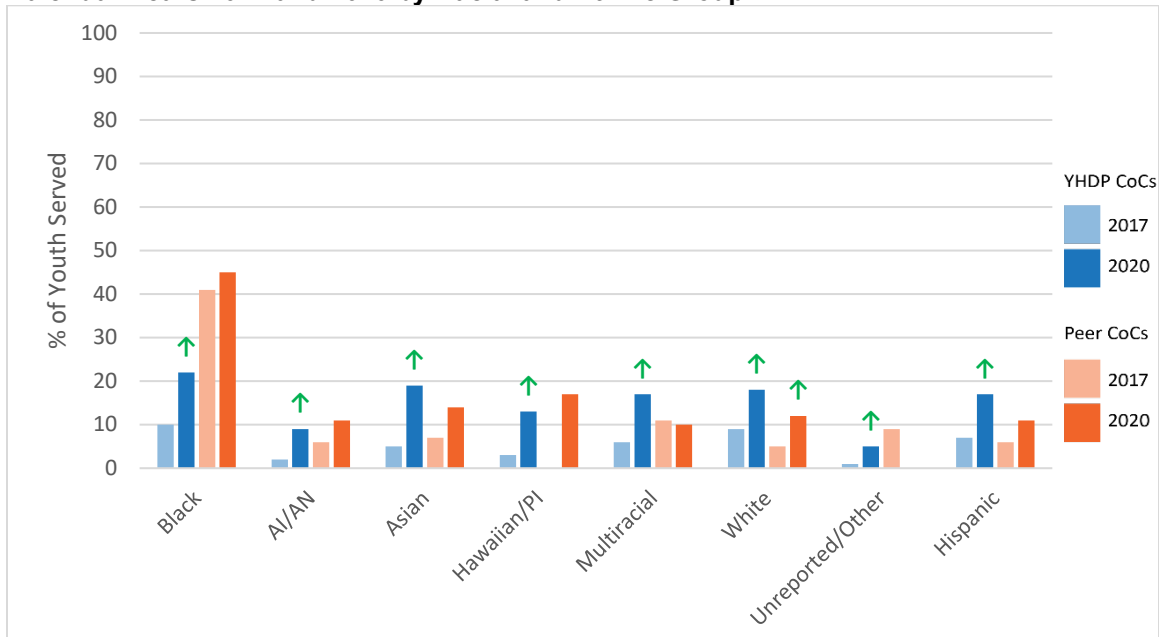
AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. CoC = Continuum of Care. PI = Pacific Islander. YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

Note: Arrows indicate statistically significant increase (↑) or decrease (↓).

Sources: 2017 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); 2020 HMIS

⁷These analyses exclude San Francisco among the YHDP sites and Colorado Balance of State among the peer sites because the researchers did not receive individual-level Homeless Management Information System data for these sites.

Exhibit 11. Receipt of Rapid Rehousing by Youth Served in YHDP and Peer CoCs in Calendar Years 2017 and 2020 by Racial and Ethnic Group

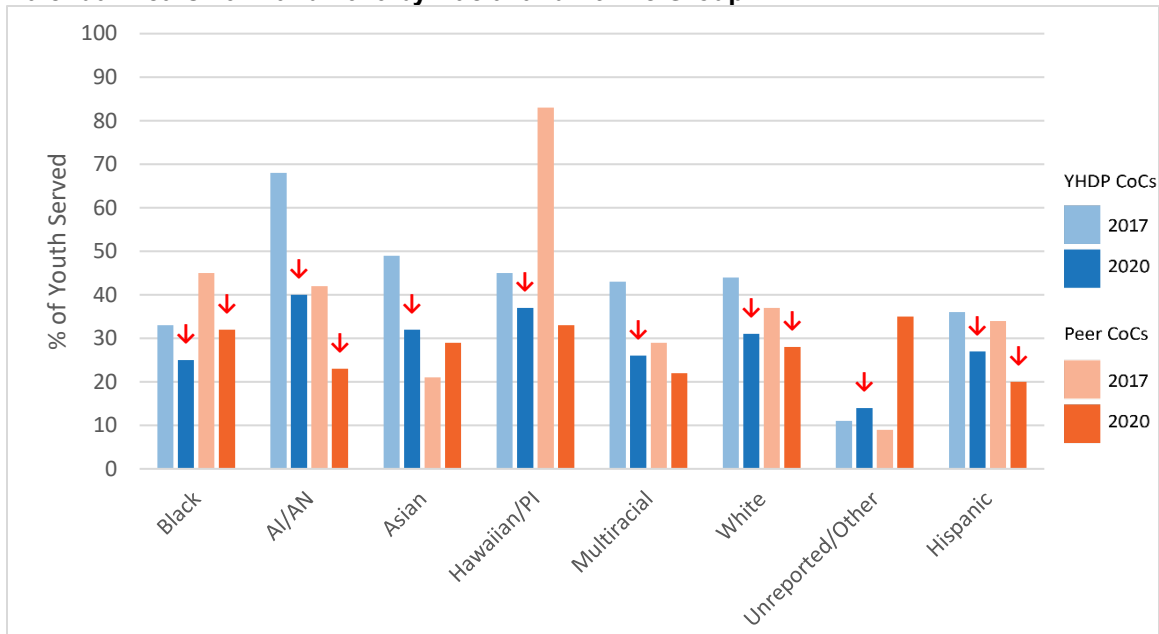


AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. CoC = Continuum of Care. PI = Pacific Islander. YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

Note: Arrows indicate statistically significant increase (↑).

Sources: 2017 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); 2020 HMIS

Exhibit 12. Receipt of Emergency Shelter by Youth Served in the YHDP and Peer CoCs in Calendar Years 2017 and 2020 by Racial and Ethnic Group



AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. CoC = Continuum of Care. PI = Pacific Islander. YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

Note: Arrows indicate statistically significant decrease (↓).

Sources: 2017 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); 2020 HMIS

The peer sites did not experience the same set of changes in these services over time. Like the YHDP sites, receipt of emergency shelter decreased for Black, White, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Hispanic youth between 2017 and 2020. However, rather than increase, receipt of navigation assistance decreased for both Black and White youth during this period, and only White youth in the peer sites realized an increase in receipt of rapid rehousing assistance.

The patterns of change in service receipt by youth of different racial-ethnic groups are not as clear for other types of assistance, such as coordinated entry, outreach and drop-in centers, and other types of housing assistance (appendix C). For example, across YHDP CoCs, significant increases were in the percentage of American Indian and Alaska Native youth and multiracial youth who received coordinated entry in 2020 compared with 2017, but decreases in percentages of youth identifying as Black, White, Hispanic, and unreported races. American Indian and Alaska Native, Hispanic, and White youth in YHDP sites realized increases over time in outreach services, but youth in all these racial groups in peer sites were more likely to receive outreach services in 2020 than youth in YHDP sites. For other types of assistance, such as drop-in centers, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing, and other permanent housing, small percentages of the total number of youth served within the sites received the assistance, thus making it hard to detect differences over time by racial-ethnic groups.

How Sites Worked Toward Racial Equity in Their Systems

Throughout the demonstration, the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) Continuums of Care (CoCs) implemented a variety of strategies to promote equity in their youth homelessness systems and to engage more youth of color and Hispanic youth in the services offered. These strategies spanned the development of the systems from building more diversity and cultural specificity into the governance of the systems and the policies and procedures within them to promoting equity in coordinated entry and in the services and housing provided and to taking a racial equity lens in the collection and analysis of data.

Governance

Creating Diverse YHDP Leadership Teams that Included Representatives from Culturally Specific Organizations

YHDP was the impetus for developing a CoC committee or workgroup specifically focused on youth homelessness in eight sites (the remaining two sites already had youth focused working groups). In each site, the leadership team was generally composed of representatives from local government, youth and non-youth homeless services providers, behavioral health providers, child welfare agencies, school districts, and youth with lived experience. The leadership team was responsible for determining the needs of youth at risk of and experiencing homelessness, developing coordinated community plans and proposed projects, reviewing project proposals and selecting providers to receive YHDP grants, and monitoring the ongoing demonstration activities and outcomes.

Several CoCs made concerted efforts to include representatives from culturally specific organizations in these leadership groups to provide strategies for increasing identification and outreach to underserved youth populations, ensure implementation of culturally appropriate YHDP projects, and review system processes to ensure that they promote racial equity and produce equitable outcomes. Exhibit 13 provides an example of efforts implemented in Anchorage.

Exhibit 13. Building in Diversity in Governance: Anchorage

To ensure that its coordinated community plan addressed the needs of the disproportionate share of Alaska Native youth experiencing homelessness, Anchorage included representatives from the Alaska Native Tribal Health System, Southcentral Foundation, and the Cook Inlet Tribal Council to serve on the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program leadership team and its workgroups. These organizations have a history of providing a range of social supports and health services to Alaska Native populations and were able to help identify policies or procedures that discouraged Alaska Native youth from accessing the assistance they needed. For example, employment and education requirements for Transitional Living Programs disproportionately excluded Alaska Native youth who were coming to Anchorage for assistance from the surrounding villages.

Reviewing Policies and Procedures that May Exacerbate Racial Inequity in Service Receipt

Racial disparities in the services and housing that youth receive can occur at various points, including how they access assistance (that is, through outreach teams, self-referral, or referrals from other agencies), how they are assessed for need, what documentation is required, the type of assistance for which they are eligible, and the providers to whom they are referred. Factors, such as the race of the outreach workers, the neighborhoods they target, the assessment tool used, and the location, type, and capacity of service providers can perpetuate racial disparities in the homelessness system. About one-third of the YHDP CoCs made concerted efforts to review the policies and procedures of their systems to determine factors that may lead to racial inequity in service receipt. See exhibit 14 for an example.

Exhibit 14. Reviewing Procedures and Policies with a Racial Equity Lens: Seattle/King County

The Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program leadership in Seattle/King County created workgroups as part of their Steering Committee (the Joint Committee) to review providers' shelter and housing rules and eligibility standards to identify if they could allow for or lead to differential treatment of subpopulations of youth. The workgroups issued recommendations to improve rules and actively eliminate policies that could disproportionately affect youth of color (that is, sobriety or employment requirements and practices of barring youth with behavioral health issues for housing programs). In addition, leadership sought feedback from youth across providers through a variety of methods (that is, surveys and focus groups) to identify areas in which youth thought policies and procedures could lead to differential treatment, such as guest policies or room searches that are used with staff discretion.

Coordinated Entry

Reviewing and Revising the CoC's Coordinated Entry Assessment Tool

In the early stages of the demonstration, 9 of the 10 YHDP sites used the Transition Age Youth-Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (TAY-VISPDAT) to assess youth requesting assistance. Throughout the demonstration, numerous CoCs determined that the TAY-VISPDAT was too rigid, was not culturally sensitive, and did not accurately assess youth's needs and vulnerabilities. As a result, not all youth in their systems were appropriately prioritized for the assistance they needed, and racial inequities in receipt of homelessness assistance were exacerbated. This result is consistent with research that shows that the VISPDAT assessment tools do not equitably capture vulnerabilities for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) compared with their White counterparts. BIPOC, on average, receive significantly lower prioritization scores and are less likely to be referred for certain types of assistance, such as permanent supportive housing (Cronley, 2020; Wilkey, 2019). In response to these concerns, by the end of the demonstration, at least four sites were reconsidering their use of the TAY-VISPDAT and working to develop new assessment tools or questions, reflecting a larger national trend of questioning the use of this tool (Bitfocus, 2021) (see exhibit 15).

Exhibit 15. Developing a Prioritization Tool with a Racial Equity Lens: Austin/Travis County

To ensure that its coordinated entry system addressed the housing needs of youth of color, Austin/Travis County replaced the Transition Age Youth-Vulnerability Index Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (TAY-VISPDAT), as well as VISPDATs for non-youth populations, with Austin Prioritization Index (API), which focused on identifying and considering the underlying experiences of this population. The API is a community-based tool that was developed with an explicit focus on equity. The API retains some questions from the TAY-VISPDAT but also includes several questions to increase the prioritization score for certain types of experiences that disproportionately affect Black and Hispanic youth, such as previous experiences with child welfare and juvenile justice. The Continuum of Care's (CoC) Equity Task Group—composed of people with lived experience of homelessness, service providers, advocates, and other stakeholders—developed new questions. The new questions were pilot tested with people entering coordinated entry and assessed for equity before being adopted by the CoC in October 2021. The CoC is currently conducting an analysis of the API to ensure that it is producing equitably prioritization scores.

Services and Housing

Funding Providers Who Serve Traditionally Underserved Populations

In the development of their coordinated community plans, multiple CoCs created service maps of their neighborhoods to identify areas where gaps in service availability existed, particularly in low-income communities and communities of color. These maps helped

the YHDP leadership teams to identify the types of assistance they needed to put into place or expand with YHDP resources as well as the locations throughout their jurisdictions those services were needed. This work helped guide the development and implementation of YHDP-funded projects as well as other non-YHDP funded projects. Exhibit 16 presents an example of these efforts in San Francisco.

Exhibit 16. Funding Housing and Services in Underserved Areas: San Francisco

Throughout the period of the demonstration, San Francisco invested in housing and services for youth in Bayview Hunter's Point, a multiracial neighborhood with a high population of at-risk youth. Prior to the demonstration, despite being home to nearly 40 percent of the city's homeless population, Bayview Hunter's Point had no youth homelessness services that linked youth to crisis or permanent housing. During the demonstration, the Continuum of Care used Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program resources to fund a rapid rehousing program through 3rd Street Youth Center & Clinic. It also partnered with the organization to launch a coordinated entry access point for youth and open the Lower Polk transition age youth Navigation Center. The Navigation Center provides youth access to shelter and housing, medical and mental health services, and workforce development support.

Providing Trainings and Technical Assistance

Numerous CoCs provided training to organizations throughout their systems on topics such as cultural competence and responsiveness in service delivery, operating as an antiracist organization, and attending to racial inequities in health during COVID-19. In many of the CoCs, these trainings initially occurred live through webinars and other virtual settings but were then housed on the CoCs' websites in the form of PowerPoint decks, recordings, and other materials for new staff to review. For example, Connecticut Balance of State's website contains a database of past trainings available to providers throughout the CoC, as well as links to trainings and technical assistance materials from other local and national agencies, such as the Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness and the National Alliance to End Homelessness. See exhibit 17 for an example of efforts in Ohio Balance of State.

Exhibit 17. Training and Technical Assistance to Foster Racial Equity in Services and Housing: Ohio Balance of State

The Continuum of Care (CoC) lead, the Coalition of Homelessness and Housing in Ohio (COHHIO), established a Racial Equity Committee that implemented a Race Equity Organizational Self-Assessment and Transformation Project to assist homeless providers throughout the CoC in assessing their readiness to implement racial equity initiatives and to provide tools and resources, including curriculum for staff, to help them do so. Agencies are invited to complete an organizational self-assessment tool, share the results of that tool with COHHIO's Racial Equity Committee, and work together with the CoC to develop an action plan to advance race equity internally and in the provision of programs and services. Agencies are encouraged to embrace strategies that include hiring racially, religiously, and culturally diverse leadership and frontline staff; providing client choice in case management and service receipt; providing trauma-informed, multilingual case management; and developing organizational goals with equity-focused benchmarks.

Data

Improving HMIS Systems and Analyzing HMIS Data To Identify Disparities in Service Delivery or Outcomes

With HUD-funded technical assistance from the Partnership Center, a nonprofit organization focused on helping local municipalities improve their HMIS, the YHDP CoCs worked to improve their sites' HMIS data systems to incorporate more comprehensive data collection from youth enrolled in YHDP projects. To help guide future decisionmaking for youth services, these efforts focused on improving the completeness of data on youth's demographic characteristics, such as race, as well as to capture additional data elements, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTQ) status and previous child welfare or juvenile justice involvement.

Moreover, as part of their continuous quality improvement plans, nearly all YHDP CoCs engaged in analysis of their own data systems for racial disparities in service delivery and outcomes. In many CoCs, this work was focused on the larger population of people served rather than being limited to youth. See exhibit 18 for an example.

Exhibit 18. Improving the Quality of HMIS Data To Inform Racial Inequities: Cincinnati/Hamilton County

To better understand the population of youth in need of housing and related assistance in its community, Cincinnati/Hamilton County engaged in several activities to improve the quality of the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data across the system. Leadership and frontline staff at all youth-serving homelessness providers were given training to ensure the use of consistent HMIS data collection processes. The Continuum of Care developed dashboards from the data to track the characteristics of youth in the system and routinely shared data summaries with individual providers to bestow insight on the populations they served and guide additional data improvements. In addition, the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program case conferencing teams routinely reviewed service receipts for youth on the by-name list maintained in the HMIS with a racial equity lens.

Other Initiatives

Participating in Other Equity-Focused Initiatives

During the demonstration, one-half of the CoCs also participated in other homelessness initiatives with an equity-focus. Anchorage, Cincinnati and Hamilton County, and Santa Cruz participated in Community Solutions' Built for Zero initiative, a national collaboration of nearly 200 communities addressing homelessness through comprehensive, real-time, by-name data that incorporate a focus on racial equity and LGBTQ equity. Anchorage and San Francisco participated in A Way Home America's Grand Challenge to end homelessness for BIPOC and LGBTQ youth through targeted community-developed strategies, such as developing equity-focused youth leadership committees, identifying causes of disparity within the system, and making recommendations to rectify them. See exhibit 19 for an example.

Exhibit 19. Participating in HUD's Equity Demonstration Project: Austin/Travis County and Connecticut BOS

Austin/Travis County and Connecticut Balance of State (BOS) participated in the first cohort of HUD's Equity Demonstration Project, launched in 2019. The goal of the project was to help communities identify and rectify processes for assessing, prioritizing, and serving people experiencing homelessness that exacerbate racial inequities. Core components of the demonstration include data-driven decisionmaking, leadership teams led by Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), and people with lived experience, peer learning opportunities, and HUD-provided technical assistance.

Summary and Conclusion

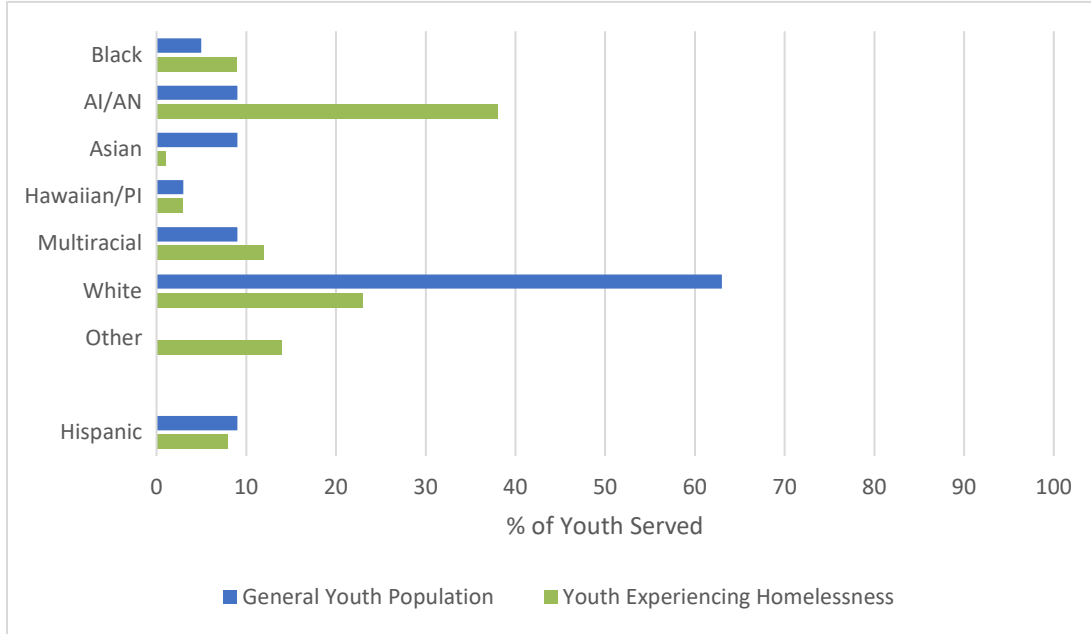
Homeless youth, like all homeless populations, are disproportionately Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Alaska Native. Despite not having a formal objective of promoting racial equity in the delivery of services and outcomes, the Round 1 Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) sites implemented several strategies to address this racial and ethnic disproportionality. Their strategies involved reaching out to both organizations serving traditionally underserved youth and youth in general. More diverse organizations were engaged in leadership and governance, and more organizations in underserved communities were funded to provide YHDP services and housing. About one-third of YHDP Continuums of Care (CoCs) reviewed past policies and procedures to correct any systemic forms of disparity and created new ones with an eye to avoid creating any new disparities and promoting equitable access and housing outcomes. These efforts were systemwide in a few YHDP sites and involved educating homeless service delivery providers in ways they can advance racial equity through their own organizations. Finally, Homeless Management Information System data were increasingly used as a tool to identify racial disparities in service receipt and outcomes.

During the demonstration, youth across the racial groups in YHDP sites increasingly received navigation assistance and rapid rehousing, and fewer received emergency shelter. Moreover, YHDP sites, more so than peer sites, served greater proportions of youth in these groups over time, which may be due in part to their explicit multipronged attention to racial equity.

In sum, the YHDP resources were an impetus to engaging other organizations into the system, increasing youth voice, and providing housing to more youth. An emphasis on cultural responsiveness and explicit attention to removing structural barriers centers racial equity in all dimensions of serving youth experiencing homelessness. With or without additional resources, CoCs can make great strides in promoting more equitable practices and outcomes by explicitly adopting and threading racial equity in all aspects of their system and practices.

Appendix A. Racial Composition of Youth Experiencing Homelessness Compared with Overall Youth Population by Site

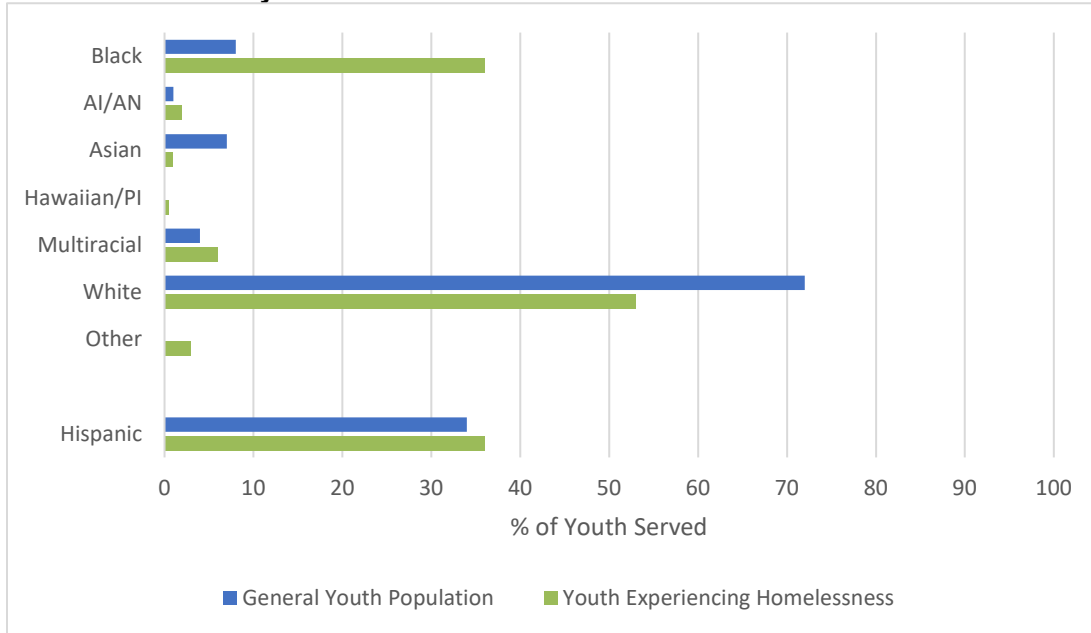
Exhibit 20. Racial Composition of Youth in HMIS and in the General Population, Anchorage



AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. HMIS = Homeless Management Information System. PI = Pacific Islander.

Sources: 2019 American Community Survey; 2020 HMIS

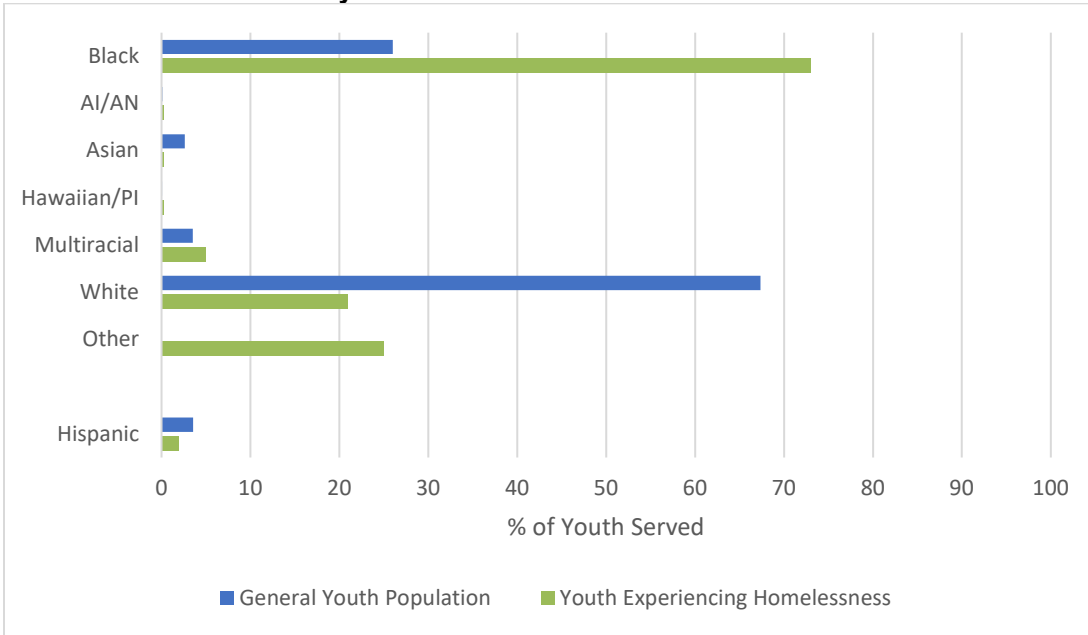
Exhibit 21. Racial Composition of Youth in HMIS and in the General Population, Austin/Travis County



AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. HMIS = Homeless Management Information System. PI = Pacific Islander.

Sources: 2019 American Community Survey; 2020 HMIS

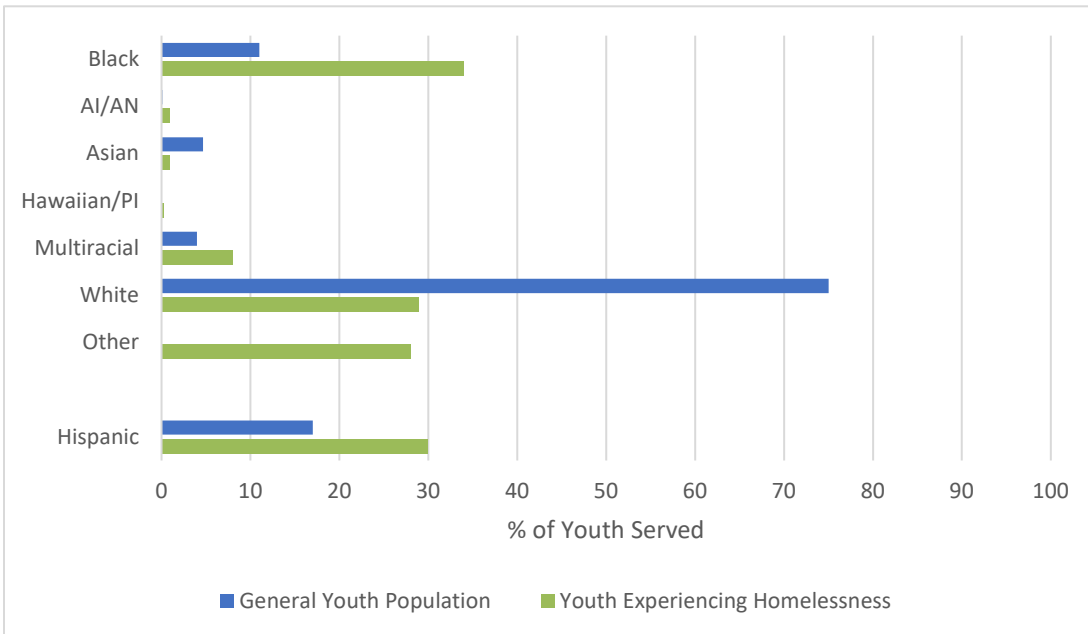
Exhibit 22. Racial Composition of Youth in HMIS and in the General Population, Cincinnati/Hamilton County



AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. HMIS = Homeless Management Information System. PI = Pacific Islander.

Sources: 2019 American Community Survey; 2020 HMIS

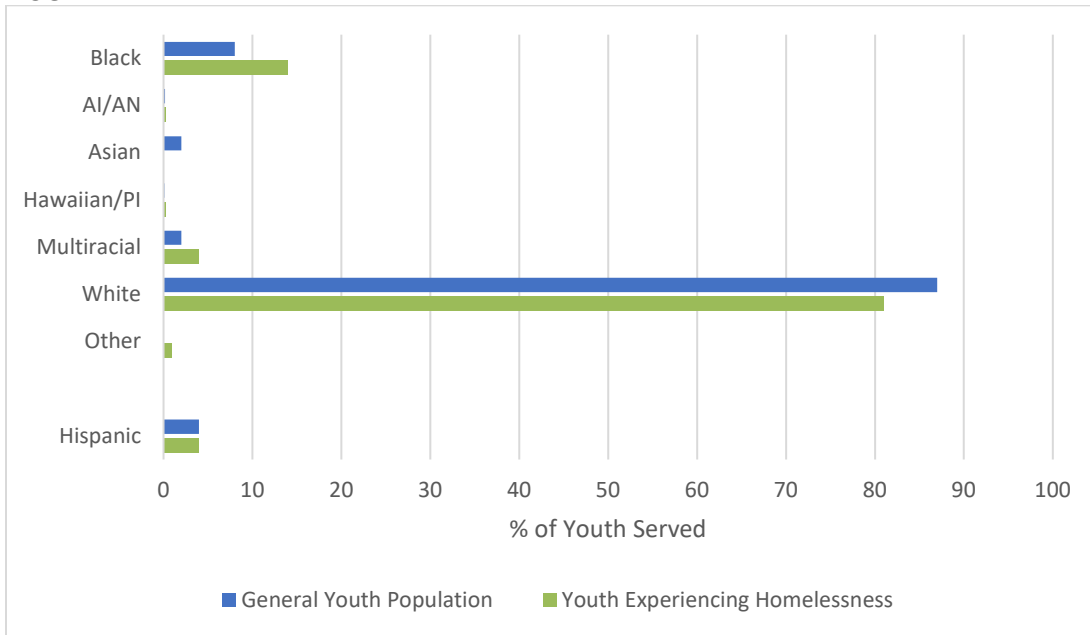
Exhibit 23. Racial Composition of Youth in HMIS and in the General Population, Connecticut BOS



AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. BOS = Balance of State. HMIS = Homeless Management Information System. PI = Pacific Islander.

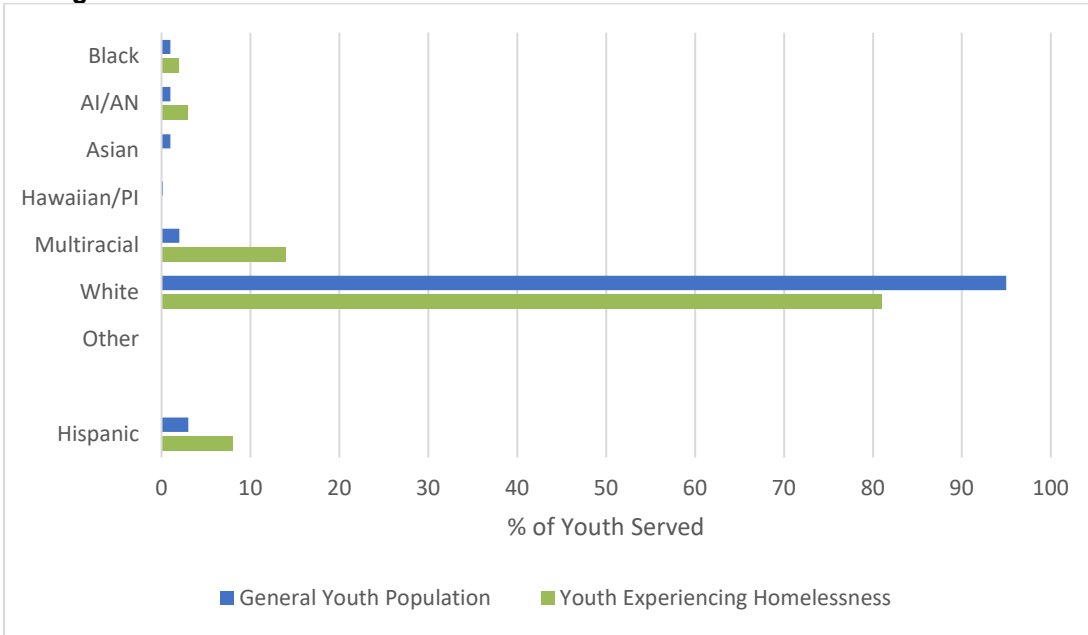
Sources: 2019 American Community Survey; 2020 HMIS

Exhibit 24. Racial Composition of Youth in HMIS and in the General Population, Kentucky BOS



AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. BOS = Balance of State. HMIS = Homeless Management Information System. PI = Pacific Islander.
 Sources: 2019 American Community Survey; 2020 HMIS

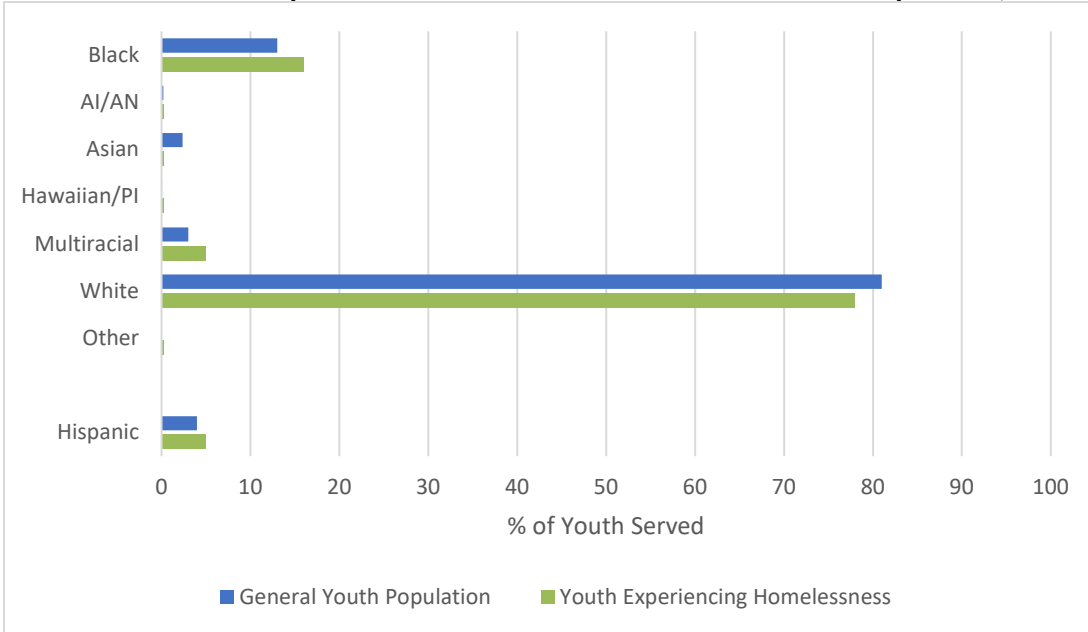
Exhibit 25. Racial Composition of Youth in HMIS and in the General Population, Northwest Michigan



AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. HMIS = Homeless Management Information System. PI = Pacific Islander.

Sources: 2019 American Community Survey; 2020 HMIS

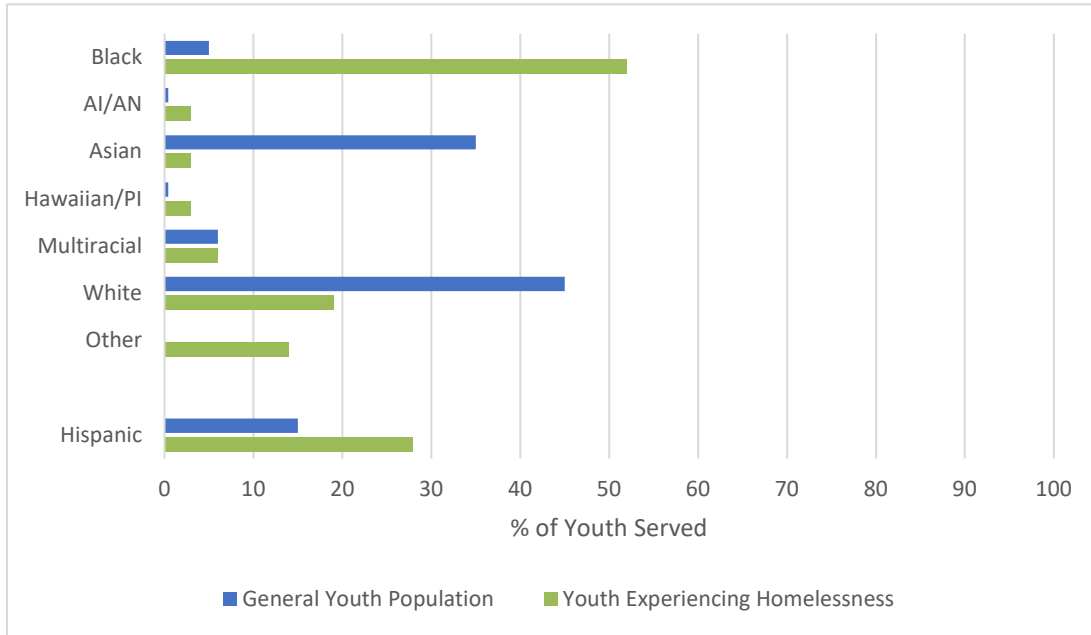
Exhibit 26. Racial Composition of Youth in HMIS and in the General Population, Ohio BOS



AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. BOS = Balance of State. HMIS = Homeless Management Information System. PI = Pacific Islander.

Sources: 2019 American Community Survey; 2020 HMIS

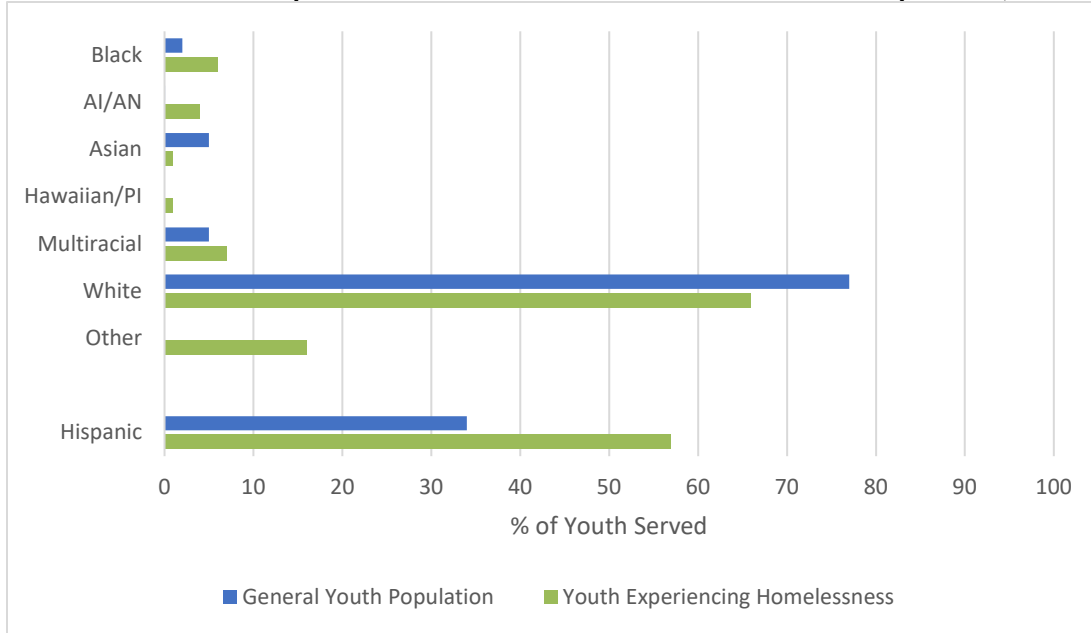
Exhibit 27. Racial Composition of Youth in HMIS and in the General Population, San Francisco



AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. HMIS = Homeless Management Information System. PI = Pacific Islander.

Sources: 2019 American Community Survey; 2020 HMIS

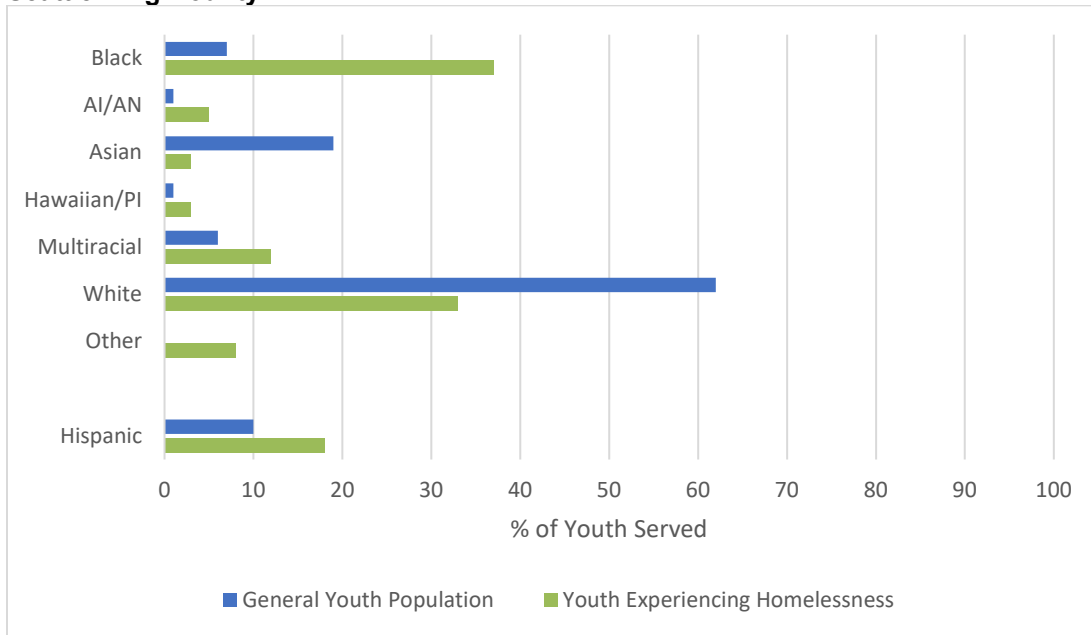
Exhibit 28. Racial Composition of Youth in HMIS and in the General Population, Santa Cruz



AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. HMIS = Homeless Management Information System. PI = Pacific Islander.

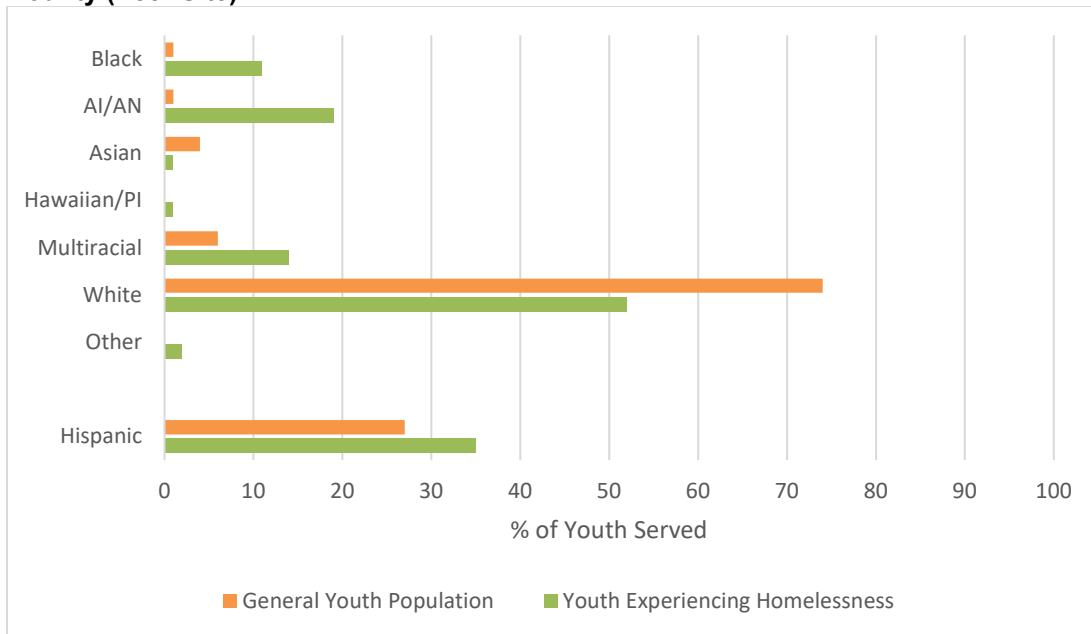
Sources: 2019 American Community Survey; 2020 HMIS

Exhibit 29. Racial Composition of Youth in HMIS and in the General Population, Seattle/King County



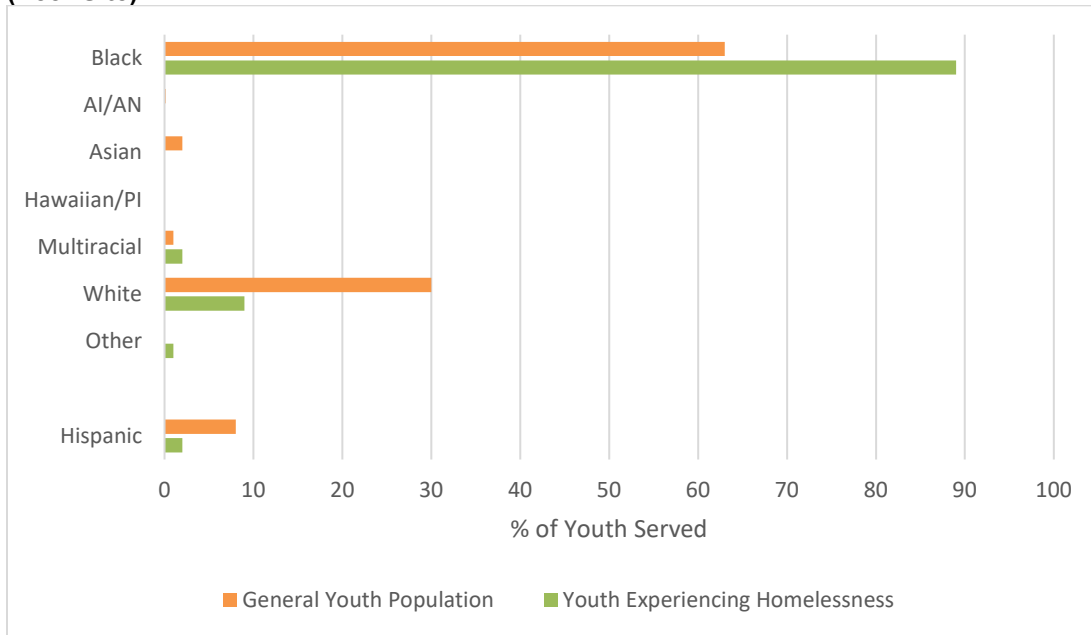
AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. HMIS = Homeless Management Information System.
 PI = Pacific Islander.
 Sources: 2019 American Community Survey; 2020 HMIS

Exhibit 30. Racial Composition of Youth in HMIS and in the General Population, Sonoma County (Peer Site)



AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. HMIS = Homeless Management Information System.
 PI = Pacific Islander.
 Sources: 2019 American Community Survey; 2020 HMIS

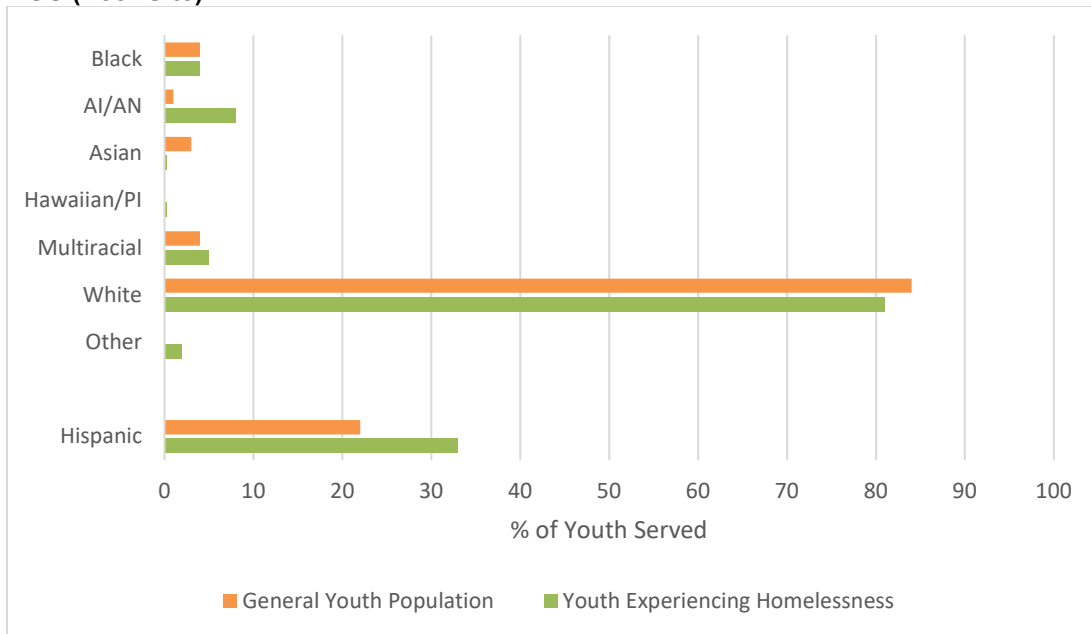
Exhibit 31. Racial Composition of Youth in HMIS and in the General Population, Memphis (Peer Site)



AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. HMIS = Homeless Management Information System. PI = Pacific Islander.

Sources: 2019 American Community Survey; 2020 HMIS

Exhibit 32. Racial Composition of Youth in HMIS and in the General Population, Colorado BOS (Peer Site)

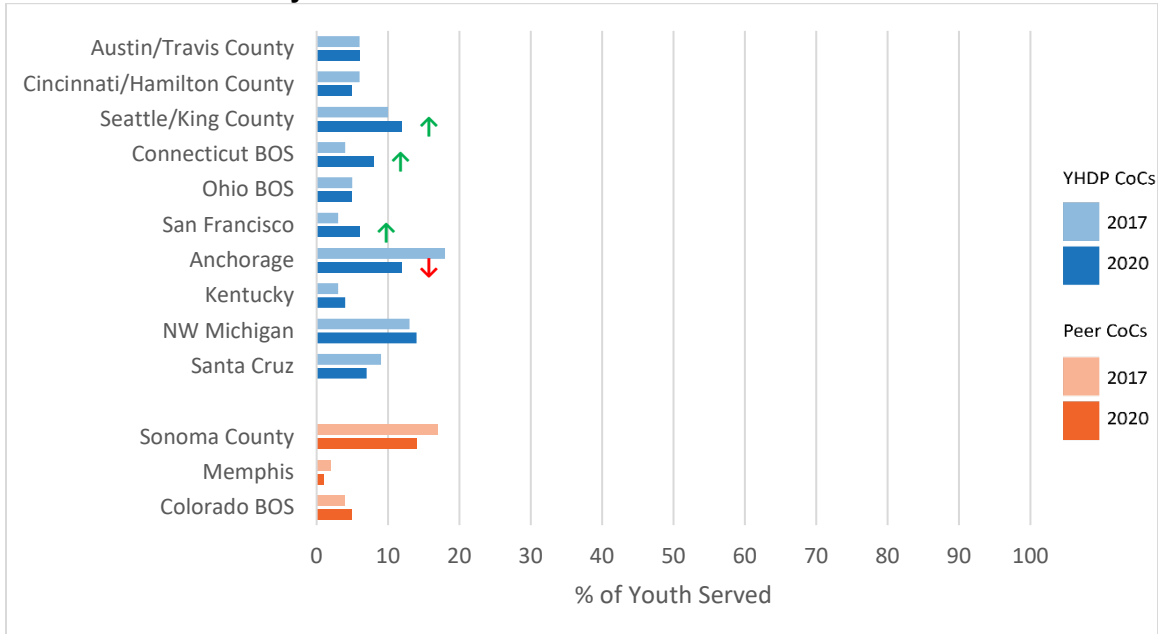


AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. BOS = Balance of State. HMIS = Homeless Management Information System. PI = Pacific Islander.

Sources: 2019 American Community Survey; 2020 HMIS

Appendix B. Change Over Time in Percentage of Youth Served in YHDP and Peer CoCs

Exhibit 33. Percentage of Multiracial Youth Served in the YHDP and Peer CoCs in Calendar Years 2017 and 2020 by Site

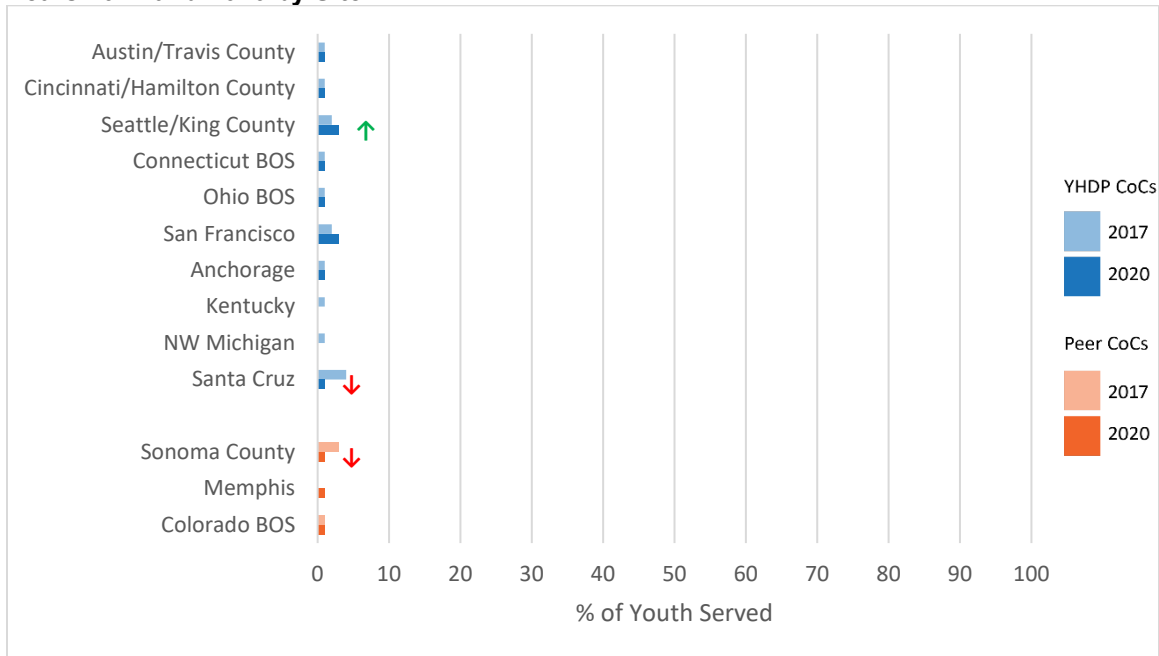


BOS = Balance of State. CoC = Continuum of Care. YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

Note: Arrows indicate statistically significant increase (↑) or decrease (↓).

Sources: 2017 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); 2020 HMIS

Exhibit 34. Percentage of Asian Youth Served in the YHDP and Peer CoCs in Calendar Years 2017 and 2020 by Site

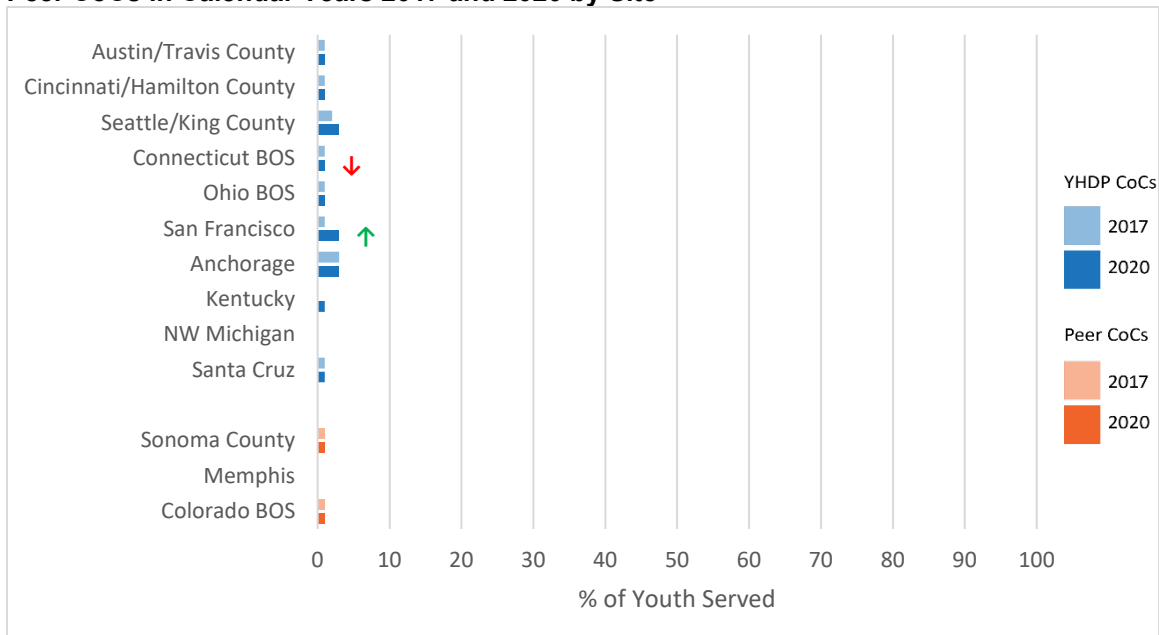


BOS = Balance of State. CoC = Continuum of Care. YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

Note: Arrows indicate statistically significant increase (↑) or decrease (↓).

Sources: 2017 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); 2020 HMIS

Exhibit 35. Percentage of Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Youth Served in the YHDP and Peer CoCs in Calendar Years 2017 and 2020 by Site



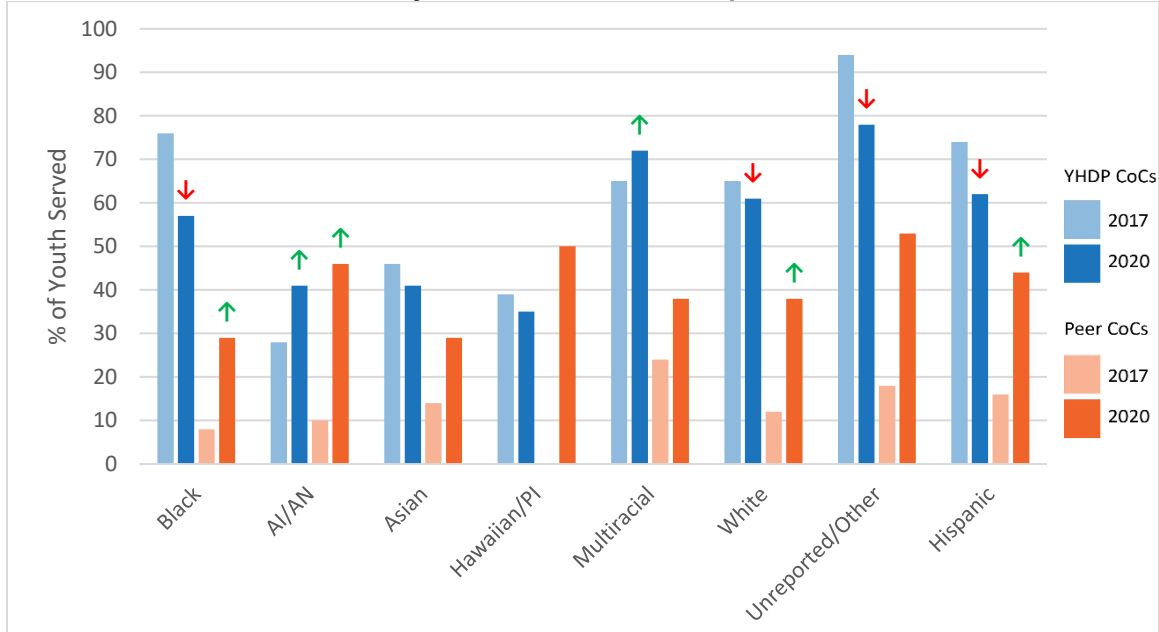
BOS = Balance of State. CoC = Continuum of Care. YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

Note: Arrows indicate statistically significant increase (↑) or decrease (↓).

Sources: 2017 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); 2020 HMIS

Appendix C. Receipt of Services and Housing by Racial and Ethnic Group

Exhibit 36. Receipt of Coordinated Entry by Youth Served in the YHDP and Peer CoCs* in Calendar Years 2017 and 2020 by Racial and Ethnic Group



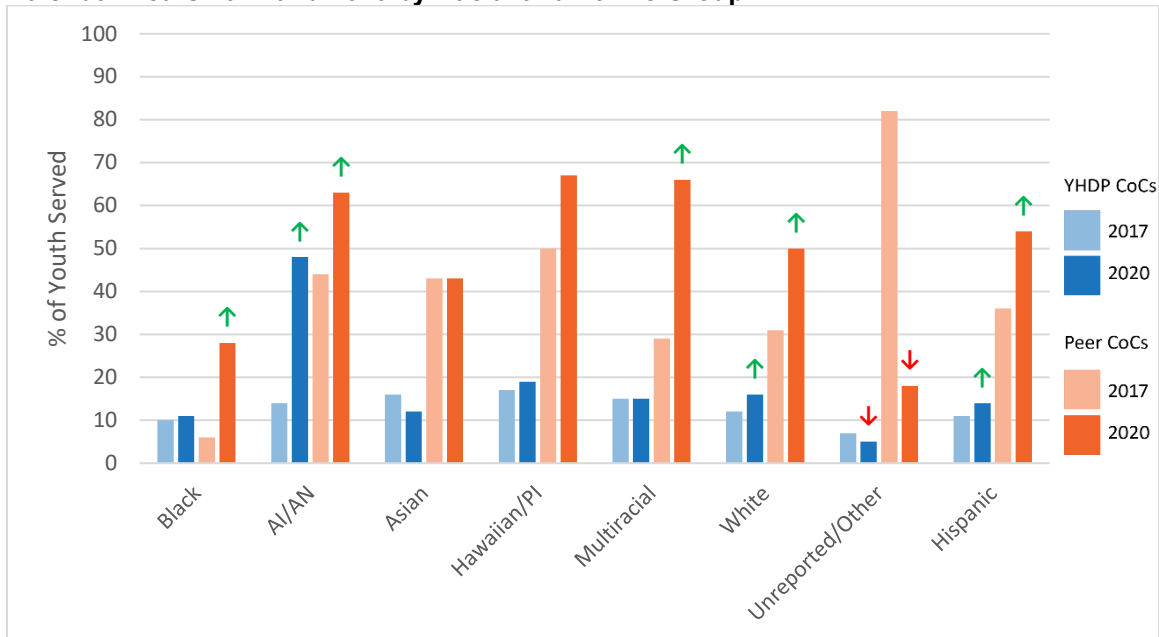
AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. CoC = Continuum of Care. PI = Pacific Islander. YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

*Coordinated entry data were only available in the 2017 and 2020 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) for four YHDP CoC (Anchorage, Austin and Travis County, Cincinnati and Hamilton County, and Connecticut Balance of State) and two peer CoC (Memphis and Sonoma County). This analysis is limited to those sites.

Note: Arrows indicate statistically significant increase (↑) or decrease (↓).

Sources: 2017 HMIS; 2020 HMIS

Exhibit 37. Receipt of Street Outreach by Youth Served in the YHDP and Peer CoCs in Calendar Years 2017 and 2020 by Racial and Ethnic Group

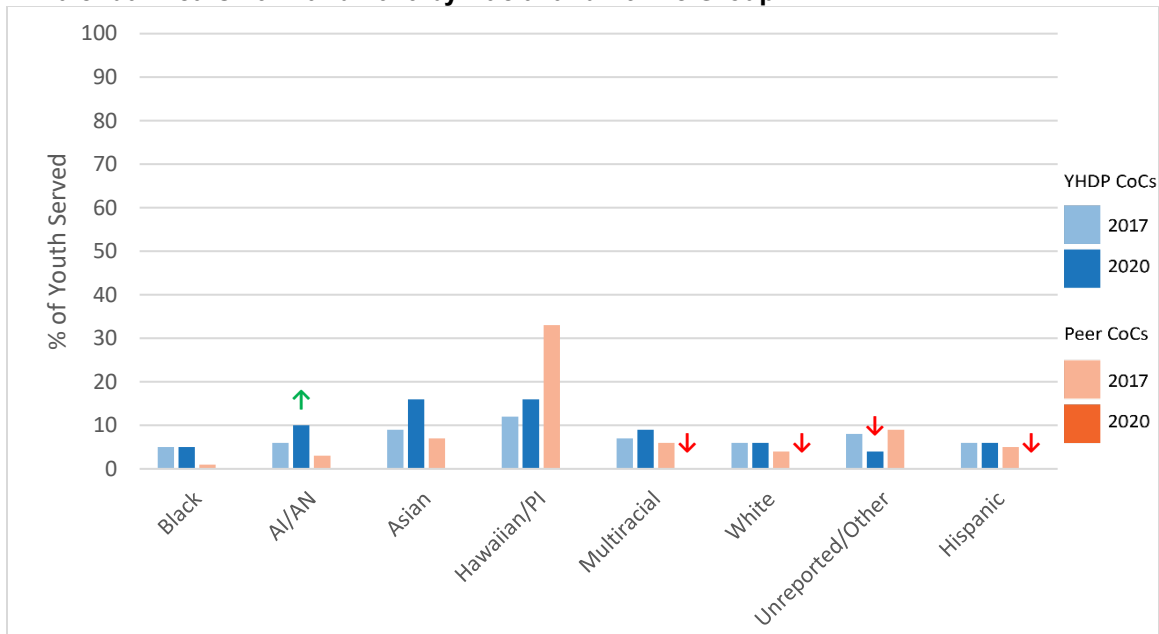


AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. CoC = Continuum of Care. PI = Pacific Islander. YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

Note: Arrows indicate statistically significant increase (↑) or decrease (↓).

Sources: 2017 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); 2020 HMIS

Exhibit 38. Receipt of Street Drop-In Centers by Youth Served in the YHDP and Peer CoCs in Calendar Years 2017 and 2020 by Racial and Ethnic Group

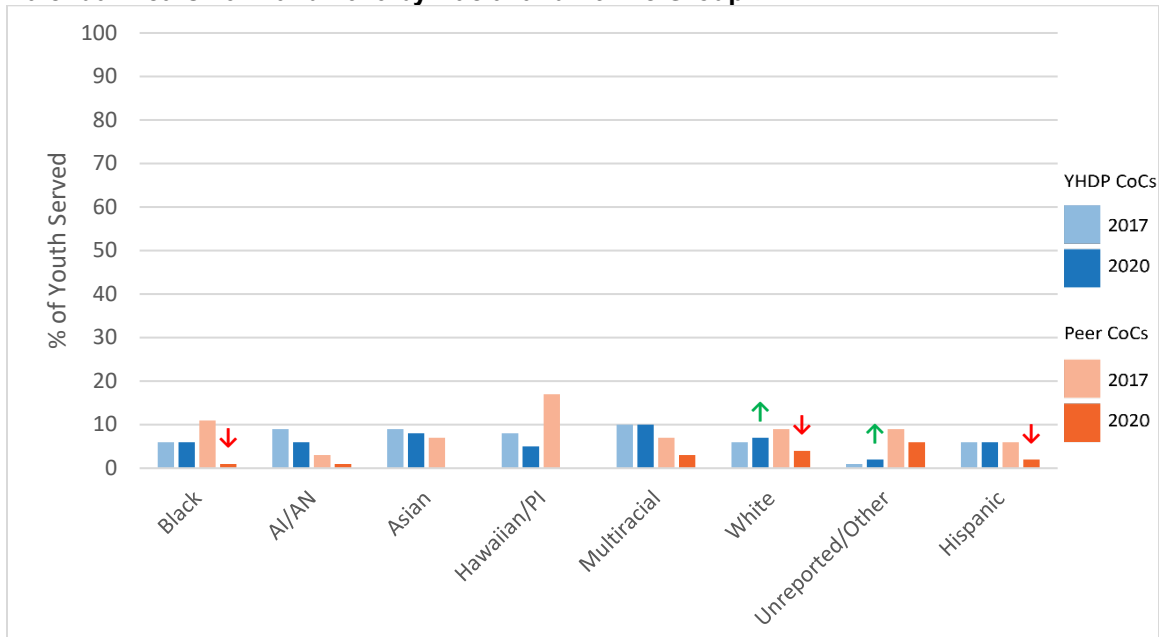


AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. CoC = Continuum of Care. PI = Pacific Islander. YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

Note: Arrows indicate statistically significant increase (↑) or decrease (↓).

Sources: 2017 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); 2020 HMIS

Exhibit 39. Receipt of Transitional Housing by Youth Served in the YHDP and Peer CoCs in Calendar Years 2017 and 2020 by Racial and Ethnic Group

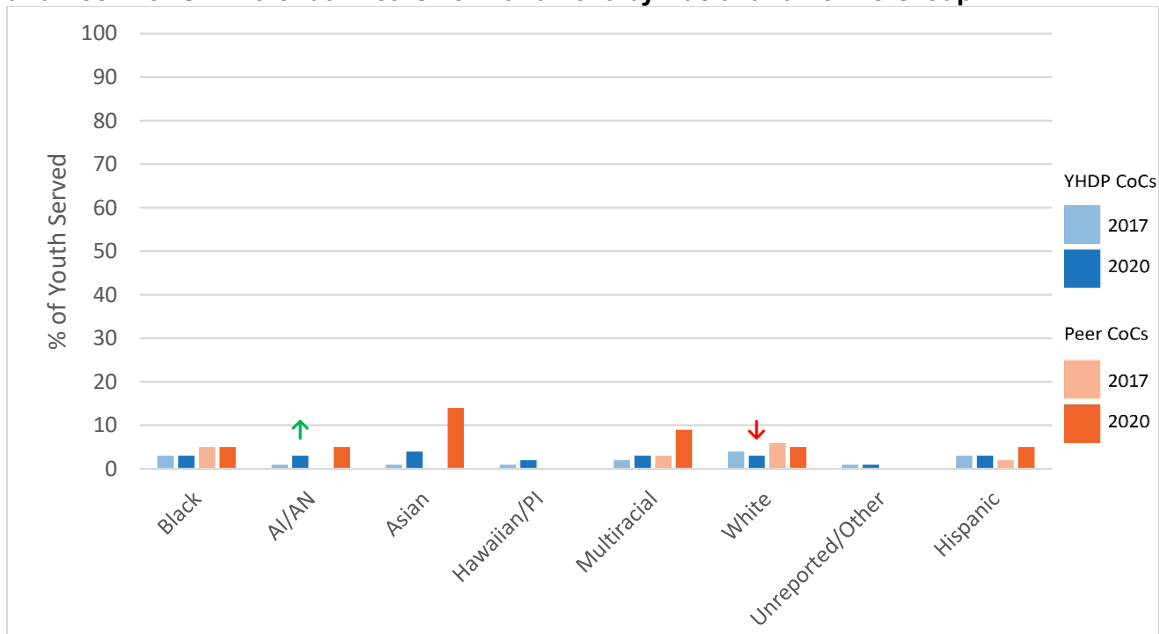


AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. CoC = Continuum of Care. PI = Pacific Islander. YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

Note: Arrows indicate statistically significant increase (↑) or decrease (↓).

Sources: 2017 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); 2020 HMIS

Exhibit 40. Receipt of Other Permanent Supportive Housing by Youth Served in the YHDP and Peer CoCs in Calendar Years 2017 and 2020 by Racial and Ethnic Group

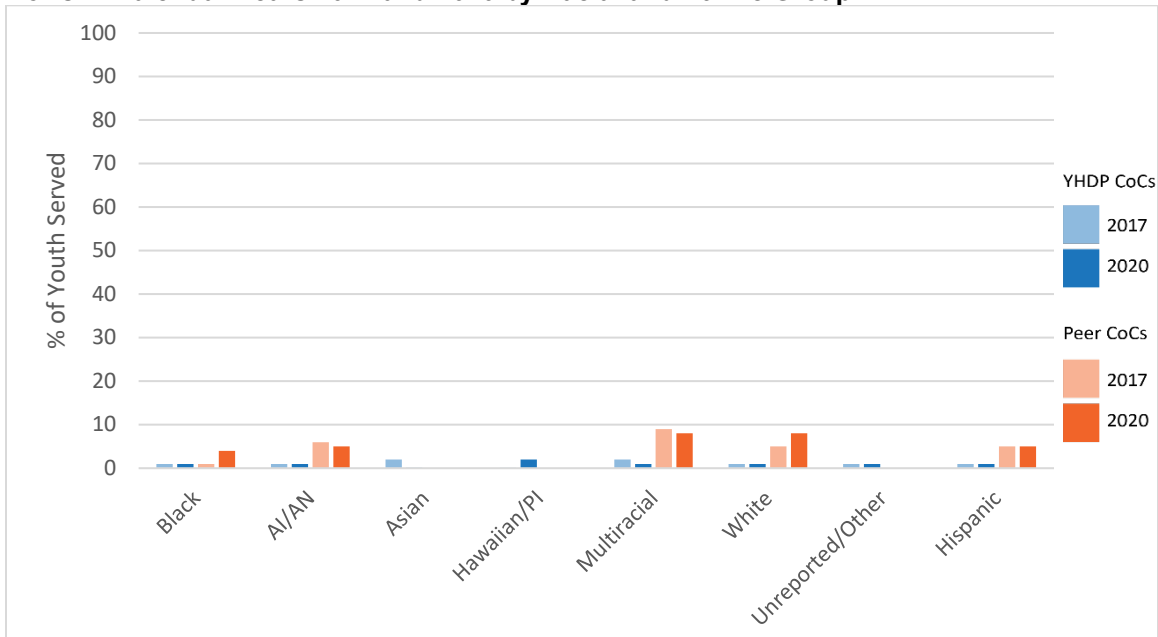


AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. CoC = Continuum of Care. PI = Pacific Islander. YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

Note: Arrows indicate statistically significant increase (↑) or decrease (↓).

Sources: 2017 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); 2020 HMIS

Exhibit 41. Receipt of Other Permanent Housing by Youth Served in the YHDP and Peer CoCs in Calendar Years 2017 and 2020 by Racial and Ethnic Group



AI/AN = American Indian and Alaska Native. CoC = Continuum of Care. PI = Pacific Islander.
 YHDP = Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program.

Sources: 2017 Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); 2020 HMIS

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