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Sustained Education Access for Homeless Youth: Case Study of U.S. Transitional Living Programs

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Abstract

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MSPP, Georgia Institute of Technology, 2004

MBA, Mercer University, 1999

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Abstract

Without interventions to address homelessness among youth, the risk of homelessness for future generations is great. As a result, the federal government has invested in funding Transitional Living Programs (TLPs), though it is not clear whether these programs have achieved the intended outcomes of helping youth transition from homelessness to being able to sustain employment and avoid poverty through access to educational and workforce programs. Using the broad conceptualization of democratic governance as the foundation, the purpose of this case study was to assess whether access to educational programs through TLPs benefitted homeless youth in terms of program success. Data for this study were collected through interviews with 9 administrators of TLP service providers and publicly available documents for the years 2008-2014. Interview data were inductively coded and subjected to thematic analysis, and data from public sources were evaluated using descriptive statistics. Qualitative analysis revealed that long term, post-TLP outcomes were difficult to track as individual TLPs tended to lose contact with youth, though self-advocacy for participants, coupled with the ability to sustain long term independence, were keys to success for program participants. Participants also noted their perception that education through TLPs provide opportunity for stable social and economic connections. Positive social change resulting from this study may be attained if TLP long-term outcomes are evaluated using metrics that are realistic for the target population, and organizational goals are refocused on improving opportunities for youth to make meaningful contributions to their communities, and thereby build the social equity necessary for long-term success.

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to my mom, Eileen K. Hall, who made her transition while I was on this journey. Mom always made education a priority at home and set a high bar for accomplishment. To my sons, Jerome Williams and Justin Williams, and to my daughter, Jamila Williams: I have taught you to keep striving forward and upward and to never give up on achieving your goals. All of you have inspired and encouraged me in your own special way. To the many homeless youth and young adults who have been failed by systems purportedly designed to help them succeed and improve their futures: This study would have been impossible without you.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Background

Public Policy and Disenfranchised Communities

Public policy initiatives may be unsuccessful when implemented in disenfranchised communities owing to a one-size-fits-all planning philosophy. *Disenfranchised* refers to those persons who have been deprived of a privilege, made powerless, or diminished of some social or political status, either individually or collectively. Examples of disenfranchised communities include those of homeless, undocumented, or other individuals who struggle to gain social, economic, and political voice in society. The incidence of unsuccessful policy implementation is due to, in part, variables within these communities that are not considered in the first three stages of the policy formation process of issue. The first three stages of this decision-making process when federal policy is contemplated are as follows:

1. The identification of the issues.
2. Issues are set on the agenda.
3. Solutions to the issues are formulated into policy initiatives. (Lester & Stewart, 2000)

Variables within disenfranchised or marginalized communities include, but are not limited to, accessibility to decision-makers, accessibility to participation in decision-making, the degree to which the public policy process is understood, and the willingness to participate. Additional variables include advocacy; age; economic status; education and literacy; ethnic origin; immigration status; family structure; gender; leadership within

the community; ability to balance work, family, and other commitments; availability of public goods and services; race; religion; and social status.

The marginalized community of homeless, at-risk, displaced, orphaned, abandoned, or otherwise vulnerable children, youth, and young adults are less visible to policymakers, due to, in part, the transient nature of their lifestyles. This subset of the population has increased dramatically during the past decade with estimates of as many as 1.4 million children and their families being identified as homeless in a normal year in the United States, and 12% of this homeless population extends to age 24 years (Burt et al., as cited in Murphy, 2011). In fact, homeless youth are the fastest growing vulnerable subgroup of the homeless population in some North American countries (Gaetz et al., as cited in Coates & McKenzie-Mohr, 2010). This increase is the result of many factors including issues of negative economic effects on families such as job loss and loss of homes, in addition to drug addiction and drug abuse, minors who have aged out of foster care and have been emancipated, and entire families who face crises due to their status of immigration, transition, social, or other economic hardship. Globally, this subset of homeless youth and young adults has also increased significantly in the same period owing to economic catastrophes, conflict, and disease. High mortality rates among young adults due to disease such as human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), malaria, and tuberculosis that have claimed the lives of thousands of parents and caregivers, especially on the African and Asian continents, left an estimated 12% of Africa's children orphaned by 2010 and 72,000,000 children orphaned in Asia. Globally, approximately 143,000,000 children are defined as orphans

who face challenges and ill effects of their situations including less access to education. This figure excludes runaways, otherwise displaced, vulnerable, homeless, and children living on the street who face many of the same challenges as orphaned children (Whetten et al., 2009). Because many homeless youths are often at high risk of becoming homeless adults, the cycle is likely to be repeated in future generations with significant long-term implications in society (Gaetz et al., as cited in Coates & McKenzie-Mohr, 2010). The broader worldview of poverty and social inequality and its effects on democracy is observed by McGuire, Tulchin, and Brown (2003) who suggested that globalization has exacerbated both of these social ills and reduced the quality and stabilization of democracy and has restricted civil liberties. Nonetheless, this very globalization may be the method by which long-term benefits will be produced to address social change.

In the United States, families with young children represent 40% of the homeless population and more than 1,300,000 children are homeless in the course of a year (National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, 2013). As a result of homelessness, these displaced children, youth, and young adults are in crisis, and they face a myriad of problems that are physical, mental, and social. Among these problems is often a lack of sound educational opportunities due to their transient lifestyle. Disrupted schooling directly and negatively affects scholastic achievement resulting in low literacy rates, increased incidences of falling behind peers, and higher risks of learning disabilities being undetected or undiagnosed until they are irreversible (Moore & McArthur, 2011). Although the education of homeless children and youth is generally not viewed as an immediate critical need, it is one of the keys to breaking the cycle of poverty and

ultimately homelessness (Tanabe & Mobley, 2011). The majority of agencies and resource centers that assist homeless youth and young adults focus on the immediate needs, such as those related to food, clothing, and shelter. Education has not been a priority, yet without an opportunity to continue or complete educational training, the opportunities to break the cycle of homelessness are severely restricted. The challenge is assuring that homeless, at-risk, orphaned, and otherwise displaced youth and young adults are afforded the same opportunities for education and educational training as their housed counterparts.

Legislation

Among the legislation introduced to address the plight of homeless youth and provide for their well-being was the McKinney-Vento Homeless Act of 1987 (McKinney-Vento). McKinney-Vento and its successor, the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program as reauthorized in 2001 under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) include provisions to ensure that "all homeless children receive the same 'free, appropriate public education" that is available to other, non-homeless children" (Tanabe & Mobley, 2011, p. 57). This program includes instruction for the coordination of its mandated provisions at the state level for the Department of Education. The school systems were charged with the responsibility to "reshape educational policy to meet the demands of providing homeless children with reasonable access to public education" (Tanabe & Mobley, 2011, p. 59). Despite these federal directives, the education of homeless children is not being accomplished owing to several issues including, transportation problems, school bureaucracy, social barriers, and insufficient funding.

One of the intended uses for funding dollars is the affirmative identification of homeless children for whom education services would be provided; however, this identification directive has often been unmet amidst constraints of tight budgets in many school districts (Tanabe & Mobley, 2011). The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, Public Law 114-95, was signed into law by President Obama in December 2015 and is effective as of October 2016. This law strengthens McKinney-Vento and replaces NCLB to provide additional support for educational access and stability to more than 1.3 million children and youth experiencing homelessness from prekindergarten through high school years (National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, 2016).

The Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act of 2009 (HEARTH) amended and reauthorized McKinney-Vento to provide additional support for a continuum of care approach. This approach is a collaboration between nonprofit providers, state governments, and local governments to address the issue of homelessness as a system-wide issue and focus on programs working together to benefit communities rather than individualized programs working independently and in their own silos.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act as last amended by the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 (RHY) includes grant funding to state and local governments and private organizations for service projects related to runaway and homeless youth and for social science research relevant to runaway and homeless individuals aged 13 to 26 years. Under the RHY, a study of programs is required regarding the incidence and prevalence of youth homelessness (National Alliance to End

Homelessness, 2013). The following provisions are included in the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (2008) as amended by the RHY:

> Increasing access to education for runaway and homeless youth, including access to educational and workforce programs to achieve outcomes such as decreasing secondary dropout rates, increasing rates of attaining a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or increasing placement and retention in postsecondary education or advanced workforce training programs.
>
> (Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act, 2008, p. 4070)

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act as amended by the RHY authorized the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program through September 2013 (Family and Youth Services Bureau, 2013). However, attempts to reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act as the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and Trafficking Prevention Act later failed in the Senate in April 2015.

The U.S. agency responsible for the coordination of homeless activities among federal agencies is the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH). In 2010, USICH and the 19 collaborating federal agencies proposed Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness. This strategic plan included unaccompanied youth, in addition to families with children, veterans, and individuals experiencing chronic homelessness in its target populations. The framework of this strategic plan was primarily focused on addressing the housing, economic, health, and civic engagement needs of the homeless populations. The plan provides specific

approaches and programs designed to help the subgroups that were identified within the framework for addressing the needs of those confronted by homelessness (USICH, 2010).

Opening Doors: Federal Strategic Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness (2010) was amended in 2012 (the Amendment) to specifically address education. Three of the Amendment's objectives of this strategic plan directly relate to the issue of youth homelessness and efforts to prevent and end the problem. Objective 2 of the Amendment recognizes the importance of retention in education programs at early education, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels as successful interventions to preventing and ending homelessness. Objective 5 of the Amendment addresses the goal to improve education access and education outcomes for children and young adults. Objective 8 of the Amendment addresses the need for stability for unaccompanied youth and youth aging out of systems such as foster care and juvenile justice, and the lack of sufficient comprehensive data on the scope of youth homelessness (USICH, 2012).

Targeted programs. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is responsible for protecting the health of all Americans and providing essential human services, especially for those who are least able to help themselves. The HHS works with state, county, and local government as well as grantees in the private sector to administer more than 300 programs in an equitable manner to their beneficiaries and to collect data on those beneficiaries (U.S. Department of HHS, 2013).

In 2003, HHS developed Ending Chronic Homelessness: Strategies for Action as a strategic action plan to guide the department's activities in reaching its goals toward ending homelessness. The goals and strategies of this plan were expanded in 2007 in the

Strategic Plan on Homelessness, which specifically included at-risk populations, such as youth. The strategic plan is an interagency collaboration between HHS, both Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA), as well as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), and U.S. Department of Education (ED). This revised 2007 framework for action includes targeted homeless programs in addition to the mainstream programs, one of which is the Program for Runaway and Homeless Youth. These targeted programs were federally funded at $105.4 million, $104.7 million, $103.9 million, and $102.8 million, for fiscal years 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006, respectively (U.S. Department of HHS, 2007). The National Network for Youth reported that funding increased from the 2008 level of $105 million to $140 million in fiscal year 2009 and $115 million in each of years 2010 through 2012 (The National Network for Youth, 2013). According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, the senate appropriations committee approved $115 million in the fiscal year 2013 budget for Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs, of which $109 million was received after sequestration, and $65 million for the Education for Homeless Children and Youth programs within the U.S. Department of ED (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2013).

The HHS has 11 operating divisions including the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), which funds 669 public, community, and faith-based programs through three grant programs that serve the runaway and homeless youth population (HHS, 2013). ACF has oversight for the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families

(ACYF) which administers the federal programs for runaway and homeless youth, and therefore oversees programs under the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB). FYSB has responsibility for the Family and Homeless Youth Program, which includes a Street Outreach Program (SOP), whose services include education and outreach on the streets; the Basic Center Program (BCP), which provides emergency short-term services; and the Transitional Living Program (TLP), which helps youth develop the skills for self-sufficiency and independent living through education opportunities such as General Educational Development (GED) preparation, postsecondary training, and vocational education. Actual legislative appropriations for FYSB spending for the years from 2008 to 2014 were approximately $53 million annually for the BCP and exceeded $17 million and $43 million for the SOP and TLP, respectively (Congressional Research Service, 2015). The TLP funds services for older homeless youth including those who are pregnant or parenting and their children (Family and Youth Services Bureau, 2013).

The USICH is an agency within the federal executive branch that coordinates the nineteen member U.S. federal departments and agencies in strategies to prevent and end homelessness. These member departments and agencies are as follows:

1. Cooperation for National and Security Service.
2. Department of Agriculture.
3. Department of Commerce.
4. Department of Defense.
5. Department of Education.
6. Department of Energy.

7. Department of Labor.
8. Department of Health and Human Services.
9. Department of Homeland Security.
10. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
11. Department of Interior.
12. Department of Justice.
13. Department of Transportation.
14. Department of Veteran Affairs.
15. General Services Administration.
16. Offices of Management and Budget.
17. Social Security Administration.
18. U.S. Postal Service.
19. White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

USICH recognizes that the strategy to ending homelessness for unaccompanied youth requires an approach that is distinct from the one required to address the issues facing homeless adults. The USICH framework to address unaccompanied youth or homeless youth up to age 24 years focuses on two complementary strategies, namely the data strategy and the capacity strategy. These strategies address the ability to obtain better data on youth homelessness and the ability to strengthen and coordinate capacity between federal, state, and local systems to efficiently and effectively address the problem (USICH, 2013).

Problem Statement

Legislation such as Mc-Kinney-Vento and its successors, the Education for Homeless Children and Youth program as reauthorized in 2001 under NCLB, and HEARTH, as well as the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act as last amended by RHY, have been enacted to afford opportunities for education and training to homeless youth. The TLP was first implemented in 1990 under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (Title 111 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974) and last amended by RHY. Despite the aforementioned legislations and the specifically targeted program known as the TLP to address education access for runaway and homelessness youth that have been in place for several years, the literature does not address this TLP program or the related outcomes. Currently, approximately 1.3 million children and youth are homeless in addition to the unseen homeless in urban and rural areas, and those who do not self-report. It is unknown whether youth who have participated in these programs are better able to obtain and sustain employment and avoid poverty and homelessness as a result of access to educational and workforce programs.

A critical pathway out of homelessness is education and training, and legislators have attempted to provide these services to youth by drafting legislation specifically targeted toward homeless youth. These initiatives are federally funded through the HHS and ED. However, despite these policy initiatives and approved federal funding to address this crisis, evidence suggests a growing population of young adults without the ability to lift themselves out of their homelessness. Contributing to this growing population is the lack of national data on the extent of youth homelessness, which

challenges the enactment of needed interventions at the appropriate scale to solve the crisis. This lack of national data is due to the incomplete status of required studies mandated by the RHY (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2013). There is insufficient information and understanding about the TLP program and its operational effectiveness to determine whether the program is working as envisioned to accomplish its goals through the strategies outlined in the 2007 Strategic Plan on Homelessness to prevent and end youth homelessness. It is unknown whether participants in the TLP are less likely to be homeless and more likely to be employed, in school, or in skills training and ultimately contributing members in society because of their participation.

Therefore, the problem that supports this study is the gap in literature about the specifically targeted program, known as TLP and the strategy implemented by this program to increase sustained education access for runaway and homeless youth that results in their improved economic and social conditions. Such improvement in socioeconomic condition, if present, would increase the ability of homeless youth to avoid poverty and homelessness.

Purpose of the Study

Despite legislation and federal funding for more than a decade to assist in transitioning youth out of homelessness, relatively little discussion has occurred in scholarly literature regarding the focus, implementation, effectiveness, or outcomes of the specifically targeted TLP. It is undetermined whether the current strategies have been successful in meeting the needs of vulnerable groups such as homeless youth to improve their lives and help them to fully contribute to society and benefit their communities.

Homeless youth can make successful transitions to adulthood with the help of systems that support their circumstances, such as improvement in educational access and opportunities for employment. This support depends on effective public policies that provide an opportunity for social inclusion of this vulnerable population (Osgood, Foster, & Courtney, 2010).

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to address the gap in knowledge about the sustained education access component of the TLP and how this component has benefitted homeless youth seeking to end their homeless status. To date, no clear picture exists regarding whether the strategies to prevent and end youth homelessness are successful. This lack of knowledge is primarily due to insufficient data collection and coordination between federal, state, and local systems to act effectively and efficiently to address this problem (USICH, 2013).

This gap in sustained education access to homeless youth was addressed through the research questionnaire used to interview a sample of administrators from TLP service provider organizations. I analyzed the responses from the administrators for codes and themes using qualitative software. This case study also incorporated analysis of data collected from the Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System (RHYMIS) and SAMHSA databases. The RHYMIS database includes information about participants in the TLP related to demographics and education achievement on entrance and exit from the program. The SAMHSA database includes nationwide information on the youth and young adult population related to unemployment rates, education levels, school enrollment, living arrangements, and other youth indicators. Data collection and

evaluation from the FYSB specifically related to the TLP long-term outcomes had not been completed by an independent contractor; therefore, analysis of the program was not included in this research

Nature of the Study

This study was a qualitative design using the case study approach. I chose the qualitative method of inquiry because the primary research question asks the *how* about a specific phenomenon that is a contemporary event. The research questions are exploratory related to whether the sustained education access component of the TLP benefitted homeless youth; therefore, the case study design method that used the concept of democratic governance was appropriate (Yin, 2009).

Research Questions

The primary research question for this study was as follows: How has the sustained education access component of the TLP for homeless youth benefitted youth seeking to end their homeless status? Additional research questions developed for this study were as follows:

1. Is the current TLP to sustain education access for homeless young adults working as designed based on goals defined by HHS?
2. How does the current TLP sustain education access for homeless young adults prevent episodes of homelessness for at-risk youth who participate in the program?

3. What strategies for sustained education access have been implemented to end the current socioeconomic status of poverty and homelessness of the beneficiaries?
4. Is current data collection sufficient for analysis, monitoring, and evaluation of the current TLP?
5. How are homeless young adults represented or directly involved at the policy formation stage of this youth homelessness issue?
6. What stakeholders should be *at the table* to discuss policies' programs for sustained education access for homeless young adults?

Research Questions 5 and 6 relate directly to the theory of democratic governance and involvement of stakeholders in the policy-making process. The research questions were addressed to administrators at the service provider organizations in the unit of analysis using a semistructured interview questionnaire.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

The theoretical framework of this study was the theory of democratic governance. Specifically considered in this study are the models that are subsets of Democratic Governance, namely Participatory Democracy and Deliberative Democracy, which are similar in their viewpoints of advocacy with regards to equity for citizens (Zanetti, 2007).

Democratic governance theory is based on the belief that each individual has a right to an individual voice in their own governance, whether through direct participation in decision-making (participatory democracy) or through other decision-makers who represent them and whom they hold accountable (deliberative democracy). Both theories

have commonalities including citizen participation (Zanetti, 2007); however, they differ in their approach to the level and manner in which citizens are involved in decision-making.

The difference between these two forms of democratic governance is that in the deliberative model, it is based on the premise that those who directly participate must be sufficiently informed about the issues to make sound decisions. Although the decision-making process is a collective endeavor, the individual may be in fact directly excluded and represented by those deemed to be more educated about the issues under consideration (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004). Eagan (2007) proposed that most theories of deliberative democracy have maximum inclusion of citizens' viewpoints to improve the level of discussion. The political outcomes generated are more legitimate and reasonable, and from a more equitable process. The participatory model, on the other hand, is based on each individual having the opportunity to directly participate, whether adequately informed or not about the issue(s) under consideration. As an advocate for equity in decision-making despite socioeconomic status, the position of 18th-century philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau was that it is through participation that social consciousness and a sense of responsibility are developed that releases the individual's sense of justice and equity (Rousseau, 1762). Although the approach to the practice of democratic theory differs from that of participatory democracy, proponents of the deliberative model also recognize the importance of education to moving forward the decision-making process (Zanetti, 2007).

Prominent democratic theorists in addition to Jean-Jacques Rousseau who initiated the robust discussion about democratic governance included 19th-century philosopher John Stuart Mill and 20th-century political theorist George Douglas Howard (GDH) Cole. Those theorists advocated for the participatory model and citizen involvement in public policy decision-making that affects their future. Rousseau's views point to broad education as a key factor where citizens are educated to become more socially responsible in their community, and Mill viewed academic education as a road to responsible political participation for the masses, whether or not everyone had an equal voice based on educational attainment (Pateman, 1970).

Schaap and Edwards (2007) proposed that the erosion of democratic institutions and growing distance between citizens and their representation has resulted in alienation between citizens and their representatives, and the need for new forms of communication between the groups is needed for revitalization of the relationship. The scope of participation is demonstrated by means of a participation ladder (Arnstein, as cited in Schaap & Edwards, 2007) that shows movement from a grassroots approach of involvement to a more hands-off consulting role, which more closely aligns with a more deliberative model.

The responsibility of government is to educate its citizens to become critical thinkers with the ability to conscientiously participate in the public policy process. According to Rosener, as cited in Lando (2003), a cause and effect relationship exists between citizen participation and desired outcomes. The measurement of success or effectiveness of participation can only be accomplished if there is an initial understanding

of the goals. One such goal is to educate the youth of today to become the leaders of tomorrow who are critical thinkers and equipped to make sound equitable public policy decisions. According to Lowi, as cited in McGuire et al. (2003), in part due to prior failures of interest groups, market mechanisms and party activity, the state government is best equipped to generate policies to address and reduce social ills, to make sustained reductions in poverty and inequality. The exclusion of beneficiaries does not meet the criteria for either a participatory or deliberative democracy model as the education of citizens to fulfill their roles in society is pivotal under both models (Mill, as cited in Pateman, 1970). Both the participatory and deliberative models of democratic governance recognize the value of education is the ability to participate in, and make sound public policy decisions despite their different approaches to the levels of education that are prerequisite to such participation (Zanetti, 2007).

Broadbent (2008) noted the main barrier to homeless youth achieving stability in their lives was due to the difficulty in maintaining links to education since they are outside the framework of families and households that are within policy parameters. The implication was that these youth must establish and create lifestyles that fall within the boundaries of the current policy scope to gain the attention of the policymakers who have responsibility to provide the homeless with services that are normally provided to housed populations.

It is critical that youth have access to education and job skills, as well as, the ability to manage pathways to education and employment to become active and responsible citizens. The support to access education and employment is imperative if

homeless youth will have the opportunity to participate in decision-making to control their civic lives, and ultimately improve their socioeconomic condition. The indications from literature are five strategies for preventing public welfare dependence are education, training, life skills, schooling, and the creation of effective links to employment (Broadbent, 2008). Schools are seen as strategic locations for the development of ties to community and education pathways should be developed as part of the comprehensive program response to engage homeless youth in education, training and employment (Thompson, as cited in Broadbent, 2008). Therefore, schools in their roles where training and education occurs, also provide networking opportunities for youth in the community which promotes increased opportunities for civic participation. Civic participation is an important step in the ability to consider and evaluate issues and ultimately to formulate possible solutions within the framework of public policy decision- making. Such engagement is a step toward representation and advocacy for social change.

The connection from education of homeless youth to social change is made through civic participation and democratic governance. Education has been linked to civic participation as citizens who are educated tend to more actively engage civically, such as voting in elections. Reconnection, engagement and participation of citizens provide the opportunity for increased involvement in public policy decision-making as a result of activities such as voting (Zaff, Ginsberg, Boyd, & Kakli, 2014). Attempts to reconnect and engage with disenfranchised citizens in recent years have been comprehensive and also transparent primarily as a result of the Internet and social media. These attempts have been especially obvious during electoral periods starting with the

2008 presidential election and continue robustly through this year's 2016 presidential election process. Whether through the participatory or deliberative democracy model, democratic governance theory is based on the belief that each individual has a right to a voice in their own governance, and the importance of education is recognized. It is through this ability to be involved in decision-making that social change can be affected as homeless young adults then have the ability an opportunity to vote for representatives that affect legislation to their benefit (Zanetti, 2007).

Operational Definitions

Homelessness: The situation where an individual does not have a consistently fixed, stable or permanent place to sleep at night.

Homeless youth: An individual aged 16 to 24 years who does not have family support, is unaccompanied and living on the streets or in a shelter (HHS, 2007).

Policy formation: The first three stages of public policy problem-solving, namely Agenda-setting, Policy formulation, and Policy implementation (Lester & Stewart, 2000).

Service provider: An organization that has contracted to provide services for the Street Outreach, Basic Center, or Transitional Living programs.

Socioeconomic status: The social standing or class of an individual or group, often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation (American Psychological Association, 2016).

Unaccompanied youth: Interchangeable with homeless youth.

Youth: An individual who is aged 13 to 24 years old.

Young adult: A subset of the population of youth who is 18 to 24 years old.

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations

Assumptions. This study was based on the following assumptions:

1. Service providers exercised due care in completion of intake and exit forms for their youth clients.
2. Participants are sufficiently proficient in the English language to fully comprehend questions asked in the Interview.
3. Information provided by youth on entry into the TLP was accurate and truthful.
4. Participants exercised care in their responses to the semistructured questions during the in-depth interviews conducted by the researcher to present information as honestly observed, perceived, or understood.

Limitations. The limitations related to this study are as follows:

1. The interview was targeted only to administrators of service providers that had been awarded grants from the FYSB. As such, there exists the possibility of some inherent bias.
2. The administrators were leaders in the service provider organizations or had been referred by the organization's leaders. As a result, there may be the possibility of bias if the individuals chose to respond in a manner that presented their organizations as more successful than they truly were regarding program outcomes
3. Interviews were not administered to state, local, or community stakeholders affiliated with the organizations that were awarded funds to

provide TLP services to homeless youth. Therefore, data may exclude the perceptions of these stakeholders. However, these stakeholders were not directly involved in TLP operations.

4. Interviews were not conducted with TLP youth, either current or past participants as the focus of this research was primarily on policy issues and the youth would not have been the appropriate audience to be interviewed. Therefore, the data does not include their perspectives
5. The data are not generalizable to the entire population of homeless persons, homeless youth, or homeless young adults. However, the data are generalizable to homeless youth in the federally funded TLP. Furthermore, the data may be useful to better understand the operation and effectiveness of the specifically targeted program examined in this case study and provide the opportunity for further research.

Scope and delimitations. The study examined the education access component of the specifically targeted program to homeless youth that has been funded through the HHS. The specifically targeted program to runaway and homeless youth is a part of the Strategic Action Plan on Homelessness effected by the HHS in 2003 and revised as of 2007.

Effective with the expanded 2007 Strategic Plan of Homelessness, the HHS included more focus on data collection to develop data and performance measurements to document future success (HHS, 2007). However, the study sample was delimited with respect to data collected by RHYMIS for the TLP, therefore archival data is limited up to

seven years from 2008 to 2014, and available documentation on data quality is also limited.

Significance of the Study

The gap in literature present in this study was addressed by providing information about the mined data for the specifically targeted program, known as TLP, as well as the strategy and outcomes in addressing education access for homeless youth. This federally funded TLP is a part of the national strategic plan to prevent and end youth homelessness by the year 2020; however, it is unclear whether this target date if feasible through current strategy and mechanisms such as the TLP. The information resulting from this study will be useful to determine whether current data are appropriate to measure progress in educating homeless young adults. The study also produces information on current interventions to address the education of homeless youth which is useful to ascertain if such interventions have produced effective outcomes as defined by HHS. According to the 2007 Strategic Action Plan Framework of HHS, a primary goal is to prevent episodes of homelessness by identifying risks and factors to incidents of homelessness to at-risk populations, of which youth are a subset. The Report to Congress on The Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs for Fiscal Years 2010-2011 submitted by the HHS and its supporting agencies indicated the timeline for preventing and ending youth homelessness is the year 2020 (U.S. Department of HHS, ACF, ACYF, & FYSB, 2013). According to the Report to Congress on The Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs for Fiscal Years 2012-2013, there remains a lack of data on outcomes that has been collected by RHYMIS and therefore the effects of the TLP are unknown. Although

there are positive outcomes such as 88% of youth leaving TLP move to stable housing, 68% have obtained their GED or graduated or are attending school regularly, and 25% were employed and another 50% were seeking employment, there is a lack of empirical studies on whether or not the TLP affected those outcomes. Additionally, the Report to Congress does not indicate a strategy for preventing and ending youth homelessness by 2020 (U.S. Department of HHS, ACF, ACYF, & FYSB. (2014).

The results of this study will be useful to ascertain whether this 2020 timeline is feasible utilizing existing interventions and to determine if education has played a pivotal role in current strategies. The study will also be useful as a guide in determining whether a different approach should be considered as a viable strategy to combat the issue of youth homelessness resulting from lack of education access and ultimately in youth and adult poverty. The literature points to education as a critical path to breaking the cycle of homelessness (Tanabe & Mobley, 2011) and the government's responsibility to educate its citizens to become conscientious participants in decision-making (Rousseau, 1762). Yet, it is the failure of society when it does not cultivate a future for homeless children and youth and promotes the cycle of poverty when children and youth are allowed to grow up without a focus and commitment to education (The National Network for Youth, 2013).

Summary

Despite legislation such as Mc-Kinney-Vento and its successor, the "Education for Homeless Children and Youth" program as reauthorized in 2001 under NCLB, and the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act as last amended by the RHY that have been

enacted to provide opportunities for education and training to homeless youth, and subsequent federal funding, there remains a gap in the literature regarding the federally funded specifically targeted TLP. This gap includes information on whether the ability and opportunity exist through TLP services to provide access to educational and workforce programs to homeless youth. Prominent theorists such as Rousseau, Mill, and Cole agree regarding the positive role of education in the citizen's ability to participate in political decision-making and social responsibility (Pateman, 1970). The evidence suggests the longer a youth is homeless, the greater the risk for adult homelessness (Johnson & Chamberlain, 2008). Although education is not usually the immediate focus for intervention regarding homeless youth, education access is the most likely important key to breaking the cycle and providing a path out of poverty for homeless youth (Tanabe & Mobley, 2011).

In Chapter 2, I review literature that is pertinent to the purpose of this study. Current literature from peer- reviewed articles, as well as comparisons and contrasts of the points of view of various theorists are discussed. In Chapter 3, I focus on the research design, and instruments and measurements used in the study, whereas in Chapter 4, I focus on the data collection and analyses of such data. In Chapter 5, I summarize the study, present its findings, and address the policy implications for promoting positive social change.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Democratic Governance and Public Policy

Tanabe & Mobley (2011) proposed that education access is the most important key to breaking the cycle and providing a path out of poverty for homeless youth. Insufficient research has been conducted on the status and outcomes of sustained education access for homeless youth within the specifically targeted program, known as the TLP for runaway and homeless youth. The effect of education on the marginalized community of homeless youth to lead them out of poverty and ultimately to become contributors to the public policy decision-making process is unknown. There is less research on the outcomes on marginalized communities when they are in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Central and South Americas, or other countries that are considered part of the third world. Therefore, the status of orphaned, homeless, and other at-risk youth and young adults in these global communities and the status of implemented strategies that positively affect their social conditions through education access are also unknown. Many of these third-world countries and nations suffer severe problems in areas of economics, education and literacy, housing and shelter, public safety, sanitation, food and agriculture, health care, and many others. Homeless children, youth, and young adults are prone to additional challenges such as street violence, sexual attacks, sexually transmitted diseases, sexual trafficking, prostitution, lack of education and training access, and drug addiction in addition to the lack of basic food, clothing, and shelter (Slesnick, Kang, Bonomi, & Prestopnik, 2008; Yu, 2010). Owing to shifts in the economy resulting from job and housing losses, more individuals are vulnerable to homelessness in the U.S. that

has experienced the highest homeless rates for families and children in recent years. In addition, the problem is compounded by the difficulty in counting the homeless and in collecting reliable data on this population (Shane, as cited in Murphy, 2011). Reports from school districts indicate that families with children are one of the fastest growing homeless populations in the United States. These homeless children are confronted with social and behavioral issues including, but not limited to, transiency, alcohol and substance abuse, mental issues, and domestic abuse, which become barriers to successful school achievement (Groton, Teasley, & Canfield, 2013). The framework for this study was the theory of democratic governance and its related participatory and deliberative models. The effect of the theory when applied to the public policy process was examined in the context of marginalized homeless youth and their access to education to produce positive outcomes. These positive outcomes include job opportunities and reduction in repeat episodes of homelessness as a result of improvement in youths' socioeconomic condition.

Democratic governance, regardless of the specific model that is addressed, focuses on approaches that allow for participation representation and the ability to freely choose among political options (Zanetti, 2007). The focus of the participatory model of democratic governance is on the individual who is presumed sufficiently informed to participate in public policy decision-making. Rousseau (1762) suggested that it is through such participation that citizens become better educated and informed of the process so that they are supportive of the laws to which they are obligated (Rousseau, 1762). The deliberative model of democratic governance considers the inequality in society and

attempts to make adjustments by placing emphasis on citizens' equal capacity to reason and participate (Eagan, 2007). This assumption of equal capacity in reasoning and participation may be faulty because access to participation should be considered, and the mental capacity to reason may or may not be present. Regardless of the assumptions, the ultimate goal of this model of democracy is to increase citizen participation, produce better outcomes, and create a more authentic democratic society (Eagan, 2007).

Structure of the Review

This literature review is organized to first discuss the theoretical framework of democratic governance followed by the public policy process and its six stages. Next, discussions on participatory and deliberative democratic models are followed by those on education policy, homelessness, interventions, and social change.

Research Strategy

The keywords and key phrases used in the search of databases for relevant peer-reviewed articles included, but were not limited to, agenda-setting, at-risk youth, citizen participation, decision-making, deliberative democracy, disadvantaged citizens, disenfranchised communities, disengaged communities, displaced children, education policy, federal programs, governance, homeless, homeless populations, homeless young adults, homeless youth, interventions, marginalized citizens, orphans, participatory democracy, policy formation, public policy, public policy process, public policy stages, social change, social equity, stakeholder participation, street kids, throwaway kids, and underserved populations. The databases accessed during the search included, but were not limited to, Academic Search Complete, Africa-Wide Information, Business Source

Complete, Dissertations & Theses, Dissertations & Theses at Walden University, EBSCO, and ProQuest. The journals searched included, but were not limited to, American Psychologist, Annual Review of Political Science, Community Development Journal, Industrial and Commercial Training, International Planning Studies, Journal of Health Politics, Polity and Law, Journal of Poverty & Social Justice, Journal of Speculative Philosophy, Polity, Public Administrative Review, Science, Technology and Human Values, South African Journal of Psychology, and The Journal of the American Medical Association. The process for selecting articles included a cursory review of the titles to determine potential relevance along with an in-depth review of the Abstract to determine actual significance.

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Democratic Governance

As stated by Zanetti (2007), democratic theory is a collection of approaches with common values such as participation, representation, elections, and free choice among political alternatives. These theories that include the participatory and deliberative models are focused on the resultant improvement in equity for citizens. The participatory approach is focused on developing the citizen from a grassroots or participatory perspective, and the evolution of the citizen both publicly and privately. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for example, advocated the equal sharing of burdens, benefits and responsibilities for the promotion of political and economic equality and good government (Pateman, 1970). Rousseau (1762) posited “he who makes the law knows better than anyone else how it should be executed and interpreted” (p. 43). Rousseau

(1762) was referring to the division of powers between the executive and legislative government; however, this same logic aptly applies to the participation of individual citizens in decision-making. Citizens who are engaged in making the laws are more aware of their meaning and consequences. Although Rousseau's viewpoint from an 18th century perspective was highly criticized and resulted in him being ostracized, this position is now widely accepted as equitable in society. On the other hand, a more deliberative approach, such as advocated by Gutmann and Thompson (2004) views democracy as a collective process where decisions are legitimized, public perspectives are encouraged, there is promotion of mutual respect during expected disagreement, and errors that result from the collective decisions are corrected. The operative word for the participatory model seems to be *individual*, as contrasted to, *collective* for the deliberative model.

Both the participatory and deliberative models advocate equity for citizens; however, the inability of the homeless to activate their human capital through attributes such as education, training and skills prevents them from being valuable in the marketplace (Eyrich-Garg, Cacciola, Caris, Lynch, & McLellan, 2008). The implementation of strength-based programming that also addresses the long-term needs of homeless youth is necessary to improve outcomes for this population (Heinz & Hernandez Jozefowicz-Simbeni, 2009).

The connection between democracy and education is further illuminated by the 20th century philosopher, John Dewey. Dewey (1916) suggested that education is a social need and function, and is the process by which continuous existence and social continuity

is maintained by groups. This continuity is a process of the individual's growth in the group environment in which he or she lives. The key to the process is education by which the needed transformation is accomplished to bring about continuity. Continuity is the movement from immaturity to maturity, and education alone spans the gap between these two points. Although education may be formal or informal, the need for formal education becomes more important as civilization advances to transmit achievements in a more complex society. The danger of creating a split between those who are educated through direct associations and those educated in formal settings is pointed out in the process of education or "transmission through communication". Therefore, marginalized and underserved populations such as homeless youth who do not benefit from a formal education process are hampered in their ability to experience social continuity (Dewey, 1916). Social continuity empowers citizen participation and promotes more informed citizens who are capable of sound civic engagement and public policy decision-making. Rousseau (1762) and Dewey (1916) shift the responsibility for a well-functioning democracy to the individual citizen.

Overall, studies indicated the economic burden of disconnected youth on society is estimated at $4.7 trillion due to lost wages and taxes, and burdens on health care, welfare, and the juvenile and justice systems. As youth increased their level of education, they showed sharp inclines in their civic participation and decreased burden on their communities. Zaff et al. (2014) completed a study of a sample of disconnected youth described as those who had dropped out of school without graduating, did not have their GED, had affiliations with gangs, juvenile justice or criminal justice systems, and were

unemployed or homeless. The study did not find a correlation between unemployment or education and the risk of homelessness as did multiple prior studies that found such relationships. The links between lack of education, unemployment and homelessness were found to be interdependent in other studies. Lack of education is a major factor to housing instability and lack of stable housing compromises the ability to achieve education and employment; lack of employment compromises the ability to obtain stable housing; therefore, education directly affects the ability to achieve employment goals (Curry & Abrams, 2015). Nonetheless, it was concluded that community support is critical to the long-term reconnection of disconnected youth. It was argued that interventions should place more emphasis and focus on reconnecting homeless youth with families and identifying risks to independent living prior to their emancipation. Family reconnection and reengagement are viewed as critical to achieving a pathway out of homelessness (Mayock, Corr, & O'Sullivan, 2011). Reconnection leads to civic engagement which in turn leads to decision-making. Milburn, as cited in Mayock (2011) conducted a 2-year longitudinal study of 183 homeless youth to determine how socialization with family, peers, social services and formal institutions would affect their chances to make successful exits out of homelessness. The study found that maternal socialization was a strong predictor of a stable exit despite the contradiction of typical life of the homeless youth which is viewed as dysfunctional and marred by violence, substance abuse and neglect.

Overall, research on the effects of transitional living programs operated by community-based agencies that are publicly and privately funded is lacking to determine

whether such programs prevent homelessness or produce positive outcomes to long-term housing for youth (Zaff et al., 2014).

Johnson et al., as cited in Curry & Abrams (2015) suggested that housed young adults are more successful in their pursuits of both educational and employment goals. The qualitative study conducted by Curry & Abrams (2015) investigated how transition-age young adults viewed their experiences in transitional housing. A sample of fourteen young adults in transitional housing programs in Los Angeles County, CA., all of whom had been in foster care or correctional placement, or had experienced homelessness were interviewed. The findings indicated a desire for supportive transitional housing programs that allowed for the navigation of employment and educational goals to achieve stability and exploration of available options. The study also suggested that attention should be paid to beneficiaries to better understand what works, and why it works when policy and programs are being initiated to benefit this at-risk population (Curry & Abrams, 2015).

The Public Policy Process

According to Bonser, McGregor, Jr., and Oster, Jr. (2000), the public policy process is described as follows:

> In its simplest form, the policy process is a cycle of problem-solving activity involving problem definition, deciding on a policy response to the problem, and acting on the decision. Politically chosen representatives recognize a special need or problem in society, make decisions about the best way to meet the need or solve the problem, and take steps necessary to produce the desired outcome (Bonser, McGregor, Jr., & Oster, Jr., 2000, p. 65).

This problem-solving activity is further categorized into stages by Lester and Stewart (2000) into six distinct stages namely; Agenda-setting, Policy formulation, Policy implementation, Policy evaluation, Policy change, and Policy termination. Outcomes has been included as a factor subsequent to Policy implementation and prior to Policy evaluation as program outcomes are integral to determining whether the policy initiatives change, remain the same, or terminate (Hall, 2008) (see Figure 1).

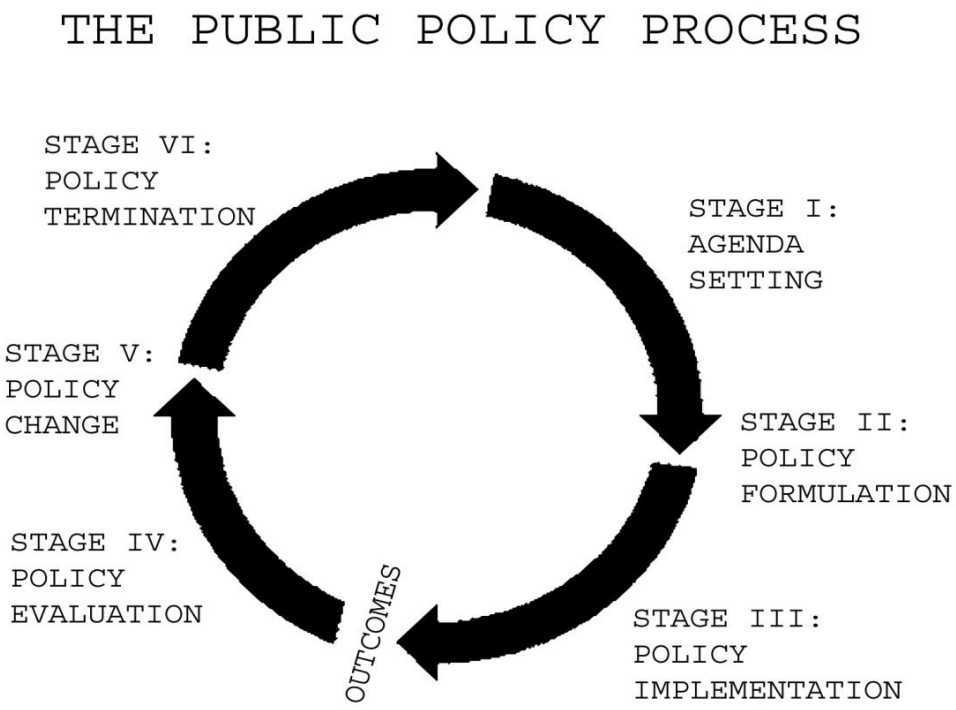

Figure 1. The public policy process.

Lester and Stewart (2000) further describe the policy stages as follows:

Agenda-setting is the first stage where the issues are brought forward for discussion and decisions are made on whether they advance in the public policy process to the next stage or not. The Agenda-setting stage is also affected by the problem stream, policy stream, and the political stream (Kingdon, as cited in Lester & Stewart, 2000). The problem stream is a definition of the problem, the policy stream is the technical feasibility and public acceptance of the proposed solutions, and the political stream includes the variables that affect likely implementation of the proposed solutions. This political stream is where solutions and alternatives are drafted in response to the problem.

These three streams may sometimes *couple* or join to more quickly move the problem onto the Agenda when conditions align. The Agenda-setting stage is also affected by the *policy window* or an opportunity for action (Kingdon, as cited in Lester & Stewart, 2000). The policy window refers to a condition that has advanced to affect a problem that should now be addressed by public policy, and is therefore affected by social, economic, political and other variables that bring it to the forefront for discussion (see Figure 2).

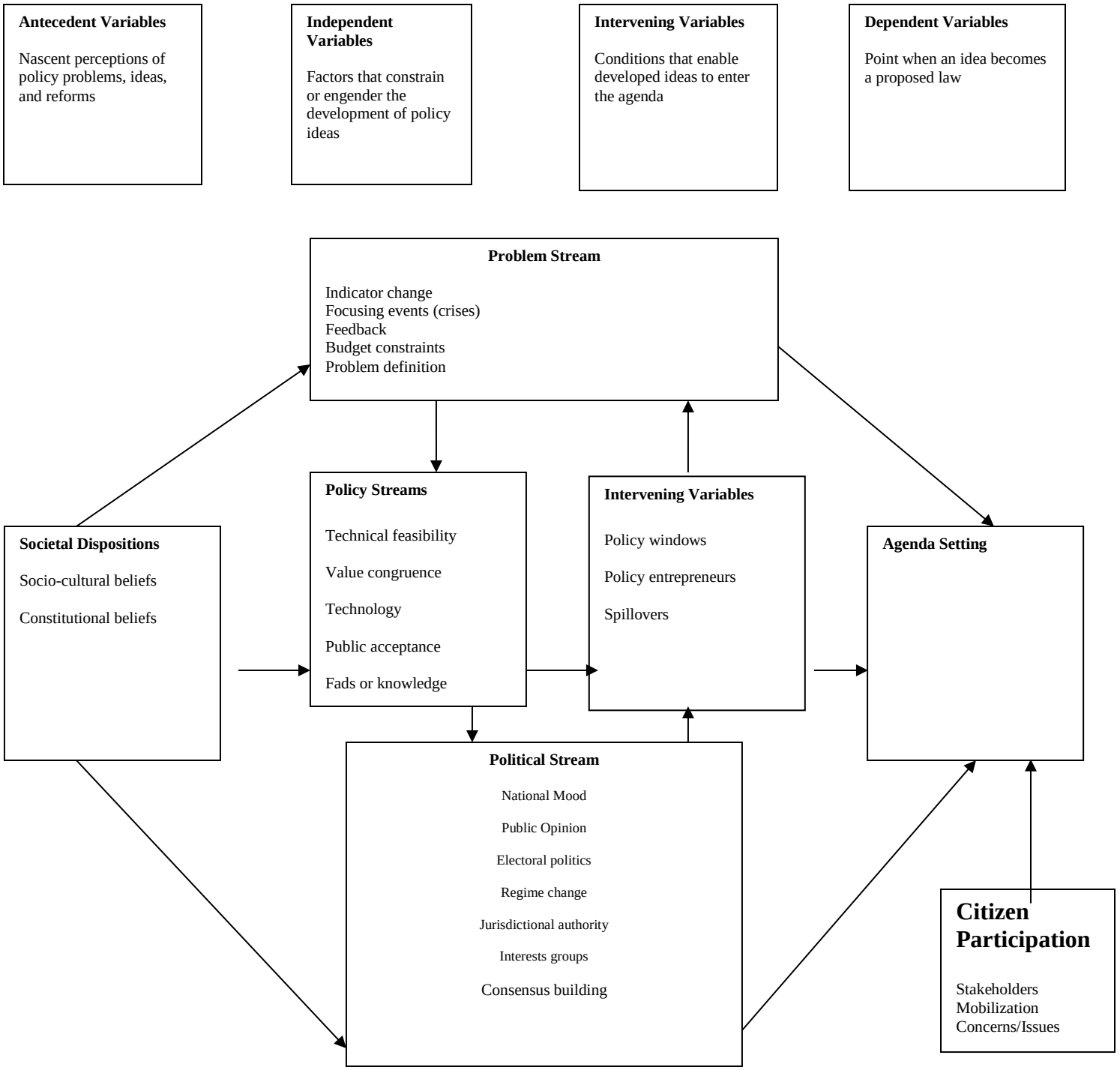
Antecedent Variables
Nascent perceptions of policy problems, ideas, and reforms
Independent Variables
Factors that constrain or engender the development of policy ideas
Intervening Variables
Conditions that enable developed ideas to enter the agenda
Dependent Variables
Point when an idea becomes a proposed law
Problem Stream
Indicator change
Focusing events (crises)
Feedback
Budget constraints
Problem definition
Policy Streams
Technical feasibility
Value congruence
Technology
Public acceptance
Fads or knowledge
Intervening Variables
Policy windows
Policy entrepreneurs
Spillovers
Societal Dispositions
Socio-cultural beliefs
Constitutional beliefs
Agenda Setting
Political Stream
National Mood
Public Opinion
Electoral politics
Regime change
Jurisdictional authority
Interests groups
Consensus building
Citizen Participation
Stakeholders
Mobilization
Concerns/Issues

Figure 2. The agenda-setting stage.

The citizen participation leg shown in the figure above was added as a direct factor that influences the Agenda-Setting stage (Hall, 2008).

Policy formulation is the second stage where the policy problem is addressed in legislation. According to Lester and Stewart (2000), this is the phase where the various stakeholders are involved, as this phase considers interest groups, socioeconomic and geographic conditions, political parties and behavior, and interest groups, and the way in which these variables may respond and influence policy outcomes (Lester & Stewart, 2000). Therefore, it is critical in this policy stage to have relevant input to address and resolve the problem with policies and alternatives that can be implemented, and their outcomes measured in a timely manner in future stages. Aviles de Bradley (2011) noted that the voices of homeless youth should be included in the discussion and framing of youth homelessness. Mainstream views and labeling that are absent of the voices of homeless youth prevent these youths from seeking out and accessing services and support.

Policy implementation is the third stage and the point when legislative action is moved from law into practice. Implementation is the step where action is applied to the goals and objectives, with expectation or hope that the results will be a solution that rectifies a problem. According to Lester and Stewart (2000), law must be translated into specific guidelines so that federal, state, or local bureaucrats can determine that the intent of the legislation is achieved at the point where the policy is to be delivered. According to

various scholars, implementation may be described as a process, as output or an outcome. The implementation process can be defined as a series of governmental decisions and actions directed toward putting an already decided mandate into effect (Lester & Stewart, 2000, p.7).

These first three policy stages above recognize the problem, address the problem, and provide guidelines for correcting the problem. The inclusion of all affected stakeholders such as homeless youth in these stages is therefore pivotal to successful implementation of policy initiatives (Aviles de Bradley, 2011).

Policy evaluation is the fourth stage when the intended outcomes reached during implementation are examined. It is during this stage that a determination is made whether the primary problem was addressed and whether the policy initiative achieved the intended goal?

Policy change is the fifth stage and a consolidation of policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. The decision-making during this stage is whether to restart the process or redesign the policy as warranted by desired changes.

Policy termination is the sixth stage and the point where outdated policies are ended when they reach their lifecycle as initially implemented. According to Lester and Stewart (2000), termination may occur over a short or long-term period, and signaled by functional, organizational, policy, or program termination within an agency, or policy redirection, project elimination, partial elimination, or fiscal reduction.

The first three stages, Agenda-setting, Policy formulation and Policy implementation are, for purposes of this research referred to as *Policy formation*. It is

during these first three stages that stakeholders such as marginalized populations and their advocates should become involved to affect the decision-making process to their benefit. It is subsequent to policy formation that resulting outcomes are evaluated for decision-making regarding continuation, change, or termination of policy initiatives.

The preceding review of the policy stages is considered important because the inclusion of all stakeholders is critical to successful policy implementation from both the participatory and deliberative models of democratic governance. The perspective of homeless youth is critical to better understand the issues and formation of strategy to address the homeless youth problem. If the homeless youth perspective is excluded in Stages 1-3, then the following three stages of evaluation, change and termination are based on less than a well-grounded basis for the initial policy implementation.

If homeless youth are not involved with moving their issues to the Agenda, then it follows that they also have no voice in policy formulation, or policy implementation, and are excluded from policy formation. The exclusion from this process may ultimately affect their daily lives and their future. The current mainstream understanding of youth homelessness may limit the youths' ability to seek out resources to negotiate school and other vital spaces. Due to the current labeling and framing of youth homelessness which excludes the voice of homeless youth. Based on their findings, Stewart, M., Reutter, L., LeTourneau, N., Makwarimba, E., & Hungler, K. (2010) concurred with other researchers that support and interventions were not based on preferences from the perspectives of the homeless who were excluded from national sampling and were not well represented in national statistics. Therefore, the framing of the youth homelessness

problem should be re-imagined to include their perspective for mainstream to better understand their situation (Aviles de Bradley, 2011). The absence of youth in the policy discussion forum produces less positive policy outcomes in an environment where disconnected youth are already less visible in civic participation. This research study included RHYMIS data which includes youth input from entrance and exit interviews that were accumulated and reported by the service provider organizations.

This study was focused on the gap in knowledge on the status and outcomes of sustained education access for homeless youth within the specifically targeted program, known as TLP for runaway and homeless youth. The study explored the outcomes of educational opportunities that are available, or not available, to homeless youth and young adults to improve their lives and their future, and their ability to access such options with the assistance of legislative initiatives and federal programs. The TLP is a federal program housed under the HHS that addresses homelessness among runaway and homeless youth. The TLP is federally funded in excess of $100 million annually and is administered by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB).

Although strategy to educate homeless youth has been implemented under initiatives of the HHS and follows the public policy process stages as previously outlined, the gap in knowledge exists related to policy evaluation of the TLP. This evaluation stage is necessary to determine outcomes of the initiatives and decisions on whether such initiatives should continue as implemented, changed, or terminated.

Democratic Governance and Policy Initiatives

Participatory model of democratic governance. Similar to the deliberative model of democratic governance, the participatory model allows for citizen participation in public decision-making; however, this participatory model refers to the type of democratic arrangement where the focus is on the individual and collective participation of citizens (Schaap & Edwards, 2007). This participatory model is based on the premise that the individual citizen is knowledgeable enough to participate in public policy decision-making, and through such participation develops into a more responsible citizen. It is often through advocacy or leadership, and through becoming more educated on the issues being discussed that results in more responsible decisions (Pateman, 1970). According to Schaap and Edwards (2007), the erosion of democratic institutions and growing distance between citizens and their representation has resulted in alienation between citizens and their representatives, and the need for new forms of communication is necessary to revitalize the relationship. The scope of participation is demonstrated by means of a participation ladder (Arnstein, as cited in Schaap & Edwards, 2007) which moves from a grassroots approach to involvement to a more hands-off consulting role (Figure 3).

Form of Participation	Role of Citizen	Role of Government
Self-governance	Initiators, self-governance	Supporter
Partnership partners	Co-producing, equal partners	Co-producing, equal
Delegated co-decision-making	Delegated co-decision making	Primary policy maker, less
	within pre-set policy lines made by	important decisions to citizens
	government	
Open advice	Advisors. Problem definitions and	Request advice through open
	potential solutions may precede	questions
	policy-making process	
Consultation	Consulting and advising on closed	Consulter. Requests advice
	questions by government	on limited controlled questions.

Figure 3. The participation ladder.

The Self-governance and Partnership partners rungs on the ladder are indicative of a participatory form of democracy where citizen involvement is critical to decision-making, and recognized as such in the production of community policies. Certain topics may not lend themselves well to direct individual involvement of citizens due to their complexity or timing, and may be better suited for a more deliberative model. This may be especially true where many community members are unable to participate directly due to disadvantages that would hinder the process or when direct large citizen involvement may not positively affect outcomes.

Deliberative model of democratic governance. Two of the early influences on deliberative democratic theory include John Rawls and Jurgen Habermas, whose perspectives point to the legitimization of the outcomes of the democratic process (Eagan, 2007). According to those theorists, reason curtails self-interest and results in a system that is fair to all participants and secures equal rights; additionally, Habermas pointed to fair procedures and clear communication to produce consensual decision-

making (Eagan, 2007). In a perfect world, these foundations for equity decision-making would be true; however, the reality is that reason does not necessarily prevent self-interest, nor does clear communication lead to consensual decision-making. The bias of self-interest often prevails as there is a great deal that hangs in the balance in public policy decision-making, and clear communication can also still include misunderstanding of goals and objectives due to varied interpretations.

Similar to the participatory model, there is agreement that the deliberative model includes the important publicity feature of a democracy, and the use of public scrutiny and accountability in decision-making. In contrast to the participatory model of democracy, the deliberative model is, according to Schaap and Edwards (2007), currently one of the most influential models of democratic practices and inspirational in many democratic practices. As demonstrated in the participation ladder shown above, the deliberative model moves away from more direct individual participation in the upper first and second rungs of the ladder to representative decision-making that lends more to citizen groups where more informed citizens advocate on behalf of the masses, as demonstrated by the lower open advice and consultation rungs.

Education Policy Initiatives. Section 1032, Subtitle B of the NCLB addresses the Education for Homeless Children and Youth under the legislation entitled McKinney-Vento, as amended, Title VII, Subtitle B; 42 U.S.C. 11431-11435. NCLB, Public Law 107-110 was designed "to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind" (NCLB, 2002). The related policy statement places the burden to ensure that homeless children and youth have equal access to the same free

appropriate public education as other children and youth on each state educational agency (McKinney-Vento, 2001). The legislation demands that states with compulsory residency requirements that may be a barrier to enrollment for homeless youth revise such regulations and practices to ensure that this disadvantaged population is afforded the same free appropriate education as other youth and the opportunity to meet academic achievement standards (McKinney-Vento, 2001). McKinney-Vento also provides for funding through grants to state and local activities for this program. In 2009, Title VIII of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act allocated approximately $70 million to fifty-two grants for homeless children and youth under McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Funds to state and local educational agencies (U.S. Department of ED, 2009). Federal funding is provided to address issues such as transportation and identification in addition to formal education, and whether such funding is sufficient or insufficient is not the subject of this research. However, this study is primarily concerned with the policy problem, which is the access to education by homeless youth and young adults.

Although the legislation has been initiated to address the policy problem, the gap in literature relates to the opportunities being created for homeless youth and young adults to access education to improve and change their social condition. Grossman (2010) stated that indications from literature were "school-based educators as problematic in the policy-making process because they could undermine policy implementation from within classrooms and schools" (p. 657). This finding suggests that in the matter of educating homeless youth and young adults, well-meaning and well-placed legislation may be meaningless against the internal politics of the education system, at both the state and

local agency levels. However, more recent approaches have included school practitioners in education policy change, and the disconnect between classroom practice and school reform, known as *loose coupling* has decreased. Therefore, the connection between the enacted legislation and the implemented legislation should be more local community involvement, and increased efforts to ensure fair access to educational opportunities for its homeless youth population. This fair access ultimately inures positively in the long term to the very communities that support implementation of this legislation in favor of educating homeless youth and young adults. The implementers of the McKinney-Vento policy initiative are the state and local agencies that were charged with specific tasks to be carried out under the Office of the Coordinator for the program. Recent research points to successful policy reform through the involvement of all stakeholders to close the gap between the intentions of policymakers and the actions of the implementers (Grossman, 2010).

Homelessness. RHY authorizes grants to state and local governments, as well as private organizations for research, evaluation, demonstration, and service projects to increase knowledge and improve services to runaway and homeless youth (RHY, 2008). According to the legislation, priority for grants is given to projects that increase access to education and workforce programs that decrease dropout rates at secondary schools or increase rates for obtaining a secondary school diploma or its equivalent. Priority is also given to projects that increase placement and retention at post-secondary learning institutions or advanced workforce training programs.

Unaccompanied homeless youth are defined by NCLB as youth who are not 'in the physical custody of a parent or guardian" (Aviles de Bradley, 2011). There are additional delineations which are not mutually exclusive such as runaways, throwaways, street youth, and system youth, all of whom are covered by the RHY. Researchers of a study of six unaccompanied homeless students attending two different Chicago Public schools attempted to understand how homelessness affects the student's ability to be a success. The study determined that homeless youth learned survival skills such as self-motivation, self-awareness, forethought, purpose of life, in addition to access to basics that helped them to navigate obstacles and survive in their unstable environment. However, the mainstream viewpoint and labeling may be a deterrent to homeless youths' seeking out and accessing services and support. The framing of youth homelessness should be re-visited with the inclusion of homeless youth voices to better address the issue (Aviles de Bradley, 2011).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), good health is important to the participation of youth in a rewarding social and economic life. Studies of homeless youth in Australia aged 15 to 24 years showed that one in 5 are at the greatest social and economic disadvantage and disproportionately utilize the country's health services. WHO has also defined Quality of Life (QOL) indicators as a person's perceptions of their position in life in relation to their goals. A focus group study of 140 homeless individuals aged 15 to 73 years in various Canadian provinces produced themes that were expected and consistent with prior research. The studies showed that health, living conditions, financial, unemployment, relationships, and recreational activities are important to both

youth and adults. In addition, the desire to be included and treated as a citizen instead of being disenfranchised was an important theme resulting from the focus group study. These themes all link to broader themes of stability, respect, choices and equal rights in society. Despite the millions of homeless individuals in the U.S. and Europe who experience similar health, financial and trauma issues, little research has been done on QOL indicators (Papelu, Hubley, Russell, Gadermann, & Chinni (2012).)

As a result of their study involving 849 long term and chronic homeless women, Zlotnick, Tam, & Bradley (2010) concluded that the federal definition of chronic homelessness excludes certain segments of the population, and services are focused on rehabilitation rather than prevention. The literature showed education as one element that adds to social capital and can prevent homelessness and pointed out that it is essential to examine the short and long-term effects of childhood homelessness. One long-term effect shown through a study about unaccompanied women, that is, women without children, was that women who were homeless as children had a greater risk of being homeless as adults. A thirty-five-year study of an African American community using prospective data indicated that running away from home before the age of 15 years is a strong predictor of adult homelessness, since running away is linked to poor family and school bonds (Fothergill, Doherty, Robertson, & Ensminger, 2012). The researchers concluded that additional investigation is suggested to determine how running away increases vulnerability to homelessness. However, the interrelationship between risk factors for running away such as economic disadvantage and poor family relationships; early

conduct disorders and poor adolescent school bonds; adolescent drug use and antisocial behavior to poor adolescent bonds are clearly shown in studies (Fothergill et al., 2012).

The phenomenon of children living on the streets was first observed in the 1970s in urban areas and large cities of developing countries with rapid economic expansion. The lack of education of rural youth placed them in a noncompetitive position for employment in those urban areas and resulted in high incidences of poverty and subsequent homelessness. Poor economic conditions continue to largely contribute to children living on the streets, regardless of the reasons that initially brought them to the streets (Martinez, 2010). Ferguson, as cited in Martinez, 2010 noted that reasons related to homeless and youth who lived on the streets in the U.S. were either individual, familiar, or structural. Individual causes were identified such as school dropouts, unwanted pregnancies, gang involvement, and substance abuse; while familiar causes included parental conflict, abuse, and neglect. Poverty was identified as the structural cause which was often compounded by individual and familiar reasons (Martinez, 2010). Given that some youth choose to live on the streets rather than in shelter housing, it is important to examine why and when those choices are made to decide how to provide support programs that are effective rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

Included in the population of homeless youth are those who live in rural areas. Skott-Myhre, Raby, and Nikolaou (2008) noted that rural youth homelessness is not addressed in social policy thereby further marginalizing this population. There is a further gap in literature about this segment of the homeless youth population who are largely invisible to the general population and initiatives are dependent on research that applies

to urban youth in the design of programs to offer interventions and services. Other subpopulations of homeless youth include those who identify as being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ). Many LGBTQ youth become homeless due to family conflict because of disclosure of their sexual identity, orientation, or sexual preference. Although LGBTQ youth represent approximately 3-5 % of the U.S. population, they represent approximately 35% of homeless youth (Yu, 2010). According to Keuroghlian, Shtasel, and Bassuk (2014), the unique experiences of LGBT youth must be understood to develop appropriately responsive policies and practices. The absence of such an understanding and support will result in LGBT youth who continue to be homeless and effectively lost for a generation. LGBTQ homeless youth as well as those of racial or ethnic minorities represent a larger proportion when compared to the general population, and are recognized in the unaccompanied youth population included in the federal strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness (USICH, 2010).

The evaluation of factors that influenced youth to transition from a homeless to housed status and becoming self-sufficient demonstrate that education and skill-building were critical in the process. A study of a 23 former residents of a transitional living program in Northern California concluded that such programs provided the necessary support for vulnerable youth to practice living independently and helped them to develop skills useful in the navigation of an independent lifestyle (Rashid, 2004). The study compared the outcomes for former residents aged 18 to 22 years who participated in a training program targeted to promote independent living with those who did not participate. Youth in the program committed to at least six months of participation with a

maximum of 18 months and a mean stay of 7.3 months. Participants were male or female; African-American, Asian-American, Caucasian, or Hispanic; heterosexual, homosexual or bisexual. The effectiveness of the program was measured through specific information such as hourly pay rate, money saved, effects of employment training on pay rate, and long-term housing. The study showed that 100% of the participating youth were employed at the end of the program compared to 13% on entry into the program, and 83% had maintained the same employment throughout their exit of the program. The majority of participants, 70% exited the program with sufficient saved funds for their own stable housing in San Francisco, a known high rent area. The effects of the employment training, GED classes, and support for post-secondary education on wages were evident for the participants who experienced an almost 30% increase in hourly wage over their non-participating counterparts. There was also a distinct program correlation shown between the length of time in the program and length of time employed while in the program on the hourly wage (Rashid, 2004). The results of this study are consistent with the study conducted by Mallon, as cited in Rashid, 2004 which indicated positive results for forty-six male youth aged 16 to 23 years who participated in a New York residential independent living program between 1987 and 1994. At exit from the program, 72% and 74% of the youth had full-time jobs or their GED, respectively. A six month follow up indicated that 76% of youth were living independently and 15% were living with family. Although these were small samples with positive outcomes, it was noted that there was little empirical evidence about the effectiveness of transitional living programs nationwide despite the approximately one hundred fifty such programs that

existed within the U.S. (Rashid, 2004). More recent literature indicated that although there have been studies related to youth who are homeless or aging out of foster care, there is little empirical evidence that points to the experiences of the youth during participation at transitional housing programs. Little is known about the effects these programs have on youth transitioning into adulthood from their own perspectives (Dworsky et al., as cited in Curry & Abrams, 2015).

According to the Report to Congress submitted by HHS, there is a current lack of data on outcomes based on information collected in the RHYMIS database on homeless youth, therefore, the effects of the federally funded TLP is unknown as of 2013. Although 88% of youth who exited TLP moved to stable housing, 68% had either received their GED, graduated or were attending high school regularly, and 25% were employed or seeking jobs, the effect on those outcomes as a result of the TLP is uncertain (U.S. Department of HHS et al., 2014). Moreover, a clear strategy for moving forward to prevent and end youth homelessness by 2020 or the timeline for collecting and analyzing data on homeless youth were not evident in the Reports to Congress as of fiscal years ended 2013.

A longitudinal study conducted by Dworsky, Napolitano, and Courtney (2013) on youths aging out or being emancipated from foster care in the U.S. Midwest indicated this subset of the population also had a high risk of becoming homeless as they transitioned into adulthood. An estimated 31% to 46 % of this group experienced homelessness by age 26. Policy and practice implications are clear for emancipated youth, and similar to other homeless youth such as runaways or throwaways, indications

are that changes are necessary to result in positive outcomes for transition into adulthood. This is a recurring conclusion and clearly indicated by current literature. Transitional living programs which are age appropriate for aged out foster youth, have yet to be evaluated to determine what works best and for whom, and whether they are instrumental in preventing long term homelessness (Dworsky, Napolitano, & Courtney, 2013).

In an effort to combat certain education obstacles for homeless youth, there have been programs such as the transitional living program in San Francisco that intervened by setting up an on-site accredited school and collaborated with San Francisco State University for college courses and scholarships (Farrar, Schwartz, & Austin, 2011). However, a lack of accountability at local, state and federal levels and determination of the reasons why homeless children face barriers to education have not been adequately addressed. Aviles de Bradley (2011) suggested there is a lack of coordination between districts, schools and the agencies that provide services to homeless children which contribute to, and promulgate the problem. Furthermore, the focus has been on monitoring compliance with McKinney-Vento, while research, literature and education policy have given little attention to the reasons behind the barriers to education for more than 1.35 million children who experience homelessness each year (Aviles de Bradley, 2011).

The barriers to education and skill-building also translate into barriers to successful transitions from the street and into productive adult lives. One study using a qualitative design method was used to determine what factors influenced homeless youth to remain or escape from living on the streets. The study was conducted with ten

employed or in-school adults living in Seattle who were 13 to 18 years when they first became homeless and 17 to 23 years when they left the streets. The participants were male or female, African-American or Caucasian, one had a master's degree, two were enrolled in community college, and only one did not have a high school diploma or GED. Their jobs ranges from trade to professional and they were housed independently or in care facility programs. Semistructured interviews using open and closed-ended questions with subjects found that coping skills were among the factors that were a successful influence to transitioning out of homelessness. Skill building in preparation for working and living independently included skills for re-entry into society such as money management and interaction with the work environment were especially critical to success. Another important issue raised was education and the focus on learning versus discipline. The participants were critical of the school system that was viewed as being deficient in challenging students who are focused on learning while babysitting disruptive students (Raleigh-DuRoff, 2004).

Another point to be considered related to youth homelessness is the decision of some youth to remain on the streets rather than move to shelter housing. A qualitative study of 18 youths in Manila, Philippines who lived either in shelters or on the streets was conducted to shed light on the reasons to remain on the streets. Among the reasons that the streets were chosen were boredom, loss of relationships, and loss of a sense of control in the shelters. The reasons youth chose to stay in shelters were for a sense of security, determination, opportunities to fulfill their dreams, and where there was a welcoming environment (Martinez, 2010). The issues of loss of a sense of security and

control were also found to be psychological impacts that were barriers to independent living experienced by youth in Western Australia as they transitioned from homelessness (Brueckner, Green, & Saggers, 2011). It stands to reason that if the causes underlying the choice to remain on the streets could be replicated in the shelters, then youth may more often choose the shelters.

This qualitative study also asked questions related to representation of homeless youth during the public policy process. Although it would be difficult to fully and directly involve this marginalized segment of the population during the process due to their transient and hidden lifestyle, participation of the visible youth population may add value during the process of initiating public policy aimed at assisting their homeless counterparts' transition from life on the streets. This may be helpful because these two groups share an age bracket in common, and the housed youth are aware of the variables that affect their own lives that lend to success. Checkoway, Allison and Montoya (2005) suggested that young people should be recognized as competent citizens and community builders and participate in public policy at the municipal level. There is agreement in this viewpoint with Rousseau's position which points to the development of social responsibility through participation and control over one's own future (Rousseau, 1762). According to Checkoway et al. (2005), democracy is a process in which young people can engage and their participation prepares them for their roles as citizens, and their participation relies on their expertise that improves municipal decisions for their communities. The participation of youth in public policy involves young people in a process that affects their own lives and positively affects their social development

(Checkoway, Allison, & Montoya, 2005). Head (2011) shares the perspectives of Checkoway et al., (2005) when arguing that young people have the right to be involved and consulted, where appropriate, as such participation improves services for the young. This improvement in services stems from their views and interests being represented and articulated. Another benefit to youth participation in public policy decision-making is that such involvement results in developmental benefits for both the individual and civil society. Head (2011) and Checkoway et al. (2005) recognize it is not always appropriate for youth to participate in policy making decisions due to their age and level of experience and maturity; however, their involvement in certain areas that involve learning processes is expected to be important over the long term. The risks and responsibilities of youth participation should be weighed against non-participation and it is understood that the vulnerable groups are likely to be overlooked. Since homeless youth have not benefited from the full scope of education opportunities due to limited access, they are less likely to participate at any level of public policy decision-making that affects their daily lives. These marginalized and disadvantaged youth do not have the knowledge, communication skills, or organizational navigation skills to be confident in their abilities, or to find the forum to give voice to their interests (Head, 2011).

Interventions. In an effort to develop prevention and intervention to homelessness, researchers have studied pathways into and exits from homelessness which affects up to 2.1% of the U.S. population (Eyrich-Garg et al., 2008). This percentage represents more than 6.8 million persons based on the estimated current population of more than 324 million persons (U.S. Census, 2016). The contention is the existing causal

link between the homeless in their inability to activate their human capital through education, and job skills to provide an exit out of homelessness and poverty (Eyrich-Garg et al., 2008).

The beginning of homelessness, when it occurs during early literacy development is a risk for developmental delay in children and a strong predictor of declined literacy and socioeconomic status (Hanning, as cited in Willard and Kulinna, 2012). A study involving twelve homeless children, aged 5 to 12 years, residing in transitional housing who participated in a six-week literacy program during the summer indicated positive effects on the childrens' choices to read, and helped to counteract the negative effects of summer vacation in their environment. The study examined the reading scores, attitudes and environments of the children and the twenty four parents and tutors who provided one-on-one instruction to students who participated in post-program interviews. Interventions during this critical early period could help close the achievement gap and end the cycle of poverty for children (Willard & Kulinna, 2012).

A qualitative study by Stewart et al. (2010) of homeless youth indicated that youth wanted to be more aware of available services such as skills training, returning to school, getting a job, etc. to help navigate the process of returning to normal life. Service providers, in contrast, identified the need for improved long-term commitment to transitional support including employment, and voiced concerns about the gap between overcapacity and underfunding (Stewart, Reutter, LeTourneau, Makwarimba, & Hungler, 2010). The sample size in the study was determined by data saturation and both individual and group interviews were conducted with thirty-five youth and their 27

service providers. It is also important to understand the factors that facilitate, and obstruct youth's motivation to transition out of homelessness. A research study with former homeless persons sought to identify the services that created successful pathways from homelessness that were realistic, accessible, and sustainable (Wilks, Hiscock, Joseph, Lemin, & Stafford, 2008). While the reasons for entry into homelessness were complicated, successful exits were dependent on several crucial variables including inspirational relationships. The formation of these relationships through activities such as mentoring fostered a feeling of social inclusion to those in the transition process (Wilks et al., 2008). Although reasons for entry into homelessness may be through emancipations from foster care, or as a runaway, or as a throwaway, the homeless youth have certain commonalities with their housed counterparts. These commonalities include the desire to feel secure, normal, to have a sense of belonging, and to experience many of the other everyday desires such as home ownership. All of these yearnings translate into control, family life, and independence (Brueckner et al., 2011).

Jones (2011) examined three year data from a sample of 129 youth who were at least age 17 years when they existed foster care. The study measured eight points for self-sufficiency and placement regarding the youth. Included in those eight points were education, employment, and housing stability. Outcomes were examined for youth who resided in transitional housing programs and those who had other living arrangements after aging out of foster care. The findings were that youth had more successful transitions to independence after participating in transitional housing programs rather than other living arrangements. Youth who had other living arrangements including

returning to old living environments faced the risks associated with their old lifestyles upon their exits. However, it was noted that African American youth who were at greater risk for homelessness made stronger strides subsequent to foster care and were more successful in achieving the points used in the measure for self-sufficiency (Jones, 2011).

Regardless, the focus of services has primarily been on quick-fix interventions rather than those that embrace the skills of youths and address long-term benefits. This is compounded by the underutilization of available services by youth due to program or organization requirements despite the higher risk of negative outcomes (Heinze & Hernandez Jozefowics-Simbeni, 2009). In the study by Heinze and Hernandez Jozefowics-Simbeni (2009), youth were frustrated by their thwarted attempts to be more self-sufficient and were therefore cautious in seeking assistance or opting to terminate service delivery programs. Some success was found in client-directed intervention strategies that are not based on the use of external controls. External controls were unsuccessful since youth lacked the accountability and responsibility to be independent on discharge. The client-directed approach provided a safe environment to practice life skills that were transferrable when the youth were independent (Barker & McLintock, 2010).

Research on homeless youth often excludes the segment of the population in school-based programs and there were no studies found that assessed the need for support and intervention from the youth's perspective. This gap may be the root of discrepancies that exist between the available and needed services focused on building (Stewart et al., 2010). Kidd (2012) commented that a strategic and cohesive response is necessary to

move forward in achieving meaningful solutions to homelessness. Characterization of this segment of the population is difficult due to the ambiguity of definitions for terms such runaways, throwaways, homeless youth, as well as differing age ranges and the manner in which they are applied. However, there is agreement that this population is large, continues to grow, and requires intervention. The current practice does not provide post-intervention to reduce returns to the street and other issues including those of chronic homelessness, poverty while housed, instability, or even death. The literature suggests that current social responses have been unsuccessful; therefore, a framework that incorporates research, policy and service responses to produce coordinated solutions is suggested to generate effective solutions (Kidd, 2012).

The addition of social capital contribution through education of homeless populations to prevent homelessness (Zlotnick et al., 2010) is also considered in other research. Eyrich-Garg et al. (2008) determined that those who were literally homeless and sleeping on the streets, cars, and in public places have the least social support and were less likely to spend their free time with others. As a result, these homeless are less apt to form social bonds through education or other attributes to activate their social capital. One organization has actually *flipped the script* to organize homeless persons and give them an opportunity to interact with the general population, thereby making them less invisible to the masses. The strategy employed by StreetWise was to integrate the homeless through vendor opportunities to raise awareness and encourage engagement with citizens and enhance civic discourse. Civic engagement is a pathway to building social capital which when activated supports a democratic way of life (Novack & Harter,

2008). This researcher observed that on any Monday through Friday, during normal business hours, StreetWise vendors were on the streets of Washington, DC selling their newspapers in the shadows of The White House, federal agencies and departments, and affluent business and shopping areas. These homeless or formerly homeless vendors utilized the opportunity to connect with potential customers regarding their socioeconomic situation and their efforts to change their circumstances. The sale of the newspaper provides income for the vendor, an opportunity for conversation with the customer, and for the customer to become better informed about the issues facing homeless persons. Democracy is about people working together to solve problems; however, according to Deetz, as cited in Novak & Harter, 2008, the argument is that democracy has become more about expression instead of working together on solutions to local issues. The act of customers purchasing the paper for $1 or $2 and then reading the vendors' stories, is in itself a small act of participation in the democratic process through the connection of people who would not generally interact within the same community (Novak & Harter, 2008). Although civic engagement is important for the proper functioning of a democracy and the encouragement it offers young adults to grow and mature, opportunities for such engagement are not equitable due to factors that are socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic (Flanagan & Levine, 2010).

Although the lack of education is a major contributing factor to homelessness due to poverty (Tanneby & Mobley, 2011), the homeless live a day-to-day existence where their primary concern is meeting their daily needs; therefore, planning to improve their future through education is not a priority (Shier, Jones, & Graham, 2012). In a study of

61 persons who were homeless and employed, researchers found that characteristics of the labor market, available economic opportunities, and homeless services attachment difficulties directly affected the experiences with homelessness. Issues such as insufficient work, inconsistent pay, employee/employer relationships, temporary employment, housing that tied to employment in certain jobs, undesirable employment, and homeless services delivery such as shelter constraints may negatively affect the opportunities for stable employment (Shier et al., 2012). The literature is clear that education and skills training promote stable employment that leads to decreased risk for poverty and homelessness (Tanneby & Mobley, 2011; USICH, 2013; Zlotnick et al., 2010).

Although there is sufficient evidence to suggest certain positive outcomes for youth who participated in transitional living programs, the federal funding for specifically targeted programs including SOP, BCP, and TLP for runaway and homeless youth of approximately $140 million annually, at its peak, or about $70 per youth seems woefully inadequate. Many homeless youth lack basic life skills, work skills, education and job experience to assist them in successfully transitioning to adulthood. Furthermore, many of this homeless youth population also experience physical, mental, and substance abuse challenges which further complicate their transition out of homelessness (Dworsky, 2010). It is therefore critical to determine what interventions work well with this population to effectively utilize scarce funds to produce positive outcomes. In addition, there is a critical need to evaluate current programs to determine how the TLP shapes movement toward independence (Curry & Abrams, 2015).

As further discussed in Chapter 3, the qualitative method is suited to understanding naturally occurring phenomena in its natural setting and builds on interconnected themes through inductive analysis from a holistic perspective through a flexible design (Patton, 1990). In addition, the case study strategy has the unique ability to encompass a variety of evidence such as documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations when examining contemporary events where relevant behaviors are not manipulated (Yin, 2009). The exploratory case study design is appropriate because the research question seeks to determine how a program operates, and as such, relates to the possible development of hypotheses and proposals for further inquiry (Yin, 2009). This research study incorporated a semistructured questionnaire as the basis of in-depth interviews.

Social Change

The HHS report to Congress related to promising strategies to end youth homelessness states that youth programs for homeless youth should include opportunities for decision-making; however, there is no mention of education as a pathway out of homelessness for youth. The report also excludes education in the interventions to ameliorate homelessness and in its policy and program development goals (U.S. Department of HHS, ACY, ACYF, & FYSB, 2012)

According to The National Network for Youth (2013), society fails to cultivate a future for homeless children and youth and promotes the cycle of poverty when these children and youth are allowed to grow up without a focus and commitment to education. As such, the critical pathway out of poverty to breaking the cycle of homelessness

through education as posited by Tanabe & Mobley (2011) is not evident in society. This education pathway has not been promoted in the government's responsibility to educate its citizens to become conscientious participants in decision-making through the current strategies to end youth homelessness as reported to Congress by HHS.

The USICH framework to end youth homelessness charges federal departments, agencies and systems to work together to produce better outcomes for youth in several areas including education as a pathway out of homelessness. The objectives of the USICH framework provide strategies to address issues related to defining the scope of the youth homelessness issue as well as strengthening capacity through systems' collaboration to produce positive outcomes and promote social change (USICH, 2013). The diverse missions of systems that provide services have complicated the task of transitioning youth out of their homeless status. The services that were available to these vulnerable youths often cease when they cross the invisible line into adulthood, and they are unable to navigate through the transition between old services for which they no longer qualify and new services which may be available. Research indicated that continuing services may not be needed for these youth if government systems had been more successful in preparing the youth for transition into adulthood (Osgood, Foster, & Courtney, 2010).

According to USICH, homeless youth have distinct needs that are different from those of homeless adults as they are still developing emotionally, socially, and physically and generally have little job experience. A quality education is deemed essential from early childhood onward to reduce vulnerability to homelessness. Evidence strongly

supports education as part of the objectives to combat homelessness. Employment is critical and is often dependent on education for an individual to be self-supporting and avoid homelessness. Social change is achieved through interventions that move homeless youth to productive young adults. This positive social change is accomplished by moving homeless youth out of poverty and improving their socioeconomic status through opportunities that include citizen participation and result in decision-making that affects their daily lives and decrease the likelihood of their own children being homeless. The objectives of USICH that support preventing and ending youth homelessness by 2020 include access to education for young adults who are homeless. This objective is planned through strengthened focus on education access by reviewing federal, state and local programs and policies and regulations that increase access and retention and help ensure access is achieved (USICH, 2013).

Youth who are educated are more confident and inclined to participate civically such as voting for elected officials. Studies indicated there was increased participation for youth with a high school diploma and even more participation for those with a college degree. Furthermore, educated and engaged youth are less costly to society as their economic burden through lost wages and taxes, social services, healthcare, juvenile and justice system costs are decreased (Zaff et al., 2014). Owing to the self-perpetuating nature of homelessness, the lack of appropriate interventions to prevent and end youth homelessness increases the likelihood that their children will also be homeless, thereby increasing society's burden for another generation.

Summary

Despite legislation such as NCLB and McKinney-Vento that address education concerns and options for homeless youth, and the timetable of HHS to prevent and end youth homelessness by 2020 (HHS et al., 2013), homeless youth continue to be the fastest growing vulnerable subgroup of the homeless population (Gaetz, et al as cited in Coates & McKenzie-Mohr 2010), and their education access does not match that of their housed counterparts.

The authors of current literature agree on the self-perpetuating nature of homelessness for youth. Homeless youth who do not have effective interventions are more at risk of becoming parents to children who are homeless. Education and educational skills are key factors in breaking the cycle of homelessness and positively affecting social equity for these marginalized youth (Tanabe & Mobley, 2011).

Despite studies conducted on multiple topics related to homeless youth such as the access to food, clothing, shelter, and health care, there remains a significant gap in literature related to education access for homeless youth. Grossman (2010) argued the gap in literature related to school change are comprehensive studies on marginalized groups within educational institutions and the manner in which they mobilize to improve the interests of the homeless.

The importance of education as a means to equip homeless youth to lift themselves out of their depressed socioeconomic status is agreed upon by authors in the literature. In addition, the themes that were developed from the literature review indicated that successful integration of homeless youth into a contributing society included their

ability to access human and social capital. Eyrich-Garg et al. (2008) and Zlotnick et al. (2010) view the activation of human and social capital as necessary attributes for success as these attributes access the common marketplace and provide a path toward a democratic way of life.

Furthermore, improvement in socioeconomic status is also dependent on stability, civic engagement, and equal rights. However, the absence of these dependencies along with the absent voice of the homeless youth were barriers to positive outcomes which contributed to the self-perpetuating nature of homelessness. Although Broadbent (2008) attributed the disconnected results for this marginalized population from their being outside of the policy parameters, others such as Papelu, Hubley, Russell, Gadermann, and Chinni (2012) point to the lack of research on QOL indicators for homeless populations. Equity in a system of democratic governance is based on fairness to citizens and on maximum inclusion, and not only in consideration of those who directly participate in decision-making (Eagan, 2007).

This study focuses on the sustained access to education for homeless youth that participate in the TLP in the U.S. and the gap in knowledge about whether their socioeconomic status is improved as a result of their participation. This gap in knowledge directly relates to the 2020 target to prevent and end youth homelessness as reported to Congress by HHS and its supporting agencies.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Exploratory Case Study

In this study, I used the qualitative tradition with an exploratory case study design that employed multiple sources of evidence. The purpose of the study was to address the gap in knowledge regarding the status of sustained education access for homeless youth within the specifically targeted program, known as the TLP for runaway and homeless youth. The data I collected for use in this study included archival data from public databases and organizational records, as well as in-depth interviews with administrators from the sampled service provider organizations.

I chose the exploratory case study design for this study because the research question seeks to determine how the specifically targeted program, known as TLP, focused on sustained education access for homeless youth operates and, as such, relates to the possible development of hypotheses and proposals for further inquiry (Yin, 2009). The program I examined is a current event where behaviors of participants cannot be manipulated and can be observed through a full variety of evidence; therefore, the exploratory case study was appropriate. In the following sections of this chapter, I discuss the qualitative methodology and case study research design. I also present detailed information about the population, sampling strategy, role of the researcher, rationale and instruments for data collection, and data validity.

Research Approach

In this case study, I employed a multiple approach to data collection to explore the current status of the specifically targeted program, known as TLP for runaway and homeless youth, and the sustained education access component for their benefit. The use of the qualitative method is suited to understanding naturally occurring phenomena in its natural setting. The qualitative research method of inquiry builds on interconnected themes through inductive analysis from a holistic perspective through a flexible design (Patton, 1990). In contrast, quantitative research is more suited for studies where there are cause and effect, measurement and observation, and the testing of theories through data collection on predetermined instruments that produce statistical data. The quantitative approach uses closed-ended questions and numeric data within the predetermined approaches to relate variables in a hypothesis and rate behavior.

Bryman (2008) further elaborated that quantitative methods focus on a deductive approach in the theory-to-research relationship, and research is used to test the logic of the theory while the qualitative approach emphasizes an inductive approach to a study so that theories evolve from the research. Patton (2013) further discussed the quantitative design as an approach with the goal of generalizing from a sample to a population, whereas qualitative studies begin with an inductive approach to the world by observing and finding the emerging patterns to develop a theory. The mixed-methods design uses practical assumptions and claims and employs closed-ended methods (quantitative) with the qualitative open-ended observations (Creswell, 2003).

According to Creswell (1998), a qualitative study is selected based on the nature of the study and is suitable when the research question asks *how* or *what* about a social or human problem. This research study also explored how the specifically targeted program, known as TLP, and the focus on sustained education access for homeless youth operates as there is a gap in the literature about this program and its outcomes. Yin (2009) stated that a case study is appropriate when the researcher is interested in knowing *how* or *why* a program worked or did not work, and is the preferred design when relevant behaviors cannot be manipulated during contemporary events under examination. Yin (2009) also suggested that a survey strategy may be combined with a case study strategy when appropriate because a survey strategy also answers research questions that ask *what*, *who*, *where*, *how many* or *how much*. Both strategies focus on contemporary events but do not require the researcher's control over behavioral events. In addition, the strength of the case study design is its ability to cope with a variety of evidence including documents, interviews, quantitative data, and observations.

The decision to utilize a particular qualitative method pivots on the types of questions asked by the researcher, and the goals of the study through a holistic method of inquiry that examines the subject from a *real world* perspective. As part of the decision-making process, I considered the ethnography, phenomenology, and ethnomethodology approaches, in addition to the case study approach. The alternative approaches are briefly discussed below.

Ethnography. The ethnographic study focuses on the culture of a group and primarily utilizes participant observation as its source of evidence. The assumption in this

type of study is that people living together over time will evolve into a culture. This approach is suitable for program and organization evaluation as both programs and organizations develop cultures, which are in turn, affected by the processes and outcomes of the program or organization (Patton, 1990).

Phenomenology. A phenomenological study focuses on what is experienced by persons in a particular structure, such as a program, organization, or culture, and how those persons describe their experiences and how they experience the encounters. It is important to know what is experienced by the subjects and their interpretation of such experiences. This approach stresses the experience which may be an emotion, a relationship, or a job, and the manner in which the people develop a world view to make sense of the whole through their experiences. This approach also has a second methodological implication, which is to actually experience the very phenomenon that is being investigated, so that the researcher actually experiences the *essence* of the experience. The phenomenological approach makes the assumption that there is some essence or core meaning that can be understood through shared common experience (Patton, 1990). According to Moustakas, as cited in Creswell (2003), this approach "involves extensive and prolonged engagement to develop patterns and relationships of meaning" (p. 15).

Ethnomethodology. The primary focus in this approach is the manner in which people make sense of their everyday activities to be socially acceptable through their behavior. These studies are accomplished through in-depth interviews and participant observation to determine norms, understanding, and assumptions of persons so involved

in the process that they are unaware of their actions because they take them for granted. In the process of the investigation, the researcher disrupts the everyday activity to determine how the participants react to make sense of a new situation and behave in a socially acceptable manner (Patton, 1990).

The three approaches described above, the ethnography, phenomenology, and ethnomethodology, have in common that they require participant observation. The research question in this particular study asks, "how has the sustained education access component of the TLP for at-risk homeless youth benefitted youth seeking to end their homeless status?" and points to an exploration of the program to better understand how it operates. It would be premature to use any of the aforementioned three approaches at this point in the topic's exploration since relatively little is known about the current status of the program. The exploratory case study design is appropriate for this study where the goal is to gain further insight and understanding to address the gap in literature as it pertains to the specifically targeted program or single case, namely the TLP (Singleton & Straits, 1999).

Case study. One of the reasons to conduct a case study is to generate useful information which may be used to help coordinate or manage services or to evaluate outcomes (Patton, 1990). The case study has the unique ability to encompass a variety of evidence such as documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations when examining contemporary events where relevant behaviors are not manipulated (Yin, 2009). The case study strategy may include single or multiple-case studies, it is useful when attempting to bring clarity in situations where an intervention does not have clear outcomes, and can

include qualitative evidence (Yin, 2009). Owing to its attributes, the case study strategy is appropriate for this study to explore the current status of the specifically targeted program, known as TLP for runaway and homeless youth that focuses on sustained education access for homeless youth as provided under RHY.

Case studies can include quantitative data and use a mix of qualitative and quantitative evidence including survey questions, may exclude direct and detailed observational evidence that is usually associated with qualitative research, or may even be limited to quantitative evidence. The case study strategy is useful when the researcher is attempting to gain insight about the interventions and their outcomes (Yin, 2009). The case study design is therefore suitable for this study to address the gap in literature and gain an understanding of the implemented strategies in the TLP to benefit homeless youth and comply with mandated timelines to prevent and end youth homelessness.

Owing to the archival governmental data sources in RHYMIS and SAMHSA, the case study design and data collection strategy are suitable for inquiry into the specifically targeted program, TLP. This study examined data from RHYMIS which accumulates intake and exit youth statistics from provider organizations of the TLP, and from SAMHSA which accumulates data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). As the data is archival and electronically retrieved, neither data collection method is subject to manipulation. The study also included a semistructured questionnaire that was used as the basis for in-depth interviews with administrators at the TLP service provider organizations. The in-depth interviews were conducted by phone with the administrators at the service provider organizations that were awarded grants to

implement the TLP. This combined approach based on Yin's work in the qualitative research methodology yielded the *hows* and *whys* of operations for the specifically targeted program. Using this qualitative methodological approach, the study allowed me to learn about the TLP operations and current outcomes. The method also provided a basis in this study to dig deeper through semistructured questions to explore the thoughts of participants that resulted from their actual feedback. This case study approach permitted a level of robust exploration of the topic that produced a thorough, incorporated analysis of numeric data and participant responses employed by the qualitative method.

Population in the Study

The focus of this study was to explore the current status of the specifically targeted program for runaway and homeless youth, known as TLP that focuses on sustained education access for homeless youth because there is currently a gap in the literature concerning this program. HHS has funded this program to address the problem of youth homelessness and has introduced strategies to prevent and end youth homelessness by the year 2020.

ACF is one of the operating divisions of HHS and has oversight for the ACYF, that administers the federal program for runaway and homeless youth. The FYSB has operational responsibility for the Family and Homeless Youth Program, that includes a SOP which services include street based education and outreach; the BCP which provides emergency short term services, and the TLP which helps youth to develop the skills for self-sufficiency and independent living. These skills are developed through education opportunities such as GED preparation, post-secondary training, and vocational

education. FYSB contracts with service provider organizations to provide services to homeless youth as prescribed under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, as amended by the RHY.

The population for this study was the group of service provider organizations that were federally funded to provide TLP services during fiscal years 2008 through 2014 and for which data has been reported in RHYMIS. The 2008 grantees were awarded for up to five years and TLP grants were next awarded in 2012 for 60-month projects with five 12-month budget periods. The names of service providers for 2008 awards were acquired from the archive list on the website of the ACF (HHS, 2008).

The names of the 2012, 2013 and 2014 grantees were acquired from the lists on the website of the FYSB (FYSB, 2016).

All lists were retrieved from public sources.

Sampling

The focus of qualitative inquiry is often with a single case that has been selected for the rich information they offer that can be studied in great detail. Because the purpose of this study was to address the gap in literature about the current status of a specifically targeted program, purposeful sampling was advantageous to learning through the comprehensive understanding of a small carefully selected sample from the unit of analysis to answer research questions (Patton, 2013). The unit of analysis in this study was the federally funded TLP that provides services to youth 16 – 22 years through the affiliated service provider organizations. The span of 16 – 22 years is the age range from

where the mainstream housed youth population is preparing for high school completion to preparing for graduation with an undergraduate college degree. According to Patton (1990), an entire program may be the unit of analysis and qualitative inquiry focuses directly on the unit through observations and description and aggregating data from individuals to obtain overall program results. The key decision affecting selection of the unit of analysis is for the researcher to decide what would he or she want to know about something at the end of the study. The decision about the sample, its size and related strategies are dependent on the unit of analysis (Patton, 1990).

The opportunity for selection of information rich cases to illuminate the questions being studied and inclusion of several strategies on which to base the sample selection resulted from purposeful sampling. Included in the list of strategies is maximum variation sampling. The purpose of maximum variation sampling is to capture central themes or outcomes that cut across variations in participants or programs. The emerging common themes or patterns capture the core experiences and shared aspects that impact the participant or program (Patton, 1987)

A small sample that is purposefully chosen is maximized by the selection of diverse characteristics such as representation from varied geographic settlement areas and regions when a program is operated in multiple project sites around the U.S. The utilization of a small sample allowed me to select participants from diverse areas, resulting in data collection and analysis that yielded findings that are high-quality and sufficiently detailed to document uniqueness, as well as, share important patterns that emerged out of their diversity. The research literature indicated that maximum variation

sampling strategy is useful within a single program when selecting individuals for study (Patton, 1987).

The list of service provider organizations obtained from the FYSB indicated the award recipients as well as their city and state locations.

All agencies listed as service provider organizations were reviewed in the sample selection process for participation in the research study. I applied purposeful sampling to the entire TLP unit of analysis to determine the service provider organizations to be selected for inclusion to add the greatest depth to the study. Then, the maximum variation sampling strategy was utilized as this method "documents diverse variations and identifies common patterns", and as in the case of this study, strengthened results from the heterogeneous small sample size (Creswell, 1998, p.119).

Service provider organizations were awarded grants in almost every state for most of the years during 2008 to 2014 and awardees were operating primarily in large urban areas. Purposeful maximum variation sampling was applied to select service providers located in states that had homeless populations of less than 3%. All states, the District of Columbia, and the territory of Guam, with the exception of California, Florida, New York, Rhode Island, Texas, and Washington had less than a 3% share of their state's homeless population according to the 2015 Point-in-Time count which reported homeless counts performed in 2014 (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2015). All of the states except Delaware, Idaho, Rhode Island and Tennessee received RHY funding for their TLP during the years 2008 – 2014. During the award years from 2008 to 2014, approximately 123 organizations in multiple states with less than a 3% homeless

population were granted awards as service providers to the TLP. There were 572,485 estimated homeless persons in those included states during the 2014 year (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2015). A 12% extrapolation to homeless young adults up to age 24 indicated there were 68,698 such youth in those multiple states (Burt, et al., as cited in Murphy, 2011). The aforementioned 123 organizations were included in the sample pool to which invitations were forwarded for the in-depth interviews using purposeful multiple variation sampling.

The total sample pool included many organizations that were no longer operating, could not be reached by electronic mail, or did not respond to the researcher's invitation to participate. There were nine administrators from the successfully contacted organizations who agreed to participate during the two-week period when the interviews were being conducted and they returned their Informed Consent. The administrators who were interviewed had varying titles in their respective organizations which included but are not limited to, Executive Director, Program Director, Program Operations Director, Director, Supervisor, Case Manager, Vice President, and Residential Director. The administrators in their various roles are responsible for the implementation, management, and operations of their respective organization's transitional living programs.

Informed Consent

Participation in the study was strictly on a voluntary basis. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions about the study and as the researcher, I personally responded to all participants. All potential participants were required to read, sign, and return the consent form to me prior to the start of the phone interview.

Confidentiality

Participants were assured by me that their identities and the identities of their employers would remain confidential. Generic labels and generic codes in an alphanumeric sequence were used instead of actual names of the participants and organizations to protect their identities. All research documentation will be secured at the researcher's home in a locked fireproof container and password-protected files for five years.

Role of the Researcher

As an interpretive research, qualitative inquiry involves sustained, intensive interaction with participants (Creswell, 2003). Therefore, the personal interests, gains, biases and any potential ethical issues concerning the researcher and the study should be identified. As the researcher, I served as the designer and administrator of the semistructured questionnaire. I analyzed publicly accessed archival data using Microsoft Excel as a non-statistical method. I reviewed documents that related to the TLP as well as responses from the interview questionnaire to determine common themes that surfaced using the qualitative data software NVivo.

As the researcher, I presented the Proposal (Chapters 1 – 3) for this study to the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB is responsible for giving permission to move forward with the study, and to ensure the protection of the rights of human participants. The IRB approval is number 02-19-16-0102997 which expires on February 18, 2017, and was included in the Informed Consent that was provided to the research participants.

As the researcher, I did not have any relationship with the HHS or any of the agencies or departments responsible for policy or practice in implementing homeless policy. I have worked in financial environments for many years including positions in financial management and consulting in both business and nonprofit sectors. Furthermore, I am the parent of adults and I have volunteered for more than fifteen years with various organizations that provided activities to positively affect youth who were either housed and homeless.

The semistructured questionnaire was the basis of the in-depth interviews conducted with the program administrators included in the sample of participants. The sample was selected from the service provider organizations in the TLP unit of analysis. I did not interview program beneficiaries who are the youth and young adults that participated in the TLP, nor any federal, state or local government decision-makers. All numerical data collected on TLP youth and young adults was accessed from RHYMIS which accumulated information reported by TLP staff. The numerical data that related to general youth indicators and demographics were retrieved electronically from SAMHSA. The study was minimally disruptive to participants who completed the phone interviews during their normal work day with the consent of their organizations' leaders.

I analyzed the data from public domain archival sites that contained TLP youth participant information and were retrieved for use in the study. The results of the analyses from the phone interviews and archival sites are reported in text, chart, and tabular formats.

Rationale for Data Collection

The study utilized RHYMIS, a public government database that has information from service provider organizations that contract with FYSB to provide services to homeless youth. The databases contain entrance, stay, and exit information on the youth beneficiaries of the program including their education level and status, and education services provided during their participation in the TLP. The entrance data that is collected from RHYMIS include school status such as high school attendance, grade completed, dropped out, expelled, graduated, obtained GED, college attendance, and living situation. The exit data collected is similar in nature to the entrance data for the same selection of youth beneficiaries. The RHYMIS data was obtained from the public ACF website (HHS, 2016). The SAMHSA database contains archival data about the U.S. youth demographics and is focused on youth transition to adulthood. The accumulated data includes school status, education level, living arrangements, and employment status. The SAMHSA data was obtained from the website of the NCES (NCES, 2016).

Service provider organizations were awarded FYSB grants to provide services to youth in the TLP. The purpose of these grants was to facilitate the youth in developing the skills for self-sufficiency and independent living through education opportunities such as GED preparation, post-secondary training and vocational education. All of the service provider organizations in the population were invited to participate in the study. The service provider organizations were awarded funds to operate the TLP for runaway and homeless youth in the majority of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and territory of Guam.

The list of service provider organizations for award years 2008 to 2014 is presented at Appendix A.

Instruments for Data Collection

This study employed a questionnaire to collect data from administrators at the service provider organizations that were federally funded to work directly with the homeless youth in the TLP. The questionnaire was designed as an instrument with semistructured questions tailored to respondents who are well informed and can provide important insights into the program. Yin (2009) noted that interviewees can provide shortcuts to the prior history of the situation and help the researcher to identify other relevant sources of evidence (p.108).

I designed the questionnaire that was used in this study. The questionnaire was administered to the participants to address the primary research question which is "how has the sustained education access component of the TLP for homeless youth benefitted youth seeking to end their homeless status"?

All questions developed for this study were intended to elicit responses in support of the aforementioned primary question.

The data collection questionnaire was administered by telephone interview. A Letter of Invitation was forwarded to the primary officer at each service provider organization to invite program administrators to participate in the study. Program administrators of the service provider organizations who agreed to participate were forwarded the Informed Consent via electronic mail and later guided through the in-depth discussion.

In-depth interviews were conducted by telephone with TLP administrators at nine of the service provider organizations utilizing the semistructured questionnaire. This effort to dig deeper and gain a better understanding of the research topic was performed to capture observations, thoughts and perspectives of the respondents to address the primary research question.

The Research Questions Matrix: In-Depth Interviews that links the research questions to the semistructured questions is presented at Appendix B.

The Semistructured Interview Questionnaire is shown at Appendix C.

Validity of Data

To ensure reliability, the goal of which is to" minimize the errors and biases in a study" (p.45), and confirm the validity of the study, I triangulated data from multiple sources of evidence, developed and maintained a case study database, and maintained a chain of evidence (Yin, 2009). Multiple sources of evidence include archival data, the semistructured interview questionnaire, and documentation provided by agencies and departments responsible for the implementation of youth homeless policy. The case study database includes, but is not limited to, analyses of the RHYMIS and SAMHSA data, documents, narratives, notes, and responses to the questionnaire. A chain of evidence process was employed that is consistent with the case study protocol that ensures the case study content is linked with the research questions (Yin, 2009). In addition, I developed and analyzed themes and patterns from the responses of participants to the questionnaire to test internal validity using NVivo. As proposed by Guba and Lincoln, criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are used to better reflect the

underlying assumptions, and judge the soundness of qualitative research. This study was focused on understanding the education access component of the federally funded program known as TLP by thoroughly describing and documenting research, assumptions, observations, changes, and the procedures used for checking and verifying data throughout the study (Trochim, 2001).

Procedures for Data Analysis

This case study used both qualitative and quantitative data. My analytical strategy for this study included the use of computer-assisted tools and non-statistical methods. I retrieved quantitative data from RHYMIS and SAMHSA for analysis using non-statistical methods, although the qualitative data from interviews were analyzed with the aid of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, NVivo to recognize codes and themes. Quantitative data was not statistically analyzed as such data provided information that was cumulatively reported and related only to participant counts. These counts provided information such as gender, age, educational grade level, race, and other demographics of youth when entering and exiting the TLP and for the U.S. population in general.

Quantitative data was derived from RHYMIS and SAMHSA. The RHYMIS data is relevant as it covers events related to the education levels, housing, and employment status of youth at their entrance into, and exit out of the TLP program. RHYMIS also bears a direct relationship to the service provider agencies from which the sample was drawn to study the TLP unit of analysis, as these organizations are responsible for providing the data that is collected in RHYMIS. Both the qualitative and quantitative data

was subjected to analyses at the same time to build a strong analytical strategy in support of this case study (Yin, 2009).

Presentation of Results

The results of this study are presented as direct quotations of participants who participated in the in-depth interviews. Furthermore, common themes that resulted from the interviews as well as the non-statistical analysis of data derived from RHYMIS and SAMHSA systems are also discussed in Chapter 4.

Relationship of Exploratory Study to Larger Study

An exploratory study is often used as the first step in probing a topic where previous examination has not occurred. This step is taken to determine whether the situation lends itself to further study, such as, hypothesis testing of qualitative data. However, without an exploratory study to see if further work is justified, there is in effect no basis to determine if additional work is warranted.

The larger study that may result is the investigation of the tax dollars expended to fund the specifically targeted TLP for runaway and homeless youth. This research may also lead to further study to determine whether the TLP is working to prevent and end youth homelessness through education and other interventions aimed at improving the socioeconomic status of the intended beneficiaries.

Implications for Social Change

The use of resources in an efficient manner may positively affect the issue of youth homelessness and could be instrumental in preventing or ending the problem. If youth are offered sustained access to education while homeless, it may be the critical

pathway needed to move them out of their transient situations and break the cycle of poverty (Tanabe & Mobley, 2011).

Youth homelessness is indicative of social inequality and injustice in an otherwise comfortable society, and while there is no single cause of homelessness, a breakdown in family relationships is a key contributor to homelessness among youth (Barker, 2010). Education provides the opportunity for stable social and economic connections. The outcomes for youth with these connections include social and emotional well-being, employment, permanent connections, and stable housing (USICH, 2013). Furthermore, education when activated as an intervention, leads to civic engagement and builds social capital that supports a democratic way of life (Novack & Harter, 2008). Proponents of both the participatory and deliberative models of democracy recognize the importance of education to moving forward the public policy decision-making process (Zanetti, 2007). Head (2011) and Checkoway et al., (2005) agreed that youth in public policy involves young people in a process that affects their own lives and positively affects their social development. Therefore, young people have the right to be involved and consulted, where appropriate, as such participation improves services for them because their views and interests are represented and articulated (Head, 2011). This is especially important for homeless youth as their interests often differ from their housed counterparts.

Interventions that improve the socioeconomic status of youth translate to improvement in overall societal conditions as these youth transition into adulthood and are better equipped to be contributing members in their communities.

Summary

The primary research question that was asked in this study was "how has the sustained education access component of the TLP for homeless youth benefitted youth seeking to end their homeless status"? This primary question as well as additional relevant and supporting questions were posed to participants in this exploratory study to address the gap in knowledge and learn about education access for homeless youth participating in the TLP. The knowledge derived through this study about the TLP will be useful to determine whether the TLP lends itself to hypothesis testing, investigation of tax dollars spent to fund the program, and whether the program works to prevent and end youth homelessness by the year 2020 target date as reported to Congress by HHS.

In recent years, funding for the TLP has decreased despite an increase in youth homelessness. The knowledge that results from this study will also inform discussion and debate on whether the provision for education and workforce access under RHY legislation as implemented has achieved the intended goals. The evaluation of these outcomes would be pivotal in determining whether to change, restart, redesign, or terminate the program component that specifically addresses education access, or alternatively, to draft policy that more aptly addresses solutions to prevent and end youth homelessness.

Chapter 4: Results

Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to address the gap in knowledge regarding the sustained education access component of the TLP and how this component has benefitted homeless youth seeking to end their homeless status. To date, a clear picture is not evident of whether the strategies to prevent and end youth homelessness are successful. This lack of knowledge is primarily due to insufficient data collection and coordination between federal, state, and local systems to act effectively and efficiently to address this problem (USICH, 2013).

This gap in knowledge about the TLP prompted the following overarching research question:

How has the sustained education access component of the TLP for homeless youth benefitted youth seeking to end their homeless status?

Further contemplation of this primary question resulted in additional questions. The following additional questions were helpful in answering the overarching question about whether the socioeconomic status of homeless youth have been affected by the sustained education access component of the TLP:

1. Is the current TLP to sustain education access for homeless young adults working as designed based on goals defined by the HHS?
2. How does the current TLP sustain education access for homeless young adults prevent episodes of homelessness for at-risk youth who participate in the program?

3. What strategies for sustained education access have been implemented to end the current socioeconomic status of poverty and homelessness of the beneficiaries?

4. Is current data collection sufficient for analysis, monitoring, and evaluation of the current TLP?

5. How are homeless young adults represented or directly involved at the policy formation stage of this youth homelessness issue?

6. What stakeholders should be *at the table* to discuss policies and programs for sustained education access for homeless young adults?

Qualitative methods of inquiry are guided by questions and a search for patterns and are responsive to discovery and inductive logic. The inductive approach begins with questions such as those posed by the above research questions on a particular program (Patton, 1987).

In this chapter, I address the collection of data from nine administrators at TLP service providers who were interviewed by phone using a semistructured questionnaire to explore the phenomenon of the TLP. The semistructured questionnaire was designed to elicit in-depth responses using questions that provided opportunities for the administrators to further elaborate on the questions. Next, I discuss the analysis of the interview data using the qualitative software NVivo and the data coding into nodes to develop themes, as well as the data from public databases RHYMIS and SAMHSA. Then, I present evidence of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability that reflect the underlying assumptions to judge the soundness of this qualitative research

study as proposed by Cuba and Lincoln (Trochim, 2001). The resulting support from the data analysis that addresses the research questions follows, and I conclude the chapter with a transition to Chapter 5.

Data Collection

I interviewed nine administrators employed at TLP service providers in both urban and rural geographic settlement locations in various U.S. regions by phone during a two-week period. The administrators were referred by the respective Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Executive Director (ED) of their organization whom I had contacted via an electronic Letter of Invitation to request cooperation in my research study. The TLP service providers and their respective transitional living programs funded by RHY dollars were located in the Midwest, Southwest, West, Northeast, and Southeast regions of the U.S. All administrator participants had direct responsibility for TLP operations and youth in the program. The tenure of administrators ranged from one to 8 years in their positions, and they had been employed by their organizations from one and one half to 36 years. This diversity in geographic settlement locations, regions, and employment duration of the administrators supported the maximum variation strategy applicable to the purposeful sampling for this study (see Table 1).

Table 1

Demographics of the Responding Administrators

	Location/region in the United States	Years at organization	Years in position	Youth served since inception
RSP 001	Rural/Midwest	15–20	1–5	501–1000
RSP 002	Rural/Midwest	6–10	1–5	101–500
RSP 003	Urban/Southwest	1–5	1–5	101–500
RSP 004	Urban/West	1–5	1–5	1–100
RSP 005	Urban/Northeast	>20	6–10	1–100
RSP 006	Urban/Southeast	6–10	1–5	1–100
RSP 007	Urban/Northeast	1–5	1–5	1–100
RSP 008	Urban/Midwest	10–15	1–5	1–100
RSP 009	Rural/Northeast	10–15	1–5	1–100

The semistructured questionnaire which was utilized for the in-depth phone interviews included three types of qualitative questions to collectively address and dig deep into the subject to uncover themes and connections. The main questions were used to guide the conversation; probe questions were used to pursue, complete or clarify answers, or request further examples, and follow-up questions asked for elaboration of core concepts and examined central themes (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

The interviews were conducted during normal business and averaged between forty five minutes to 1 hour during a period when the administrator was at work. I wrote notes as well as recorded the conversations with the participants' permissions. Later, the notes and conversations were transcribed using Microsoft Word and entered into the NVivo data analysis software that was used as the analysis tool.

NVivo Analysis

NVivo is a data analysis software used in qualitative research. NVivo is useful to help organize, analyze, and find insights in unstructured or qualitative data such as interviews.

The nine transcribed interviews were entered into NVivo after deletion of the participant's individual information and assignation of a unique identifier ranging from RSP 001 through RSP 009 to each participant. Then, I developed several codes by identifying key concepts resulting from a thorough review of all nine interview transcripts. Key concepts were words, processes, functions, and issues of relevance related to the interviews or the research questions which were then coded as common patterns into nodes in NVivo.

Thirteen nodes were identified and coded as being representative of common patterns that emerged across the different programs as follows:

1. 2020 Timeline - the tracking in adherence to, coordination and responsibilities related to, the 2020 timeline to prevent and end youth homelessness as reported by HHS to Congress.
2. After-care – the support received by youth who had exited the TLP, whether by decision to leave prior to the maximum time allowed, or resulting from the successful completion of their stay.
3. Assessments – the assessments completed on the youth participants upon entry, while in residence, and upon exit from the TLP.

4. Compliance – the rules and guidelines for the youth to access education options provided by the TLP service provider.
5. Data collection – the reporting of program participant information to federal, state, local authorities, and community groups.
6. Employment percentage – the percentage of youth who were employed after completion of the TLP.
7. External feedback – feedback to and from the TLP service provider with federal, state, local authorities and community groups.
8. Participant outcomes - the results of youth participation in the TLP program, such as college, jobs, High School diploma, GED, or the military.
9. Program offerings – the manner in which education, training or workforce development choices were made for the youth.
10. Program participation – the description of education, job, community and other requirements while participating in the TLP
11. Sustainability - the sectors that employ youth that participate in the TLP, their wages, and whether jobs are temporary or permanent.
12. Youth Case Plan - the plan developed for TLP participants based on the youth's individual goals while in residence.
13. Youth representation – the manner in which youth self-represent and provide input while at the TLP.

Subsequent to the identification and coding of nodes, I analyzed the research questions to determine the main concepts resulting from the primary and six supporting questions. The resulting seven concepts from the research questions were participant outcomes, program design, sustainability, collaboration, self-advocacy stakeholder input, and data collection which are explained below.

1. The participant outcomes concept focused on whether youth in residence or those who had exited the TLP were employed.
2. The emphasis of program design was on the interventions to prevent and end youth homelessness by 2020 as reported by HHS to Congress.
3. The sustainability concept concentrated on whether youth who had completed TLP had the ability to prevent future episodes of homelessness.
4. Collaboration focused on the interaction of the service provider, federal, state, local authorities, and community stakeholders to provide support for the TLP and the participating youth.
5. Self-advocacy emphasized the ability and opportunities for youth to be represented in program and in policy decisions about their future.
6. Stakeholder input was representative of those who are external to the TLP service provider organization and supported the self-advocacy concept.
7. The emphasis of data collection was the adequacy and sufficiency of information on youth that was collected and reported to the various external stakeholders.

An examination of the above research question concepts in conjunction with the 13 nodes indicated commonalities and patterns between the two groups. Synthesis of the above 13 nodes and 7 research questions concepts resulted in four major themes which represent shared effects of the programs and showed that data collection was both an input to, and an output of the TLP. Data collection occurred at the youths' application and entry into TLP, during the stay while they received services in TLP, and upon exit and After-care from the TLP. Therefore, data collection supported all of the following four major themes that were developed as described below.

1. Collaboration: This theme referred to the interaction and feedback process amongst the federal, state, and local governments, as well as community groups and the TLP service provider.
2. Participant Outcomes: This theme referred to the results of youth participation in the TLP such as whether they were employed, attending higher education institutions, vocational or workforce training, joined the military, or had other post TLP housing plans.
3. Self-Advocacy: This theme related to the manner in which the youth self-represented during and after the TLP in program and policy decisions that affected their goals.
4. Sustainability: This theme focused on the ability of youth to sustain a quality of life after the TLP so that episodes of homelessness are not repeated.

Public Databases

The RHYMIS and SAMHSA public databases were analyzed as part of the effort to triangulate data obtained during the research. The RHYMIS database included information about participants in the TLP related to demographics and education achievement on entrance and exit from the program. Information in RHYMIS was obtained from the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) database which is the portal used by service providers to report information about TLP participants to federal agencies. HMIS is not a public database; however, certain information is shared with RHYMIS. The SAMHSA database included information on the U.S. youth and young adult population related to unemployment rates, education levels, school enrollment, living arrangements, and other youth indicators.

An examination of SAMHSA data for 2014 indicated there was a higher percentage of youth aged 20 to 24 years who were not attending school or working compared to youth aged 16 to 19 years (see Figure 4).

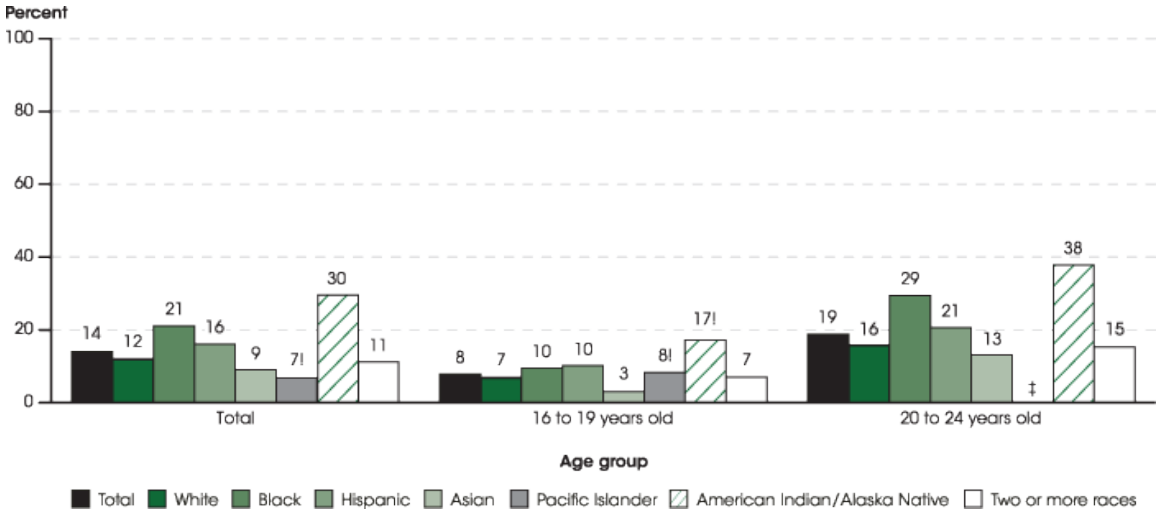

Figure 4. Percentage of youth ages 16-24 not enrolled in school or working: 2014. *Source*: National Center for Education Statistics.

Additionally, youth from ages 16 to 24 years whose educational attainment was at most a high school diploma had greater unemployment rates than even those who had some college education in 2010 (see Figure 5).

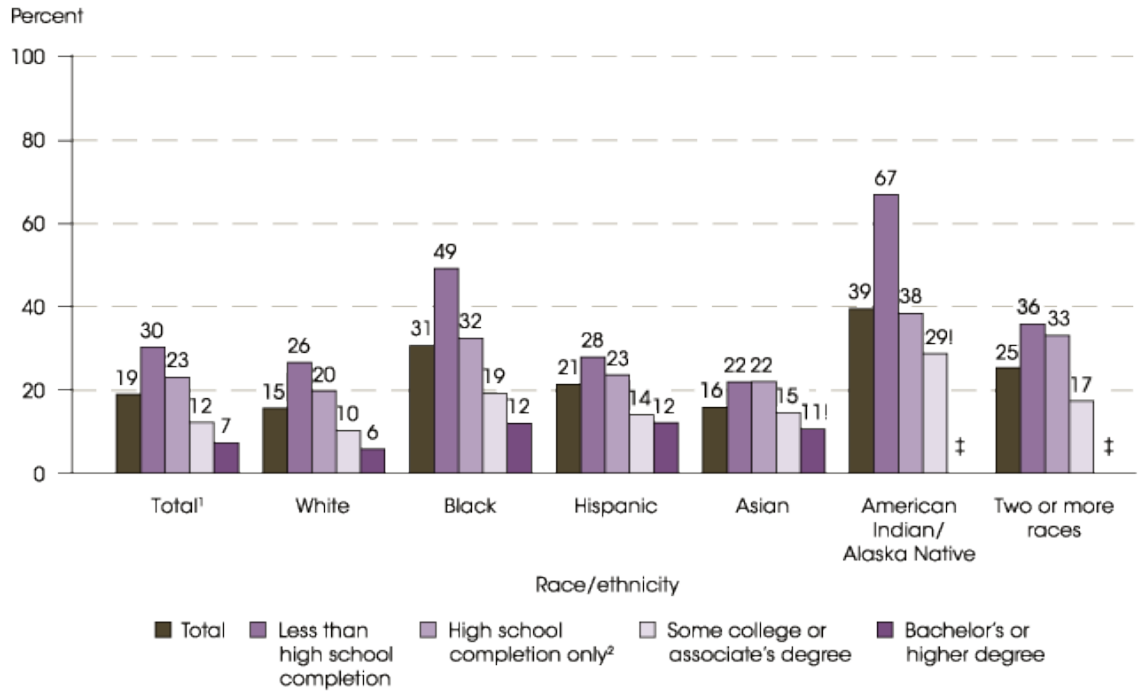

Figure 5. Unemployment rate of youth ages 16-24 by educational attainment: 2010.
Source: National Center for Education Statistics.

Furthermore, for this age 16 to 24 years demographic, the data showed that those who had dropped out of high school participated less in the work force over the past ten years ended 2009 (excluding the military) during the year of their high school exit (see Figure 6).

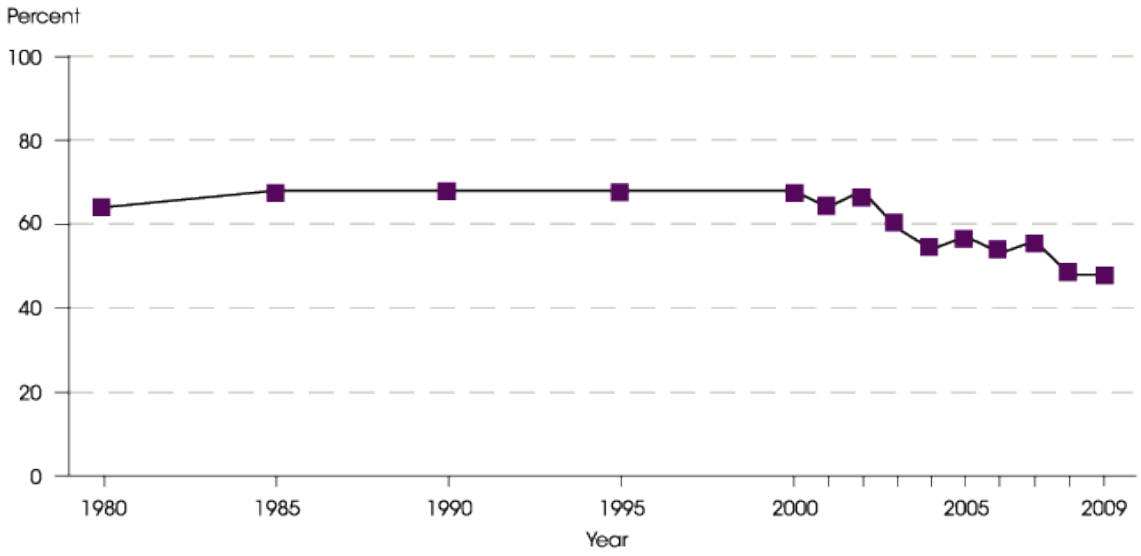

Figure 6. Labor force participation of high school dropouts in year of exit: 1980-2009.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics.

Information available from the RHYMIS database from 2008 to 2014 was used to determine completion percentages of the TLP youth and their subsequent housing plans. The data indicated that 59% of youth successfully completed TLP or left for another opportunity after an average stay of about eight months (see Table 2.). Furthermore, only 85% of youth living situations at exit were considered safe, and included accommodations in detention centers, mental hospitals, and the military. The other unsafe 12% referred to youth who returned to the streets, shelters, or whose housing plans were unknown (see Table 3.). Moreover, RHYMIS also provided information on homeless youth who were turned away from TLP participation for various reasons such as having reached the age limit for acceptance, or were placed on waiting lists to participate (see Table 4.).

Table 2

Program Completion

	Status	Count	Percentage	Average days enrolled
	Completed*	6,931	32.0	313
	Left/Other plans*	5,837	26.9	148
	Left/No plans	4,207	19.4	138
	Expelled	4,679	21.6	139
	…Total	**21,659**	**100.00**	**197**
	Positive Completion*	12,768	59.0	238

Source: US Department of Health and Human Services. NEO_RHYMIS. All TLP locations October 2008 to September 2014. Ages 16-24 for all participant demographics.

Table 3

Living Situation at Exit

	Exited to	Count	Percent	Average days enrolled
	Shelter*	785	3.6	121
	Street*	387	1.8	119
	Unknown*	1,506	7.0	148
	Private Residence	16,384	75.6	210
	Residential program	1,177	5.4	200
	Detention	390	1.8	136
	Mental hospital	108	0.5	105
	Military	76	0.4	214
	Other	846	3.9	182
	…Total	**21,659**	**100.0**	**197**
	Safe	18,981	87.6	206
	Unsafe*	2,678	12.4	136

Source: US Department of Health and Human Services. NEO_RHYMIS. All TLP locations October 2008 to September 2014. Ages 16-24 for all participant demographics.

Table 4

Turn Aways

	Number in person	Number by phone	Number on wait	Total
	7,865	16,627	10,442	34,934

Source: US Department of Health and Human Services. NEO_RHYMIS. All TLP locations October 2008 to September 2014. Ages 16-24 for all participant demographics.

In-Depth interviews

As stated previously, four major themes resulted from the analysis of my interviews with nine administrators of the TLP service provider organizations. These themes namely collaboration, participant outcomes, self-advocacy, and sustainability are further discussed below.

Collaboration. Discussions with the administrators indicated the majority of them were unaware of the process of interaction and coordination amongst federal, state, and local governments. The organizations primarily interacted with the local homeless Continuum of Care (CoC) groups and reported youth data through HMIS or RHYMIS to the federal authorities. Most respondents indicated there was no proper feedback process from governmental agencies, although in a few cases there were periodic audits. Approximately half of the respondents interviewed assumed the tracking may be done by the county or local homeless CoC, another thought it was possibly done through RHYMIS or HMIS, while others were unsure.

In response to questions posed relating to the 2020 timeline and coordination between agencies and groups to achieve this goal, some of the respondents made the following comments:

"Unrealistic 2020 goal for the age group. Unknown who's really tracking the information" (RSP 003).

"2020 is a wonderful goal to shoot for, but unrealistic" (RSP 004).

"Possibly coordinated through the Continuum of Care" (RSP 006).

"The youth are reluctant to share their identifying information. Unclear how to track youth from age 18" (RSP 008).

"Don't know if 2020 is a realistic timeframe, don't think there's enough resources to meet this timeframe. Although an endless optimist, I don't think we can end by 2020 because of too many variables. Don't know who's going to champion this 2020 goal" (RSP 008).

"There's an attempt to collect data through HMIS and RHYMIS integration and track that way" (RSP 008).

[2020 timeline] "Possibly to decrease, absolutely yes. However, some youth want to remain homeless which is not understood by the general population" (RSP 009).

"Don't know who coordinates strategies, tasks or interactions between federal, state and local" (RSP 009).

Many respondents were unaware of the 2020 timeline and unsure of who was responsible for the coordination and tracking of information to determine whether outcomes were aligned to reach the reported 2020 deadline. As my conversations were

with administrators with direct responsibilities the TLP youth, it is of concern that most of them including leaders at the organization were unaware of the 2020 timeline to prevent and end youth homelessness that was reported to Congress by HHS in the 2010-2011 report.

Participant outcomes. The administrators indicated that in general, participant outcomes were positive for youth who had exited the TLP. The respondents stated that overall more than 70% of youth were working after TLP completion, and a few were in college; however, it was sometimes difficult to track youth after they left the TLP. The administrators also indicated that their organizations offered an After-care program to follow up with youth for a year after their exit from the TLP. However, during residency in TLP, the service provider organizations had participation requirements that included work, school, community service or some combination of the three activities. As a result, all youth were engaged during their time in residency. The respondents made the following comments during our interviews in response to questions related to youth employment, wages, higher education, and program requirements.

[There is a] "Program requirement for educational pursuit until at least a High School diploma or GED" (RSP 003).

'Kids often not ready for higher education, 75% set up for failure" (RSP 003).

[Higher education] "30% continue initially, but 5% stay. They are required to take a full load with financial aid which is unsuccessful for them because they do not have the support or ability to study to fulfill the requirements" (RSP 003).

"We push for technical training and match skills realistically with opportunities" (RSP 003).

"Generally youth who want to go to college can't manage a permanent or high paying job and go to school" (RSP 008).

"Youth want to work rather than go to college. Most don't want traditional schooling, less than 10% go to college and 40% do not complete education" (RSP 009).

"100%. Must be employed to complete program and prove that youth could sustain a standard of living" (RSP 002).

[Employment]. "70% while in program. Difficult to track after leaving the program (RSP 008).

"It's difficult to get information after exit as youth consider the TLP a closed chapter in their lives and don't want to reconnect. They do stay connected with each other" (RSP 008).

[Employment] "Seventy five to 80% including After-care. 100% while in the program" (RSP 009).

"Not required to access higher education or vocational training; however, otherwise must have full time job that is sustainable" (RSP 001).

"To maintain placement, youth must do one life skills group per week, have educational or vocational goal, and some type of community service work or other work experience" (RSP 002).

"The goal is for 100% to be in educational or job training. The reality is 80% in educational, vocational, or workforce development" (RSP 008).

"The engagement goal is 80% at three months and 65% at six months; the experience is 100% at three and 6 months. Both the goal and engagement experience are 50% at 12 months" (RSP 008).

Although the service providers could monitor youth outcomes while in placement at the TLP, the same process after the youth exited the program during After-care was problematic as the burden was on the youth to volunteer information. One organization creatively provided cell phones during After-care support as an incentive for the youth to keep in contact. Nonetheless, contact after TLP participation was on an as-needed basis for the youth who could generally return to the program if age limits had not been exceeded.

Self-advocacy. Conversations with the administrators indicated the individual program goals, class choices, college attendance, vocational training, or workforce development were decided by the youth with some guidance or suggestions from the Case Manager; in conjunction with, their required assessments. The respondents reiterated to me on multiple occasions that it was always the youths' decisions regarding the path they should take for their future. As a part of this process, Youth Advisory Councils (YAC) were in place at most organizations to represent the youth in TLP and other programs, and were generally comprised of youth in residency, as well as some who had completed programs at the organization. The purpose of the YAC was to be an advocate and intermediary between youth and the service provider organization, in addition to any direct contact opportunities between youth and their Case Managers or the program's CEO or ED. The administrators indicated that youth had the opportunity to

make suggestions for program changes, goal changes, and discuss grievances during their residency. During my conversations with the administrators, I noted the following comments related to the manner in which youth were responsible for decision-making and guiding their own program within the TLP.

"Individualized, based on kid's goals" (RSP 001).

"Youth's voice which weighs most. Based on which skills need the most development" (RSP 002).

"It's based on the case plan with goal sheet and educational goal. It's totally open and guided by the youth and their interests. Youth are asked to research the options they want to pursue" (RSP 007).

"It's based on educational goals, testing, youth's goals and resiliency, guided by the Case Manager" (RSP 008).

"The YAC meets each Wednesday and with the ED quarterly. YAC is the voice of all program youth with officers. YAC operates locally and at the state level" (RSP 002)

"Information provided by youth through YAC is communicated to the service provider" (RSP 004)

"Information provided by youth considered in making changes to program development" (RSP 007).

The service providers had some method in place for open communication between youth and the organization. Some were more structured with a YAC while others depended on one-on-one contact with the youths' case managers. The youths'

voices were especially dominant in matters relating to their individual goals while in residence at the TLP.

Sustainability. The administrators stated while employment for youth who exited the program was 70% or greater, the jobs the youth had were primarily in industries such as fast food, customer service, retail, and hospitality that were sometimes temporary or seasonal. The administrators made the following statements regarding my questions about the wages and types of jobs obtained by the youth during and after participation in TLP.

"Generally work with car dealers, hotels, restaurants, large retail chains, Goodwill, resale shops, warehousing" (RSP 001).

'Usually employed in skilled trades and generally above minimum wage at $12 to $17 an hour" (RSP 002).

"Mostly minimum wages, seasonal and temporary in food services, waiting tables, construction, big home repair, and retail stores (RSP 003).

"Both temporary and permanent, usually paid slightly above minimum wage in fast food, retail, construction" (RSP 004)

"Mostly permanent jobs above minimum wage with benefits at car dealerships, healthcare as certified nursing assistants, service industry, education, and the casino. Sustainable jobs" (RSP 005).

"They are generally permanent jobs usually between $8 to $16 an hour in fast food and manufacturing" (RSP 006).

"Both temporary and permanent jobs above minimum wage as day laborers, in fast food, retirement homes, hospitals, call centers, warehousing, retail" (RSP 007).

"Employment is generally temporary and at minimum wage. They are often employed in customer service or fast food industry, about 50%. About 10% have higher paying jobs at the airport at about $16 to $17 hourly" (RSP 008).

'Generally temporary to permanent paying above minimum wage in retail and hospitality" (RSP 009).

Although some wages were above the minimum rate, most jobs were unskilled labor, and the permanent positions with benefits and higher wages that promoted sustainability were less common or occurred infrequently.

Trustworthiness

According to Denzin, as cited in Patton (1987), there are four basic types of triangulation including data triangulation and methodological triangulation. Data triangulation uses a variety of data sources in a study whereas methodological triangulation uses multiple methods to study a single program. Triangulation is used to build checks and balances and to combine strengths and correct deficiencies of using a single data collection source when designing the study (Denzin, as cited in Patton, 1987).

This study consisted of interviews with nine administrators whose job responsibilities varied from Case Manager to Executive Director at their respective TLP service provider organizations in different geographical locations that serviced varying volumes of youth participants. In addition to the in-depth interviews based on the semi-structured questionnaire, archival data from the RHYMIS and SAMHSA databases, as

well as, RHY grant award documentation retrieved from FYSB were examined in this study.

Summary

The interviews conducted with the administrators along with the reviews performed on data from the public databases indicated that there was progress in assisting TLP participants in areas of education achievement and job attainment. However, both the administrators' responses and accumulated public data indicated the goal of preventing and ending youth homelessness by the year 2020 is not realistic. The youth who participated in TLP were responsible for determining their individual goals and following through to their ultimate achievement. TLP youth also appeared to be very involved in self-advocacy at the organizational level; however, there was remarkably less involvement external to their immediate TLP service provider organizations.

Furthermore, although there was autonomy within the operations of each service provider organization as far as programming decisions, there were uniform rules and regulations under which RHY funded organizations functioned. The intent of this uniformity can be presumed to be for consistency in the data collected. The administrators' responses indicated that although more than 70% of participating youth were employed as a result of the TLP completion, most jobs could not be considered as promoting a long-term sustainable lifestyle. Furthermore, according to information reported through RHYMIS, upon the conclusion of their TLP participation, 41% of youth did not have solid plans for their futures, more than 12% returned to unstable and unsafe living conditions, and a significant number were wait-listed to enter a TLP.

Findings from the in-depth interviews and public databases, as well as policy recommendations and implications, and the promotion of positive social change that resulted from this study are presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore whether the sustained education access component of the TLP results in preventing or ending the homeless status of youth who participated in the program. Using the conceptualization of democratic governance according to various theorists, I investigated whether this component of the RHY has benefitted homeless youth seeking to end their homeless status. According to USICH, no clear picture exists of whether the strategies to prevent and end youth homelessness are successful. This lack of knowledge is primarily due to insufficient data collection and coordination between federal, state, and local systems to act effectively and efficiently to address this problem (USICH, 2013).

Furthermore, the Report to Congress on The Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs for Fiscal Years 2010–2011 submitted by the HHS and its supporting agencies indicated the timeline for preventing and ending youth homelessness is the year 2020 (HHS, ACF, ACYF, & FYSB, 2013).

This qualitative case study method of inquiry was the most appropriate for this study because the primary research question asked *how* about a specific phenomenon that is a contemporary event. Furthermore, the youth homelessness problem has been assigned the year 2020 as a definitive timeline by which it is to be resolved. The use of a case study design is deemed appropriate when the research questions are exploratory in nature about a specific experience (Yin, 2009).

Key Results

The primary results centered on themes of collaboration, participant outcomes, self-advocacy, and sustainability in response to the research questions posed in this case study. The findings in the study indicate that although feedback exists between the service provider organization and its immediate community groups such as the local homeless continuum of care, no collaboration exists among the organization, state, and federal government agencies. The service providers submit reports semiannually through the HMIS portal as directed; however, this is only a one-way communication. The organizations' leaders for the most part were unaware of the 2020 deadline that their funding organization FYSB reported to Congress as the timeline for preventing and ending youth homelessness. This timeline is crucial and the organizations are not kept informed related to progress or lack thereof in meeting this deadline.

The 2020 timeline is unrealistic for this goal considering the change in the definition of homelessness that was adopted solely in 2011 by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), a member of USICH. The new HUD definition, as shown in Appendix D, severely restricts which individuals can be considered homeless, and it results in fewer persons who would be considered homeless, in direct contrast to observation that shows homeless counts are rising. The new HUD definition excludes persons who are doubling or tripling up, couch-surfing, or temporarily staying in a motel, and it excludes youth with such sleeping accommodations from point in time counts completed for the homeless population. The terms *doubling up*, *tripling up*, and *couch-surfing* are standard nomenclature when discussing the sleeping arrangements for the

homeless population. This new HUD definition points to a lack of coordination within the collaborating U.S. agencies and departments of USICH, which are responsible for coordinating strategies to address youth homelessness.

All TLP applicants are required to submit a logic model for their program, a sample of which is shown at Appendix E. The model indicates outputs for education job readiness, and After-care with outcomes that address improved self-sufficiency as both proximal and distal. This study found that youth participation in TLP did not make it any more or less likely that youth would be employed or be more stable subsequent to their exit from the program. While there were some exceptions, youth employment during their TLP stay were primarily as non-skilled labor and information on their progress during and subsequent to After-care was insufficient to determine their success or failure after they exited the program. The TLP program allows youth the re-enter should the need arise, therefore some youth remained inadequately prepared to be self-sufficient after completing their stay. The TLP youth who did not have a High School diploma or GED had to focus on this educational achievement as a program priority. However, they could subsequently work for minimum wage if their goal was just to get a job, and there were no other options. There were no provisions in places to manage through a process that ensured youth would be trained for viable self-sustaining jobs or continue to college. The young adults could not be in a TLP for more than an 18-month stay, and could not enter after their twenty-first birthday. Therefore, in some situations the maximum participation would be one year as TLP participation ages youth out at twenty two years old. The information reported by the service providers during 2008 – 2014 indicated that

only 59% were successful in improving their lives after TLP, and less than 76% had safe housing that excluded, residential programs, detention, mental hospitals, military, or other accommodations. There was no evidence of an increase in the ability to sustain a reasonable lifestyle as a result of TLP participation given the data reported for the years 2008-2014 by the programs and interviews with the program administrators.

The TLP participants had opportunities to advocate for themselves within the service provider organizations and affect changes to program offerings and individual goals. However, there was no evidence that their voices are instrumental in making any changes to the TLP as a whole, or in effecting policy changes to strategically address the issues they face as runaway and homeless youth.

Interpretation of the Results

According to Dworsky et al., as cited in Curry & Abrams (2015), there is little known about the effects that TLP have on youth transitioning into adulthood from their own perspectives. Furthermore, there is a lack of data on outcomes from information collected by the RHYMIS database on homeless youth. Therefore, the effects of the federally funded TLP on homeless youth and young adults are unknown as of 2013 according to the Report to Congress submitted by the HHS. The results of this research study concur with the aforementioned findings based on the public data that was retrieved and the interviews that were conducted with TLP administrators. There is a substantial amount of data collected on the youth at entry throughout their exit from the TLP; however, for the most part, information is not readily shared and available from youth after they leave the program.

The RHY gives priority to projects that increase placement and retention at post-secondary learning institutions or advanced workforce training programs. Broadbent (2008) posited there are five strategies for preventing public welfare dependence which are education, training, life skills, schooling, and the creation of effective links to employment. The evaluation of factors that influence youth to transition from a homeless to housed status and to become self-sufficient demonstrate that education and skill-building are critical in the process

The service provider organizations offered college placement as part of their programs; however, some youth did not take advantage of this option, choosing to work instead and taking advantage of workforce training when it was offered. One interviewed administrator remarked that "work is work" in response to the types of opportunities that were available to the TLP participants. Although there were attempts to match skills, interests and opportunities through assessments and meetings with the youth, the programs' focus seemed to be on the youths' completion of high school or the equivalent to obtain jobs, but not necessarily to provide options that were sustainable over the long term or to develop careers.

The ability to provide sustainable options may be problematic due to the length of time youth are in the program which is a maximum of 18 months and not sufficient time to gain trust, engage, and provide or support workforce development or job training for sustainable employment. The administrators indicated at least half of the youth wanted to continue to college, yet the results of these decisions are not readily determinable as far as the visible effect on changing the socioeconomic status of those homeless youth. In

fact, the attempt to pursue a college education became burdensome due to the additional financial obligations, unemployment rates, the overall state of the US economy, and other barriers.

Rashid (2004) stated the issue of support is important as demonstrated in a study of a twenty three former residents of a transitional living program in Northern California. The Northern California study concluded that such programs provide the necessary support for vulnerable youth to practice living independently and help them to develop skills useful in the navigation of an independent lifestyle. This research study concluded that support was in place for the youth by the TLP organization which permitted the youth to guide the decisions concerning their own future. However, it should be noted that youth ages 16 to 22 years often do not have the experience to see the implications of what may seem to be a relatively straight-forward decision. One administrator mentioned issues around transportation when discussing one youth's decision to attend college that was several miles away and there was no bus route between the rural TLP and the college campus. Logistics such as transportation are very real obstacles and represent one of the various challenges encountered by youth in the pursuit of higher education in rural areas.

At age twenty-two, young adults are no longer eligible for TLP support. Despite TLP interventions, these youths will most likely continue to face issues of unpreparedness to successfully navigate into adulthood and remain at risk of becoming homelessness. Osgood, Foster. & Courtney (2010) proposed that upon crossing into adulthood, these young adults are unable to navigate through the transition between old services for which they no longer qualify and new services which may be available, and

government systems are less than successful in preparing them for transition into adulthood.

The delegated co-decision making level of participation as described in *Figure 3*. The participation ladder, in Chapter 2 appropriately fits the relationship between the TLP youth, service provider organizations, and government, which is the primary decision-maker of homeless youth policy. The third rung of the ladder in indicative of the way that the TLP operates based on my conversations with the administrators. There are pre-set policy guidelines put in place by government with some decision-making by the service providers as far as their individual program content, and decision-making by the youth only as it relates to their individual goals and achievement. This approach while it lends itself to consistency between operations in various program locations, it does not offer the opportunity for overall program change, improved outcomes, and more youth involvement in determining public policy decisions that affect their futures.

According to Pateman (1970), prominent democratic theorists such as Rousseau, John Stuart Mill, and Cole advocated for the participatory model of citizen involvement in public policy decision-making that affects their future. However, the outcomes for TLP youth as related to their citizen involvement are very different from their ability to make real change through public policy participation.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study may have been certain bias in responses by administrators who were referred by their organization's leaders and may have answered the questions to present their organizations in the most favorable light. However, it was

noted that during our discussions, respondents did refer to organizational reports to answer certain questions. These references may have mitigated some of the bias, if indeed, there was any potential bias in place.

Young adults who participated in TLP were not interviewed in this study. This population could have responded only to few questions specifically related to program offerings and input to service providers, and their responses may have differed to the administrators. However, homeless young adults were not the appropriate audience to discuss the policy questions posed in this study.

Recommendations

Based on the interviews conducted with TLP administrators and analysis of data on youth who participated in TLP between 2008 and 2014, it is undetermined whether the strategies implemented to provide the desired outcomes are successful.

The following recommendations may provide a clearer understanding and assist in addressing the gap in available information related to the federally funded TLP.

1. An evaluation of the long-term outcomes of the TLP. The evidence of successful outcomes resulting from TLP participation is lacking and an evaluation to support that interventions that have been implemented are aligned with the program's goals as designed by HHS is necessary. In 2012, the ACF contracted with an independent third-party for $2 million to evaluate the TLP program. The evaluation report which was expected by fiscal year 2016 is still pending.

2. Measures of success. Indicators and measures of success for the TLP should be developed. The metrics used should be realistic for the target population.
3. Revision of the length of stay in the TLP. Currently the maximum length of stay in a TLP is 18 months, which is an insufficient period of time to assess and prepare youth between 16 and 22 years old to successfully transition into sustainable employment, college, or obtain training in workforce development. This length of stay should be revised to increase the stay with provisions for increased youth responsibilities as their stay is lengthened.
4. Revision of the age limits in TLP. The service provider organizations support TLP youth to age twenty two years including After-care, and youth must enter the program by age 21 to obtain services. Consideration should be given to the fact that some trauma caused the resultant homelessness being experienced by the youth. Therefore, these youths should not be expected to be equipped and ready to make the same decisions in the same manner and time as their housed counterparts.
5. Coordination of the definition of homelessness. The U.S. departments and agencies collaborating under USICH should all follow the same definition for homelessness. The removal of persons from the definition does not change the fact of the individuals' socioeconomic conditions
6. Increased focus on workforce development and job training. There should be more emphasis on job training, post-secondary education, and workforce development to strengthen the U.S. economy. Job opportunities should not

just focus on the retail and fast-food service industries, but should expand to seek opportunities in areas such as manufacturing, farming, healthcare, and technology. There should be more effort placed on opportunities that encourage entrepreneurship and self-sustainability.

7. Increased focus on engaging youth in the community. The opportunity for youth engagement in community and local decision-making should be an integral part of the program. This age demographic is the future of the U.S. society and the absence of voices that represent the marginalized portion of this demographic results in decision-making that is absent of a significant segment of the population.
8. Furthermore, additional research is recommended to determine the status of the program goals relative to the 2020 deadline as reported to Congress, to revise or discard such timelines.
9. Finally, the determination should be made on the accumulated costs of the TLP versus the benefits derived to youth and their communities. This determination will assist in decision-making related to best practices for continuing or restructuring the TLP.

Implications

The issue of chronic homelessness continues as both a blight and disgrace in U.S. society. In accordance with the HUD revised definition of homelessness, Point-in Time and Housing Inventory counts conducted in January 2015 indicated approximately 407,000 homeless households and 565,000 homeless persons including 176,000 under the

age of 24 years as shown in Appendix F. These counts of homeless persons under the age of 24 years indicates a vast increase from the 12% extrapolation previously estimated for this age group. In fact, this age group is now estimated to represent 31% of the total homeless population. These counts support the position taken by Gaetz, et al as cited in Coates & McKenzie-Mohr (2010) that homeless youth are the fastest growing vulnerable subgroup of the homeless population.

The efficient and effective use of resources to assist young adults in continuing their education, obtaining jobs and training to develop the workforce inures to growth for both the young adults and their communities. A self-sufficient young adult is less of a burden on society, as the individual is a taxpayer, is less inclined to be involved in street criminal activity as a way to support a minimum lifestyle, less inclined to need public support, and generally promotes self-sufficiency in their children. A productive adult has the opportunity to build social circles that are supportive of others in the community and is more inclined to be involved in community decision-making. Positive social change is vastly improved by the curtailment of the self-perpetuating cycle of homelessness and the opportunity for the formerly homeless faces to participate as future decision-makers in U.S. society.

Conclusion

Young adults are visible on the streets, in alleys and doorways, on sidewalks and other public spaces in extreme weather conditions. Their presence is an everyday phenomenon in both rural and urban areas. These young adults aged 16 to 24 years with no safe living arrangements and seemingly hopeless options are the future of a global

society. It is unknown what circumstances brought them to their current state; however, imagine the possibilities if they were given the opportunity to change their circumstances. Most of them would take every advantage to change their situations.

There are opportunities such as those provided by the federally funded TLP to support youth; however, program improvements and realistic goals must be applied to benefit these youths in the long term and support their efforts to evolve into productive members of their communities. Rousseau (1762) whose position that the development of social responsibility is through participation and control over one's own future deserves merit. Some young adults who had the opportunity to interact with TLP administration took full advantage of those occasions to make decisions about their stay in the program. Although decision-making authority will always be given to selected individuals, it is essential that the right of control over the decisions made by those given the authority to do so remain with all of the people (Rousseau, 1762).

The decision must be made regarding how to best serve the homeless youth population to transition into responsible adults and decision-makers. This decision must be based on an evaluation that addresses whether the TLP programming design and outcomes align with the goals of the HHS and strategies implemented by the coordinating departments and agencies that are a part of USICH. The tough questions must also be asked about the federally funded TLP such as: "Should the TLP be changed or redesigned"? "Should the TLP be terminated"? "Can the youth homelessness problem be managed through programming such as provided by the TLP"? "Have the costs of the

TLP outweighed the benefits derived from the program"? "What are the alternatives to address the youth homelessness problem"? "How realistic are the goals set by HHS"?

While the young adults may be happy "just to know that someone cares" as one administrator commented, the best thoughts and intentions are not the solution. The solution lies in evidenced-based programming that addresses this critical problem of youth homelessness.

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Appendix A: Service Provider Organizations

Grantee	City	State
Covenant House Alaska (MGH)	Anchorage	AK
Juneau Youth Services	Juneau	AK
Children' s Aid Society	Birmingham	AL
Tennessee Valley Family Services	Gunthersville	AL
Vine and Village	Little Rock	AR
Youth Bridge, Inc	Fayetteville	AR
CODAC Behavior Services of Pima County	Tuscon	AZ
New Life Center for Change	Phoenix	AZ
Open Inn, Inc	Tucson	AZ
Our Family Services Inc (MGH)	Tucson	AZ
Our Family Services, Inc.	Tucson	AZ
Tumbleweed Center for Youth Development (TLP & MGH)	Phoenix	AZ
Bill Wilson Center (MGH)	Santa Clara	CA
Center for Human Services	Modesto	CA
Center for Positive Prevention Alternatives, Inc.	Stockton	CA
Children in Need of Hugs (MGH)	Suisun	CA
Home Start, Inc (MGH	San Diego	CA
Los Angeles Youth Network	Hollywood	CA
Operation SafeHouse, Inc	Riverside	CA
Redwood Childrens Services (RCS)	Ukiah	CA
Redwood Community Action Agency	Eureka	CA
San Diego Youth & Community Services	San Diego	CA
St. Vincent de Paul Village, Inc.	San Diego	CA
The Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center	Los Angeles	CA
The Salvation Army, A California Corp	Los Angeles	CA
Waking the Village (MGH)	Sacramento	CA
Volunteers of America of Los Angeles	Los Angeles	CA
Womens Center of San Joaquin County	Stockton	CA
YMCA of San Diego County	San Diego	CA
Urban Peak Denver	Denver	CO
The Bridge Family Center, Inc	West Hartford	CT
Youth Continuum	New Haven	CT
Latin America Youth Center	Washington	DC
Latin America Youth Services, Inc (females)	Washington	DC
Latin America Youth Services, Inc (males)	Washington	DC
Sasha Bruce Youthworks, Inc.	Washington	DC
Anchorage Childrens Home of Bay County(MGH)	Panama City	FL
Anchorage Children's Home of Bay County, Inc.	Panama	Fl
Capital City Youth Services, Inc	Tallahassee	FL
Children’s Home Society of Florida	Pensacola	FL

Children's Home Society of West Palm Beach	West Palm Beach	Fl
Crosswinds Youth Services, Inc	Cocoa	FL
Family Resources	Pinellas Park	FL
Family Resources Inc. (MGH)	Pinellas Park	Fl
CHRIS Kids	Atlanta	GA
Open Arms, Inc	Albany	GA
The Young Adult Guidance Center Inc	Atlanta	GA
Sanctuary, Inc.	Chalan Pago	GU
Hawaii Youth Services Network	Honolulu	HI
United Action for Youth	Iowa City	IA
Youth and Shelter Services, Inc.	Ames	IA
Youth and Shelter Services, Inc. (MGH)	Ames	IA
360 Youth Services	Naperville	IL
Aunt Martha's Youth Service Center, Inc	Olympia Fields	IL
Community Elements, Inc.	Champaign	IL
Project OZ	Bloomington	IL
Project OZ (MGH)	Bloomington	IL
Teen Living Programs	Chicago	IL
The Harbour Inc (MGH)	Park Ridge	IL
The Night Ministry	Chicago	IL
The Thresholds	Chicago	IL
Youth Service Bureau of Illinois Valley	Ottawa	IL
Stopover, Inc.	Indianapolis	IN
Youth Service Bureau of St Joseph County Inc (MGH)	South Bend	IN
Wichita Children's Home, Inc.	Wichita	KS
Mountain Comprehensive Care Center	Prestonburg	KY
Education and Treatment Council Inc	Lake Charles	LA
Healing Place Serve	Baton Rouge	LA
Our House, Inc.	Monroe	LA
The Kennedy Center of Louisiana	Shreveport	LA
Bridge over troubled water, Inc	Boston	MA
Bridge over troubled water, Inc (MGH)	Boston	MA
Franklin County DIAL/SELF, Inc.	Greenfield	MA
L.U.K. Crisis Center, Inc.	Fitchburg	MA
L.U.K. Crisis Center, Inc. (MGH)	Fitchburg	MA
AIRS	Baltimore	MD
Hearts & Homes for youth	Silver Spring	MD
St Ann's Center for Children, Youth and families	Hyattsville	MD
New Beginnings, Inc	Lewiston	ME
Ozone House, Inc	Ann Arbor	ME
Penquis community Action program	Bangor	ME
Rumfor Group Homes, Inc	Rumford	ME
Alternatives for Girls	Detroit	MI
ALternatives for Girls (MGH)	Detroit	MI

Catholic Family Services	Kalamazoo	MI
Comprehensive Youth Services, Inc.	Mount Clemens	MI
Crisis Center Inc dba Listening Ear Crisis Center	Mount Pleasant	MI
Every Woman's Place, Inc (MGH)	Muskegon	MI
Gateway Community Services	East Lansing	MI
Livingston Family Center	Pinckney	MI
Saginaw County Youth Protection Council	Saginaw	MI
Ain Dah Yung (Our Home) Center	St. Paul	MN
Avenues for Homeless Youth	Minneapolis	MN
Catholic Charities of the Archdioceses of St. Paul/Mpls	Minneapolis	MN
Luther Social Service of Minnesota	Brainerd	MN
Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota	Duluth	MN
Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota	Mankato	MN
Lutheran Social Services of Minnesaota (MGH)	St. Paul	MN
Plymouth Church Neighborhood Fdn.	St. Paul	MN
The Bridge for Youth	Minneapolis	MN
The Salvation Army	Roseville	MN
Child Abuse & Neglect Emergency Shelter Inc, dba Rainbow House	Columbia	MO
Epworth Children & Family Services	Saint Louis	MO
Evangelical Childrens' Home dba ECH Every Child's Hope	St. Louis	MO
Child Center-Marygrove dba Marygrove	Florissant	MO
reStart, Inc	Kansas City	MO
Synergy Services Inc (MGH)	Parkville	MO
Synergy Services, Inc.	Parkville	MO
Youth in Need	St. Charles	MO
Sally Kate Winters Family Services	West Point	MS
Tumbleweed Runaway Program, Inc	Billings	MT
CARING for Children, Inc.	Asheville	NC
Haven House Inc. (MGH)	Raleigh	NC
Mountain Plains Youth Services (MGH)	Bismarck	NC
Youth Focus Inc. (MGH)	Greensboro	NC
Youth Focus, Inc	Greensboro	NC
Mountain Plains Youth Services	Bismarck	ND
CASA of South Central Nebraska	Hastings	NE
Youth Emergency Services Inc. (MGH)	Omaha	NE
Children and Family Services of New Hampshire	Manchester	NH
Children and Family Services of New Hampshire (MGH)	Manchester	NH
Center for Family Services, Inc	Camden	NJ
Covenant House New Jersey (MGH)	Newark	NJ
Ocean's Harbour House	Tom's River	NJ
Somerset Home for Temporarily Displaced Children	Bridgewater	NJ
A New Day , Inc.	Albuquerque	NM
Youth Development Inc	Albuquerque	NM
Youth Shelters and Family Services, Inc.	Santa Fe	NM

Clark County Department of Social Service	Las Vegas	NV
Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany (MGH)	Albany	NY
Catholic Charities of the Roman Catholic Diocese of SYR, NY	Binghamton	NY
Chautauqua Opportunities Inc	Dunkirk	NY
Diaspora Community Services (MGH)	Brooklyn	NY
Family and Childrens Services of Niagara Falls (MGH)	Niagara Falls	NY
Family of Woodstock, Inc	Kingston	NY
Green Chimneys Children's Services	Brewster	NY
Oswego County Opportunities Inc	Fulton	NY
The Center for Youth Services, Inc (MGH)	Rochester	NY
The Center for Youth Services, Inc.	Rochester	NY
The Learning Web	Ithaca	NY
The Salvation Army, a New York not for profit Corporation	Syracuse	NY
Bellefaire, JCB	Shaker Heights	OH
Daybreak, Inc.	Dayton	OH
Lighthouse Youth Services	Cincinnati	OH
Shelter Care Inc (MGH)	Talmadge	OH
Youth & Family Services of North Central Oklahoma	Enid	OK
Youth & Family Services, Inc	El Reno	OK
Integral Youth Services, Inc.	Klamath Falls	OR
Janus Youth Programs, Inc	Portland	OR
J bar J Youth Services, Inc	Bend	OR
Looking Glass Youth & Family Services, Inc	Eugene	OR
Outside In	Portland	OR
The Boys & Girls Aid Society of Oregon	Portland	OR
Yamhill Community Action Partnership, Inc.	McMinnville	OR
Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit (MGH)	Lewisburg	PA
Centre County Youth Services Bureau	State College	PA
Familylinks, Inc	Pittsburgh	PA
Pathways PA, Inc	Philadelphia	PA
Pathways PA, Inc.	Holmes	PA
People for People, Inc	Philadelphia	PA
Valley Youth House Committee, Inc	Allentown	PA
Valley Youth House Committee, Inc (MGH)	Allentown	PA
Ellen Hines Smith Girls' Home	Spartanburg	SC
Sea Haven Inc	N. Myrtle Beach	SC
Through the Storm Outreach Ministries, Inc (MGH)	Kingstree	SC
Volunteer of America, Dakotas	Sioux Falls	SD
Central Texas Youth Services Bureau, Inc.	Belton	TX
Central Texas Youth Services Bureau, Inc. (MGH)	Belton	TX
Child & Family Tennessee	Knoxville	TX
City House, Inc	Plano	TX
Promise House	Dallas	TX
Roy Maas' Youth Alternatives	San Antonio	TX

Youth and Family Alliance dba LifeWorks	Austin	TX
Youth and Family Alliance, Dba Lifeworks	Austin	TX
Youth and Family Alliance, Dba Lifeworks (MGH)	Austin	TX
Salt Lake County Government - DBHS	Salt Lake City	UT
Volunteers of America, Utah	Salt Lake City	UT
Alternative House - The Abused and Homeless Children's Refuge	Dunn Loring	VA
Alternative House - The Abused and Homeless Children's Refuge (MGH)	Dunn Loring	VA
Washington County Youth Service Bureau Boys & Girls Club	Montpelier	VT
Washington County Youth Service Bureau Boys & Girls Club (serving different communities)	Montpelier	VT
Cocoon House	Everett	WA
Community Youth Services	Olympia	WA
Friends of Youth	Redmond	WA
Northwest Youth Services	Seattle	WA
YouthCare	Seattle	WA
Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin Inc	Green Bay	WI
Kenosha Human Development Services, Inc	Kenosha	WI
Walker's Point Youth & Family Center	Milwaukee	WI
Youth Services of Southern Wisconsin, Inc	Madison	WI
DAYMARK, INC.	Charleston	WV
Youth Emergency Services Inc	Gillette	WY

Appendix B: Research Questions Matrix: In-Depth Interviews

1. How has the sustained education access component of the TLP for at-risk homeless youth benefitted youth seeking to end their homeless status?
    a. What percentage of participants who successfully completed TLP are employed?
    b. How is participant readiness for the workplace evaluated?
    c. What participant outcomes have resulted from the TLP focus on sustained education access for homeless youth?

2. Is the current program to sustain education access for homeless young adults working as designed by HHS? Why or why not?
    a. Who provides guidelines on the manner in which education access is obtained?
    b. Who monitors compliance on adherence to guidelines?
    c. How is feedback provided to service providers organizations on adherence to guidelines?
    d. How is tracking of the TLP to prevent and end youth homelessness by the 2020 target year determined?
        i. Who is responsible for tracking such progress?

3. How does the current program to sustain education access for homeless young adults prevent episodes of homelessness for at-risk youth who participate in the program?

a. Which of the following education/training programs are available to the youth?
    i. High school diploma
    ii. General education diploma (GED)
    iii. College courses
    iv. Tutoring
    v. Vocational training
    vi. Workforce development training
b. How is the determination made on which of the above programs will be offered?
c. Is there a process in place to ensure homeless youth have sustained access to the education/training programs that are provided?
d. What percentage of youth decide to continue higher education?
e. What are the experiences/outcomes of youth in securing employment?
    i. Is employment generally for temporary or permanent opportunities?
    ii. Is employment generally at or above minimum wage?
    iii. What sectors generally employ the youth?
f. Are youth participating in TLP required to participate in education, training, or other workforce development program?

4. What strategies that focus on sustained education access have been implemented in the TLP to benefit homeless and at-risk youth seeking to end their current socioeconomic status?
    a. How is the interaction between Federal government agencies, state and local government, and faith-based organizations achieved toward the overall goal to prevent and end youth homelessness by the year 2020?
    b. Who is responsible for coordination of the interaction?
    c. Are there specific strategies for each partner organization
        i. Who coordinates these strategies?
    d. Are there specific tasks for each partner organization?
        i. Who coordinates these tasks?

5. Is data collection sufficient for analysis, monitoring, and evaluation of the current TLP?
    a. Does data reported to the oversight agencies include youth participation in education and training programs?
    b. Is data on education accessibility reported to oversight agencies?
        i. How are outcomes of completion of education, training, or workforce readiness reported?
    c. What type of information is collected on each youth on entry, during, and exit out of the TLP by service provider organizations?
        i. Who collects the information?

ii. Are feedback forms completed by TLP youth a part of this collection process?

d. Who collects data regarding employment of TLP participants who have exited the program?

6. How are homeless young adults represented or directly involved at the policy formation stage of this issue?
    a. Is there a mechanism in place for youth input into daily TLP operations?
    b. Are youth involved in decision-making about course offerings for education and training programs?
        i. How are they involved?
    c. Is there youth representation that interacts with administrators to determine program policies and procedures?
        i. How are differences resolved that involve youth and program policy, or youth and service provider staff?

7. What stakeholders should be *at the table* to discuss policies and programs for sustained education assess to homeless young adults?
    a. Do service providers provide input to decisions about programs for homeless youth?
        i. To whom do the service providers provide their input?
        ii. Is information provided by homeless youth considered in service provider input to program development?

Appendix C: Semistructured Interview Questionnaire

1. What percentage of participants who successfully completed TLP are employed?
2. How is participant readiness for the workplace evaluated?
3. What participant outcomes have resulted from the TLP focus on sustained education access for homeless youth?
4. Who provides guidelines are provided on the manner in which education access is obtained
5. Who monitors compliance on adherence to guidelines?
6. How is feedback provided to service providers organizations on adherence to guidelines?
7. How is tracking of the TLP to prevent and end youth homelessness by the 2020 target year determined?
    a. Who is responsible for tracking such progress?
8. Which of the following education/training programs are available to the youth?
        i. High school diploma
        ii. General education diploma (GED)
        iii. College courses
        iv. Tutoring
        v. Vocational training
        vi. Workforce development training

9. How is the determination made on which of the above programs to be offered?
10. Is there a process in place to ensure homeless youth have sustained access to the education/training programs that are provided
11. What percentage of youth decide to continue higher education?
12. What are the experiences/outcomes of youth in securing employment?
    i. Is employment generally for temporary or permanent opportunities?
    ii. Is employment generally at or above minimum wage?
    iii. What sectors generally employ the youth?
13. Are youth participating in TLP required to participate in education, training, or other workforce development program
14. How is the interaction between Federal government agencies, state and local government, and faith-based organizations achieved toward the overall goal to prevent and end youth homelessness by the year 2020?
    a. Who is responsible for coordination of the interaction?
    b. Are there specific strategies for each partner organization
        i. Who coordinates these strategies?
    c. Are there specific tasks for each partner organization?

i. Who coordinates these tasks?

15. Does data reported to the oversight agencies include youth participation in education and training programs?
16. Is data on education accessibility reported to oversight agencies?
    a. How are outcomes of completion of education, training, or workforce readiness reported?
17. What type of information is collected on each youth on entry, during, and exit out of the TLP by all service provider organizations?
    a. Who collects the information?
    b. Are feedback forms completed by TLP youth a part of this collection process?
18. Who collects data regarding employment of TLP participants who have exited the program?
19. Is there a mechanism in place for youth input in to daily TLP operations?
20. Are youth involved in decision-making about course offerings for education and training programs?
    a. How are they involved?
21. Is there youth representation that interacts with administrators to determine program policies and procedures?

a. How are differences resolved that involve youth and program policy, or youth and service provider staff?

22. Do service providers provide input to decisions about programs for homeless youth?
    a. To whom do the service providers provide their input?
    b. Is information provided by homeless youth considered in service provider input to program development?

Appendix D: Definitions of Homeless for Federal Program Serving Children, Youth, and Families

Definitions of Homelessness for Federal Program Serving Children, Youth, and Families

The two major definitions of homelessness in use by federal agencies are the education definition in Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act, and the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) definition in Section 103 of Subtitle I of the McKinney-Vento Act. The following chart illustrates the similarities and differences between federal agencies' definitions of homeless. In December 2011, HUD issued complex regulations on the HEARTH definition of homelessness.

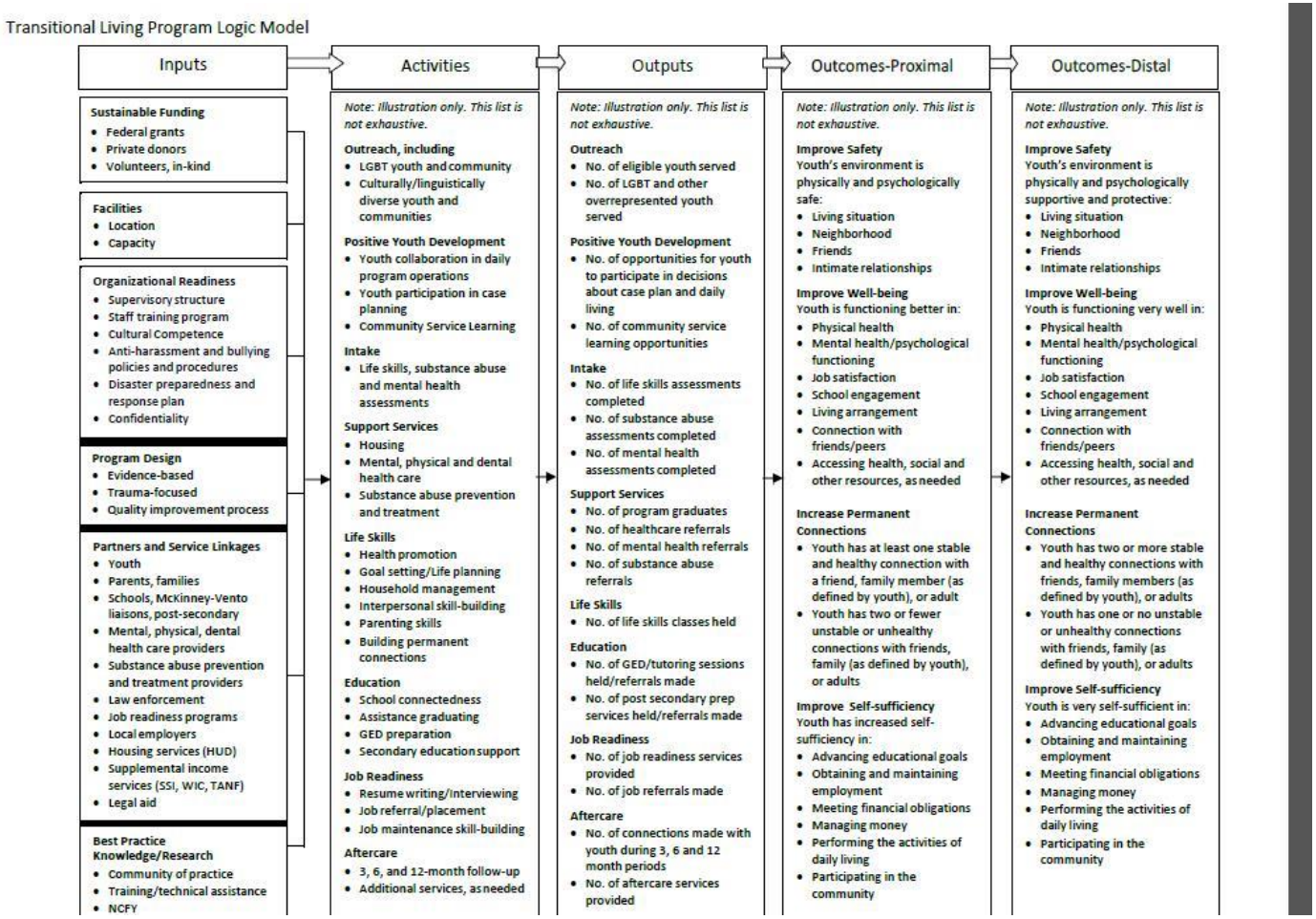
	EDUCATION DEFINITION	HUD DEFINITION – PRIOR TO 2009	HUD DEFINITION – HEARTH ACT - CURRENT	RHYA DEFINITION
Statutory Reference:	Section 725 of Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Act	Section 103 of Subtitle I of the McKinney-Vento Act	Section 103 of Subtitle I of the McKinney-Vento Act	Section 387 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act
Federal Programs and Agencies Using This Definition:	- Elementary and Secondary Education (ED) - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (ED) - Higher Education Act (ED) - Head Start Act (HHS) - Child Nutrition Act (USDA) - Violence Against Women Act (DOJ)	- Homeless Assistance Programs (HUD) - Emergency Food and Shelter (Homeland Security) - Department of Veterans Affairs (all programs) - Department of Labor (all programs)	- Homeless Assistance Programs (HUD)	Runaway and Homeless Youth Act Programs (HHS)
LIVING SITUATIONS COVERED BY THESE DEFINITIONS				
Unsheltered Locations	Yes: "(ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings (within the meaning of section 103(a)(2)(C)); (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings"	Yes: "an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings."	Yes: "an individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;"	Yes, if the youth cannot live with relatives and has no other safe place to go: "a youth… for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative, and who has no other safe alternative living arrangement."
Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing	Yes: "children and youth who are living in emergency or transitional shelters"	Yes: "a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations"	Yes: "an individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements"	Yes, if the youth cannot live with relatives and has no other safe place to go: "a youth… for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative, and who has no other safe alternative living arrangement."

	EDUCATION DEFINITION	HUD DEFINITION – PRIOR TO 2009	HUD DEFINITION – HEARTH ACT - CURRENT	RHYA DEFINITION
Motels and Hotels	**Yes, if there are no appropriate alternatives:** "children and youth who are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations" (emphasis added)	**No, except for "welfare hotels":** "an individual who has a primary nighttime residence that is a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations (including welfare hotels, congregate shelters, and transitional housing for the mentally ill);"	**Generally, no, except for the following situations:** - "hotels and motels paid for by Federal, State, or local government programs for low-income individuals or by charitable organizations" - "an individual or family who has a primary nighttime residence that is a room in a hotel or motel and where they lack the resources necessary to reside there for more than 14 days, who has no subsequent residence identified; and lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing;" - "any individual or family who is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life threatening conditions in the individual's or family's current housing situation, including where the health and safety of children are jeopardized, and who have no other residence and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing" - "unaccompanied youth and homeless families with children and youth defined as homeless under other Federal statutes who have experienced a long term period without living independently in permanent housing; and have experienced persistent instability as measured by frequent moves over such period; and can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities, chronic physical health or mental health conditions, substance addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse, the presence of a child or youth with a disability, or multiple barriers to employment.	**Yes, if the youth cannot live with relatives and has no other safe place to go:** "a youth… for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative, and who has no other safe alternative living arrangement."

	EDUCATION DEFINITION	HUD DEFINITION – PRIOR TO 2009	HUD DEFINITION – HEARTH ACT - CURRENT	RHYA DEFINITION
Staying with Others ("Doubled-Up")	**Yes, if it is due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar situation (within the definition of lacking fixed, regular, and adequate situations):** "…individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (within the meaning of section 103(a)(1)); and (B) includes — (i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;"	**No**	**Generally, no, except the following situations:** "an individual or family who will imminently lose their housing, including housing they are sharing with others, as evidenced by credible evidence indicating that the owner or renter of the housing will not allow the individual or family to stay for more than 14 days, and who has no subsequent residence identified; and who lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing: - "any individual or family who is fleeing, or is attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life threatening conditions in the individual's or family's current housing situation, including where the health and safety of children are jeopardized, and who have no other residence and lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing" - "unaccompanied youth and homeless families with children and youth defined as homeless under other Federal statutes who have experienced a long term period without living independently in permanent housing; and have experienced persistent instability as measured by frequent moves over such period; and can be expected to continue in such status for an extended period of time because of chronic disabilities, chronic physical health or mental health conditions, substance addiction, histories of domestic violence or childhood abuse, the presence of a child or youth with a disability, or multiple barriers to employment."	**Yes, if the youth cannot live with relatives and has no other safe place to go:** "a youth… for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative, and who has no other safe alternative living arrangement."

	EDUCATION DEFINITION	HUD DEFINITION – PRIOR TO 2009	HUD DEFINITION – HEARTH ACT - CURRENT	RHYA DEFINITION
"At Risk of Homelessness"	**No such definition.**	**No such definition.**	**Defines "at risk of homelessness" to include <u>all</u> families with children and youth defined as homeless under other Federal statutes.** (1) AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS.-The term `at risk of homelessness' means, with respect to an individual or family, that the individual or family- (A) has income below 30 percent of median income for the geographic area; (B) has insufficient resources immediately available to attain housing stability; and (C)(i) has moved frequently because of economic reasons; (ii) is living in the home of another because of economic hardship; (iii) has been notified that their right to occupy their current housing or living situation will be terminated; (iv) lives in a hotel or motel; (v) lives in severely overcrowded housing; (vi) is exiting an institution; or (vii) herwise lives in housing that has characteristics associated with instability and an increased risk of homelessness. Such term includes all families with children and youth defined as homeless under other Federal statutes.	**No such definition. However, RHYA does define "youth at risk of separation from family:"** YOUTH AT RISK OF SEPARATION FROM THE FAMILY.—The term 'youth at risk of separation from the family' means an individual— (A) who is less than 18 years of age; and (B)) (i) who has a history of running away from the family of such individual; (ii) whose parent, guardian, or custodian is not willing to provide for the basic needs of such individual; or (iii) who is at risk of entering the child welfare system or juvenile justice system as a result of the lack of services available to the family to meet such needs.

Appendix E: Transitional Living Program Logic Model



Appendix F: 2015 Point-in-Time and Housing Inventory Counts

HUD 2015 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs Homeless Populations and Subpopulations

Important Notes About This Data: This report is based on point-in-time information provided to HUD by Continuums of Care (CoCs) as part of their CoC Program application process, per the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the Fiscal Year 2015 Continuum of Care Program Competition. CoCs are required to provide an unduplicated count of homeless persons according to HUD standards (explained in HUD's annual HIC and PIT count notice and HUD's Point-in-Time Count Methodology Guide https://www.hudexchange.info/hdx/guides/pit-hic/). HUD has conducted a limited data quality review but has not independently verified all of the information submitted by each CoC. The reader is therefore cautioned that since compliance with these standards may vary, the reliability and consistency of the homeless counts may also vary among CoCs. Additionally, a shift in the methodology a CoC uses to count the homeless may cause a change in homeless counts between reporting periods.

Full Summary Report (All States, Territories, Puerto Rico and District of Columbia)

Summary by household type reported:

	Sheltered			
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing*	Unsheltered	Total
Households without children[1]	132,833	63,456	141,919	338,208
Households with at least one adult and one child[2]	36,752	21,312	6,133	64,197
Households with only children[3]	1,630	621	2,288	4,539
Total Homeless Households	**171,215**	**85,389**	**150,340**	**406,944**

Summary of persons in each household type:

Persons in households without children[4]	**138,246**	**64,887**	**150,403**	**353,536**
Persons Age 18 to 24	12,044	7,420	15,445	34,909
Persons Over Age 24	126,202	57,467	134,958	318,627
Persons in households with at least one adult and one child[2]	**119,327**	**66,497**	**20,462**	**206,286**
Children Under Age 18	71,268	40,726	10,907	122,901
Persons Age 18 to 24	10,765	5,851	1,448	18,064
Persons Over Age 24	37,294	19,920	8,107	65,321
Persons in households with only children[3]	**1,724**	**759**	**2,403**	**4,886**
Total Homeless Persons	**259,297**	**132,143**	**173,268**	**564,708**

Demographic summary by ethnicity:

	Sheltered			
	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing*	Unsheltered	Total
Hispanic / Latino	55,125	22,701	34,742	112,568
Non-Hispanic / Non- Latino	204,172	109,442	138,526	452,140
Total	**259,297**	**132,143**	**173,268**	**564,708**

Demographic summary by gender:

Female	113,819	60,505	50,020	224,344
Male	145,029	71,400	122,646	339,075
Transgender	449	238	602	1,289
Total	**259,297**	**132,143**	**173,268**	**564,708**

* Safe Haven programs are included in the Transitional Housing category.

Tuesday, October 27, 2015

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