

## Programming Ideas for Youth Experiencing Homelessness

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### Abstract

*This article provides an overview of some of the demographics of youth experiencing homelessness and examples of how Cooperative Extension is working with this population around the country. A discussion of the needs of this population is provided, along with strategies for how Extension can connect with current efforts to reach youth experiencing homelessness to build resilience. Data are summarized from a webinar for Extension professionals. Education in this area is worthwhile to youth development professionals who may be interested in designing new programs, expanding current programs, finding new program partnerships, and using programs to support youth experiencing homelessness. Local and national-level programs that are designed to reach youth experiencing homelessness are highlighted. The*



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*structure and resources of the Cooperative Extension system nationwide are ideal to provide supplementary support to youth experiencing homelessness in a variety of settings. This article is an invitation to expand this conversation and further explore the needs of youth experiencing homelessness and Extension's capacity to respond.*

Key words: homeless, resilience, youth programming, drop-in center, youth experiencing homelessness

### Introduction

Programs that are designed for youth experiencing homelessness (YEH) often focus on providing supports related to the types of behaviors or life circumstances a youth experiences as the result of (or leading to) homelessness. These include programs that meet youth where they are—in locations such as day treatment centers, drop-in centers, or shelters—to provide interventions and address substance abuse, vocational training, and mental health concerns (Slesnick et al., 2009).

Positive youth development (PYD) is at the heart of many youth-serving programs like 4-H, with a focus on fostering relationships between leaders and youth and providing youth with opportunities for engagement, learning, and enrichment. This approach to working with youth is seen as one of the guiding principles for promising intervention programs for YEH (Eichas et al., 2019; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2016). Another guiding principle is trauma-informed care, which takes into consideration an individual's past experiences and how those experiences lead to coping mechanisms and behavior (Withers, 2017). By blending a trauma-informed approach with PYD, programs can be designed that integrate an individual's past experiences into a roadmap of supports and opportunities to reach their greatest potential. This blended program design for YEH can provide enriching programming, address physical and emotional safety needs, and also have crisis interventions available.

For YEH, drop-in centers are available that offer mental health and substance use resources, as well as provide for basic needs like showers, laundry, and food. There are often trusting adults, peers, and recreational activities, and these centers are perceived by youth as safer than shelters (Slesnick et al., 2008). A study on the usage of drop-in centers conducted by Tucker et al. (2018) explored the background characteristics of YEH and characteristics of drop-in centers that met the needs of YEH. One identified need was "interpersonal" relationships (social connection and trust with peers or adults); relationships are a foundational component of PYD programs that are incorporated into the design of drop-in centers (Gwadz et al., 2018; Slesnick

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et al., 2008). In addition to relationships, youth seek out drop-in centers for concrete needs like hygiene 8 times more frequently than they seek out specific programming (Tucker et al., 2018).

In research interviews, YEH did not perceive their perspectives as making valid contributions, nor did they feel their input would make a difference (Gwadz et al., 2018). The familiar concept of youth–adult partnerships that is prevalent in 4-H programming is relevant here. Partnerships with trusting adults could provide beneficial mentoring experiences for YEH, whose experiences have often been traumatic, distrusting, and invalidating (Gwadz et al., 2018). These types of programming are in place, as in a case study of one program for YEH where “authentic partnerships” described the philosophical approach that was strongly grounded in positive youth development. This approach was key to all programmatic decisions and interactions with youth (Leonard et al., 2017). Yet, even in such a setting, youth perceptions of efficacy of their input in governance were incongruent with their perceptions about their ability to take on leadership roles. Youth who have opportunities to participate in ongoing, organized activities benefit from positive connections with adults and teachers, experience greater social support, and achieve better health and well-being (Oosterhoff et al., 2017), and the PYD and 4-H approach of youth–adult partnerships and emphasis on youth voice may be even more important in working with YEH than in the general population.

### How Many Youth Experience Homelessness?

Defining the population of youth who are experiencing homelessness is a challenge because of the transient nature of the experience and where they are staying (couch surfing, in cars and hotels, shelters, etc.) (Morton et al., 2017). Further, individuals may define homelessness differently than the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Office of Community Planning and Development, the primary source for one of the most often-cited homelessness statistics, the “Point-In-Time Count.” This count is determined once annually across the United States in partnership with homeless-serving organizations and schools (HUD, 2019).

The annual national homeless “Point-In-Time Count” estimated that, on a single night in 2018, about 111,600 individuals under 18 years old experienced homelessness, representing a prevalence rate of 1.5 per 1,000 children and youth (HUD Office of Community Planning and Development, 2018; Federal Interagency Forum on Child & Family Statistics, 2018). The majority of youth (96.3%) were living with their families (90.6% in homeless shelters and

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transitional housing, and 9.4% in unsheltered settings such as cars, parks, and other places that were not meant for human habitation). Less than 4% were unaccompanied homeless youth, experiencing homelessness without the presence of their parents, guardians, or own children, in sheltered (49.2%) or unsheltered (50.8%) settings.

Using a broader homeless definition, the public-school system (including preschools) identified 1.36 million students (2.6% of students) that needed stable shelter to call home at some point during the school year 2016-2017 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019; National Center for Homeless Education, 2019). These students lacked a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Three quarters of them (75.8%) reported couch surfing, doubling up, or sharing housing with others due to a loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason. The rest reported living in homeless shelters and transitional housing (13.9%); in temporary housing such as hotels or motels due to the lack of alternative, adequate accommodations (6.7%); or staying in unsheltered settings (3.7%). While the majority of students experiencing homelessness were living with their families, 8.7% were unaccompanied youth. In addition, children under age 6 are likely undercounted when Department of Education (whose housing data were collected in national surveys) data are used, because only 18% of children ages 3 and 4 in the United States (1.4 million in fall 2018) are enrolled in formal education (Shaw & Hirillal, 2019).

A national household survey, "Voices of Youth Count," revealed that 1 in 30 youth ages 13 to 17 experienced homelessness (including running away and being asked to leave) over a 12-month period (Morton et al., 2018). One-fourth of homeless youth involved couch surfing only, and the rest used a varied type of nighttime residence (Morton et al., 2017). Of these youth, about half were experiencing homelessness for the first time. The prevalence of homeless youth households was 4.4% in rural counties and 4.2% in urban counties, with youth in rural counties spending more time couch surfing than in shelters or other housing services than their urban counterparts.

While rural and urban youth experience similar rates of homelessness, disproportionality exists for subpopulations of youth, specifically youth of color; parenting youth; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) youth. Those at a disproportionately higher risk for experiencing homelessness include LGBTQ youth (120%), African American youth (83%), and Hispanic (33%) youth (Morton et al., 2017).

## What Are Strategies for Working With Youth Experiencing Homelessness?

The U.S. Interagency Working Group on Ending Youth Homelessness has developed a framework with various components that are used toward ending homelessness (U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2016). Their categories and specific related areas include

- **prevention:** support for families, caregivers, foster children, school and college students, and youth involved in the juvenile justice system.
- **identification and early intervention:** outreach to youth on the street, drop-in centers, family support
- **emergency and crisis response:** shelters, host homes, transitional housing,
- **tailored services and housing:** short-term and long-term housing

Guiding principles of promising strategies with each of these areas include immediate accessibility; individualized, flexible, and choice-based; developmentally appropriate; culturally competent; trauma-informed; “Housing First” approach; family resiliency and reunification methods (when available and appropriate); and PYD principles (HUD, 2016). These programs are meant to provide youth outcomes including permanent housing; connections to family, community, and positive social networks; education and employment; and social–emotional skills (U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, 2016).

According to Morton and colleagues (2017), targeted strategies for working with YEH, especially among certain subpopulations, should include collecting data to assess if “some high-risk subpopulations are served less frequently, or less effectively, than other young people. Informed by continuous monitoring, systems and programs can better tailor outreach, staff recruitment or development, and service delivery models” (p.14).

Cooperative Extension/4-H Youth Development have unique qualities that can enhance programs for YEH. Extension/4-H programs contain key aspects of community partnerships, a PYD framework, youth leadership, career and life skills education, and age appropriateness. 4-H and Extension staff may need additional training to learn to work in a culturally competent and trauma-informed way. Offerings have become more available, as Cooperative Extension programs and staff expand expertise to better-serve all youth, and especially YEH.

## Cooperative Extension Programming

The structure and resources of the Cooperative Extension system nationwide are ideal to provide supplementary support to YEH in a variety of settings. This article is an invitation to expand this conversation and further explore the needs of YEH and the capacity of Cooperative Extension to respond.

In an effort to understand the types of programs either offered exclusively by Cooperative Extension/4-H or offered in partnership with other youth-serving organizations, the authors compiled descriptions of known programming around the country. The authors were part of a YEH workgroup founded in 2015 with the charge to better understand the needs of and ways to support youth,

*including those growing up in low-income households, diverse racial and ethnic groups, immigrants and children of immigrants, LGBTQ youth, and children and youth with special needs, are under-served by 4-H. These same populations—which comprise a large and growing percentage of our country’s young people—disproportionately contend with conditions that often compromise healthy development and access to support for it, even as they carry rich cultural resources and cultivate strength and insight through adversity. (C. Crocoll, personal communication, 2015)*

The YEH workgroup began as part of a larger effort by the USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) to understand the needs of many types of underrepresented youth. A description and details can be found on [NIFA’s website](#). In 2019, the YEH workgroup became a subcommittee of the [Access, Equity and Belonging Committee](#) of the National 4-H Program Leaders Working Group.

The types of programs from Cooperative Extension for YEH range from workforce preparation and conflict resolution to cooking and budgeting. A full list of what the committee gathered is described in the table in the appendix. Please note that the authors encourage programming staff from within the Cooperative Extension system to contact the authors and provide information about programs and efforts for YEH that may be happening around the country.

Statistics are not readily available about programs offered by Cooperative Extension that include YEH participation. These specific numbers are unknown for a several reasons: Some programs are offered in shelters or drop-in centers for families with children where turnover is high. At

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times “contact” data are kept so that a record of the number of youths under the age of 18 is locally documented for the duration of the program (Forstadt, personal correspondence). No cumulative data are kept at a national level through 4-H or the Cooperative Extension system.

#### **Programmatic Example: Youth Futures 4-H Club**

In Missouri, *4-H Youth Futures: College Within Reach* is a college orientation program for underserved youth. The program includes local mentoring in clubs and on-campus experiences that promote college as an obtainable goal. College is defined as any post-secondary education that provides qualifications for a career (technical school, 2-year or 4-year institution, or University).

In 2014, Jefferson County identified 138 high school students as unaccompanied homeless youth. These local youth that could not live in a home with their parents or legal guardian were identified when they asked their school social worker for help. To assist these youth, University of Missouri Extension in Jefferson County started a *4-H Youth Futures: College within Reach* club with support from the Homeless Youth Initiative of Jefferson County; the Disability Resource Association; and schoolteachers, counselors, and social workers.

Since 2014, the program has been active in several school districts throughout Jefferson County. Classrooms, after-school groups, and individuals have been involved in the program. Some youth were recommended to the program, some were invited by peers, and others enrolled by being in a classroom with an interested teacher; not all were homeless, but some were. During meetings, students learn and make plans for careers and college or trade schools. Youth also connected to other 4-H activities like camps, events, and conferences outside of school.

As Cooperative Extension youth staff working with the *Youth Futures* program in Jefferson County, we recognized several things about serving youth who are homeless or who are in poverty. It was important for us to make good partners with the school staff and community organizations who are experts in supporting youth and families experiencing homelessness. We use skills learned in the Youth Mental Health First-Aid course. We try to remain flexible and follow the students’ lead in providing programming and resources. Sometimes we make adjustments with deadlines and registration. Compared to youth who are not homeless or in poverty, more time is needed from staff to support the youth when they participate out of

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school. This extra support includes individual meetings with parents, contacting students and parents via text or social media, providing transportation and gas cards, offering shopping trips for items needed to go to camp or conferences, and referring to other agencies for needs beyond our scope. We appreciate the financial support from community organizations and grants that pay for staff time and many items the students need.

### **Educating Extension About YEH**

Among national Cooperative Extension personnel, little is known about programs that serve YEH, but many personnel are well-positioned to include YEH in their programming or to design programming that serves YEH. In order to improve the conversations within Cooperative Extension and to get a sense of the programs that exist, a webinar was held in October 2017 through 4-H as part of the 2017 Professional Development E-Academy. The E-Academy is an in-depth, online professional development series designed for 4-H and other youth development professionals.

The 1-hour webinar was titled "Homeless Youth and Youth At-Risk for Homelessness" and was presented by four members of the Youth Experiencing Homeless Subcommittee of the national Vulnerable Populations Committees. This presentation was a part of a larger webinar series on "The Role of Diversity and Inclusion in Positive Youth Development" organized by 4-H National Headquarters of the NIFA at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The live webinar was attended by 180 participants, and an additional 56 viewed the archived presentation. Data were collected through webinar analytics and a post-webinar evaluation survey conducted with Qualtrics to allow the subcommittee to assess knowledge of the topic and homeless youth-related activities with which participants were involved. Table 1 provides a detail of attendee geographic information and evaluation results. Attendees were asked about their experience working with YEH; their top three barriers to working with YEH; specific knowledge gained from the webinar; and intention to use information, resources, or knowledge gained from the webinar.

Webinars such as this are worthwhile to bring together Cooperative Extension and youth development professionals who are interested in designing new programs, expanding the offerings of current programs, finding new program partnerships, and increasing awareness of the considerations around programming for YEH.

**Table 1. Webinar for Extension Professionals About Homeless Youth and Youth At-Risk for Homelessness (YEH)**

	Respondents
<b>Geographic region of webinar attendees<sup>a</sup></b>	
Midwest	47.2%
South	19.7%
West	18.5%
Northeast	14.6%
<b>Attendees experience in working with YEH</b>	
Currently work with YEH	25.8%
Suspect to have YEH in programs but cannot confirm	71.2%
<b>Webinar evaluation</b>	
I gained new knowledge from this webinar	81.8%
I gained insight into youth who are homeless and/or at risk	75.8%
I gained new resources from this webinar	53.0%
<b>Top three barriers to working with YEH</b>	
Lack of resources, such as time and appropriate services	<i>n</i> = 11
Difficulty in identifying this population	<i>n</i> = 10
Lack of knowledge of this problem at the institutional level and the partnership and skills needed to engage and help YEH	<i>n</i> = 5
<b>Top three intended use of information, resources, knowledge gained</b>	
Being more aware of youth in the program who may be at risk or experiencing homelessness	<i>n</i> = 6
Create partnerships	<i>n</i> = 4
Explore ways to work with this population	<i>n</i> = 3

*Note.* Non-geographic region data is based on a post-webinar survey (*n* = 66).

<sup>a</sup> Geographic region information was available from 79.2% of the total webinar attendees or viewers (*n* = 236).

## Future Directions

The implications for Cooperative Extension's targeted engagement with YEH are wide-reaching. Because of their presence in every state and familiarity with local needs, Extension personnel are poised to provide materials or adapt materials and programs to effectively serve YEH. They

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can explore ways to pair youth and adults (volunteers or staff) to deliver programming or meet youth where they are to provide *complimentary* programming in partnership with drop-in centers or other programs (Leonard et al., 2017).

Drop-in centers can be an ideal place to provide outreach programming for YEH because youth can both meet their basic needs for self-care and find opportunities for education and enrichment (Tucker et al., 2018; Slesnick et. al., 2008). The opportunity to participate in 4-H and other youth development programs can provide life skills and opportunities that may otherwise be missed by YEH. With the right training and the right match of skills between program staff and YEH, programs like 4-H can have a tremendous positive effect for YEH.

#### ***Flexibility***

In recent years, 4-H has been offering more varied methods of program delivery, such as school-based programs and special-interest clubs that last a short period of time, in addition to maintaining the traditional 4-H club structure. It would not be unusual to create a program that is single-session or just a few weeks in duration. In Georgia and Missouri, programs that include YEH have been made available through schools (see Appendix). There are options for program delivery, such as a staff person being on site at a drop-in center, available to offer an enrichment activity in addition to putting in “face time” on site to develop relationships and become familiar to the youth.

Flexibility also requires adaptation and options for youth who may not have legal guardians who can sign permission forms or release forms for program participation. The type of programmatic flexibility will vary, yet programs can be proactive and develop policies and procedures that create a pathway for YEH to participate in programs.

Training staff in trauma-informed models can be a significant asset as they work with all youth who may be experiencing homelessness or other negative life events in their daily lives. When staff have proper training and are able to utilize a trauma-informed lens, they align programmatic opportunities in the strength-based approach of positive youth development that is standard for 4-H programming. For example, Montana’s program works with kin to support youth who may be experiencing homelessness and separation from their biological parent(s) (see Appendix).

## In Conclusion

The objective of this article is to encourage a conversation regarding the intersection of Cooperative Extension's youth programming with YEH in rural and urban communities. Based on the experience of this multi-state subcommittee, this has not been a frequent conversation. However, serving this population of youth has been of interest and is starting to happen. In some cases, this has required creativity on the part of program staff to work within the confines of their regulations and the expectation that youth served by 4-H are living in traditional, familial structures.

Extension staff must intentionally find ways to provide access for YEH to be able to find their way to 4-H and Extension programs. Perhaps it will be the staff from Extension who become the supportive adults in these youths' lives, or perhaps it will be through outreach to existing centers that the resources and materials can be used to provide informal learning opportunities. Or maybe it will be by opening the doors to existing pathways into club and county-based programs that YEH will find these programs are also for them. However it happens, continuation and expansion of this deliberate work utilizing the research-based efforts of 4-H and Extension programs can effectively reach more YEH and youth who are at high risk for becoming homeless in the future.

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## Appendix

### Examples of 4-H Programming with Youth Experiencing Homelessness

**State:** Georgia     **Community type:** Rural

**Program Name:** 4-H Club in the Classroom

**Situation:** Youth experiencing homelessness seek support from 4-H Staff after receiving service during in-school 4-H Club programs.

**Goal:** Youth enroll in and complete college or other post-secondary school training and have a successful career.

<b>Staffing</b>	<b>Program design (partners, methods)</b>	<b>Key facets (funding source, theoretical approach, curriculum used)</b>
<p><b>Extension</b> County 4-H staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership between School and Cooperative Extension</li> <li>• In-school club meetings led by 4-H Staff</li> <li>• Multi-year connections</li> <li>• County events, camps and overnight retreats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4-H club model in the classroom</li> <li>• Partnerships with school personnel, community resources and professional service providers</li> <li>• Funding for student needs from community and individual support</li> </ul>

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**State:** Kentucky **Community type:** Urban Louisville (a) Drop-in center, (b) Shelter house

**Program Name:** The Youth Engagement and Support Project (YES)

**Situation:** Youth experiencing homelessness use services of YMCA.

**Goal:** To develop life skills necessary for self-sufficiency in youth and young adults experiencing homelessness or unstable housing.

<b>Staffing</b>	<b>Program design (partners, methods)</b>	<b>Key facets (funding source, theoretical approach, curriculum used)</b>
<p><b>YMCA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One FT coordinator - YMCA employee</li> <li>• One 15% evaluator- YMCA employee</li> </ul> <p><b>Extension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One specialist as PI/evaluator (5%)</li> <li>• One specialist as Co-PI/state coordinator (50%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership between YMCA and Cooperative Extension</li> <li>• Weekly life skills programs at Shelter House</li> <li>• Monthly, weekly, daily programs at Drop-In Center</li> <li>• Pre and posttest (workforce prep data) and intake paperwork</li> <li>• Qualitative data collection via process and exit evaluations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trauma-informed approach</li> <li>• Iowa Targeting Life Skills Program Model</li> <li>• -National YMCA Safe Place Framework</li> <li>• Evidence-based curricula - Skills to Pay the Bills, Tackling the Tough Skills (through MO Extension), Love Notes</li> <li>• \$ CYFAR, USDA-NIFA, in-kind community</li> </ul>

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**State:** Maine      **Community type:** Rural

**Program Name:** Shelter Drop-in program for Families with Children

**Situation:** Shelter Drop-in program for Families with Children

**Goal:** Youth enroll in and complete college or other post-secondary school training and have a successful career.

<b>Staffing</b>	<b>Program design (partners, methods)</b>	<b>Key facets (funding source, theoretical approach, curriculum used)</b>
<p><b>Extension</b> One community education assistant participated in this project 1 day/week</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnering with local homeless shelter</li> <li>• Weekly drop-in program lasts for 6 weeks, then begins again.</li> <li>• The projects are informal STEM activities that are art-based, plant-based, including some soil science explorations.</li> <li>• The 1-hour activities were low-cost, engaging, and intended to promote new interests.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No individual enrollment forms</li> <li>• Extension staff connect families with Cooperative Extension and 4-H in their towns as they transition from shelter and into a more permanent home</li> <li>• Contact ends once the families are in their new housing situation, so it is unknown if families are able to participate in 4-H or Cooperative Extension programs offered in their new communities</li> <li>• \$ CYFAR USDA-NIFA</li> </ul>

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**State:** Maine      **Community type:** Rural/suburban

**Program Name:** Gardening with Youth

**Situation:** Homeless drop-in setting.

**Goal:** Youth develop gardening skills and consume fresh vegetables in a supportive, individualized homeless drop-in setting.

<b>Staffing</b>	<b>Program design (partners, methods)</b>	<b>Key facets (funding source, theoretical approach, curriculum used)</b>
<p><b>Extension</b> One professional was a gardening support and facilitator May-October Twice a week for 1½ hours</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnering with county-based youth drop-in center.</li> <li>• Youth participate as much as they are interested. Working with youth in groups of 2-3 on harvesting/washing produce and other garden care.</li> <li>• Highly individualized and no set curriculum, following the lead and inquiry of participating youth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No individual enrollment forms</li> <li>• Extension staff connect with youth during the twice-weekly sessions. Youth benefit by gardening experience and also eating from the garden. Youth involved in receiving counseling and assistance from the county homeless coalition also receive food from the garden.</li> <li>• \$ local non-profit received a grant to support youth in having a “first job” experience. Creating plans for gardens at the site was one such experience.</li> </ul>

Programming for Youth Experiencing Homelessness

**State:** Missouri    **Community type:** Suburban

**Program Name:** Youth Futures College Within Reach

**Situation:** Youth experiencing homelessness are recommended to program by school staff.

**Goal:** Youth enroll in and complete college or other post-secondary school training and have a successful career.

<b>Staffing</b>	<b>Program design (partners, methods)</b>	<b>Key facets (funding source, theoretical approach, curriculum used)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension</li> <li>• One specialist as coordinator (5%)</li> <li>• One educator (50%)</li> </ul> <p><b>School partners</b> provide connections to school resources and between-meeting support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership between school and Cooperative Extension</li> <li>• College and career preparation activities</li> <li>• Bi-monthly meetings during school day</li> <li>• Summer conference and college trips</li> <li>• Pretest and posttest and 4-H enrollment forms</li> <li>• Post-high school follow-up.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4-H Project Club Model, participants are in an alternative school, some students have experienced homelessness.</li> <li>• Evidence-based curricula</li> <li>• Youth Futures College within Reach curriculum</li> <li>• Tackling the Tough Skills (through MO Extension)</li> <li>• Love Notes</li> <li>• \$ CYFAR USDA-NIFA, Local non-profit, in-kind school</li> </ul>

Programming for Youth Experiencing Homelessness

**State:** Montana    **Community type:** Rural, some small urban

**Program Name:** Montana Kinship Navigator Program

**Situation:** Youth experiencing homelessness are sometimes cared for by grandparents or other non-parental relatives.

**Goal:** Kinship caregivers and their families will have the support and resources needed to successfully parent relative children.

<b>Staffing</b>	<b>Program design (partners, methods)</b>	<b>Key facets (funding source, theoretical approach, curriculum used)</b>
<p><b>Extension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One specialist as director (40%)</li> <li>• One program manager (100%)</li> <li>• 24 local contacts across state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership among Dept of Public Health &amp; Human Services, Child Protective Services, and Cooperative Extension</li> <li>• Train staff in local agencies/organizations to provide support to kin raising relative children. Groups generally meet monthly.</li> <li>• Respond via email and toll-free number to relative caregivers providing information and resources.</li> <li>• Reach relative caregivers through Facebook and newsletters.</li> <li>• Coordinate with other organizations/agencies who are serving relative children to link resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecological model used to provide support for kinship caregivers and their families</li> <li>• Evidence-based curricula:</li> <li>• Parenting a Second Time Around (PASTA) from Cornell Extension</li> <li>• GrandCares—An adaptation of Powerful Tools for Caregivers</li> <li>• Federal funding from our Title IVE agency; DPHHS Child and Family Services; Brookdale Foundation; other local foundations and organizations</li> </ul>

Programming for Youth Experiencing Homelessness

**State:** Washington      **Community type:** Suburban

**Program Name:** 4-H at the Oasis

**Situation:** Youth living or regularly attending classes and outreach at a local homeless youth shelter.

**Goal:** To use 4-H programming to support 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in homeless and at-risk youth attending a local youth shelter.

<b>Staffing</b>	<b>Program design (partners, methods)</b>	<b>Key facets (funding source, theoretical approach, curriculum used)</b>
<p><b>Extension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One community education assistant is the primary staff.</li> <li>• 4-H coordinator and regional specialist administer the program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partner with a shelter for at-risk youth</li> <li>• Monthly 60-minute 4-H activity including ice breaker, activities, and reflection</li> <li>• Projects incorporating youth input and reflection for social-emotional learning</li> <li>• Serves ages 13-25 and most are between 17-22</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curricula include Lego Robotics, STEM, Creative Arts, Your Thoughts Matter, Zoom, and Challenge.</li> <li>• The focus is on building 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (<a href="http://www.battelleforkids.org/networks/p21">http://www.battelleforkids.org/networks/p21</a>):</li> <li>• critical thinking</li> <li>• creativity</li> <li>• collaboration</li> <li>• communication, flexibility, leadership, and social skills.</li> <li>• Evaluation is based on a tool designed to measure 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills.</li> <li>• \$ County Community Development Block Grant Program</li> </ul>