

HOLLYWOOD HOMELESS YOUTH PARTNERSHIP

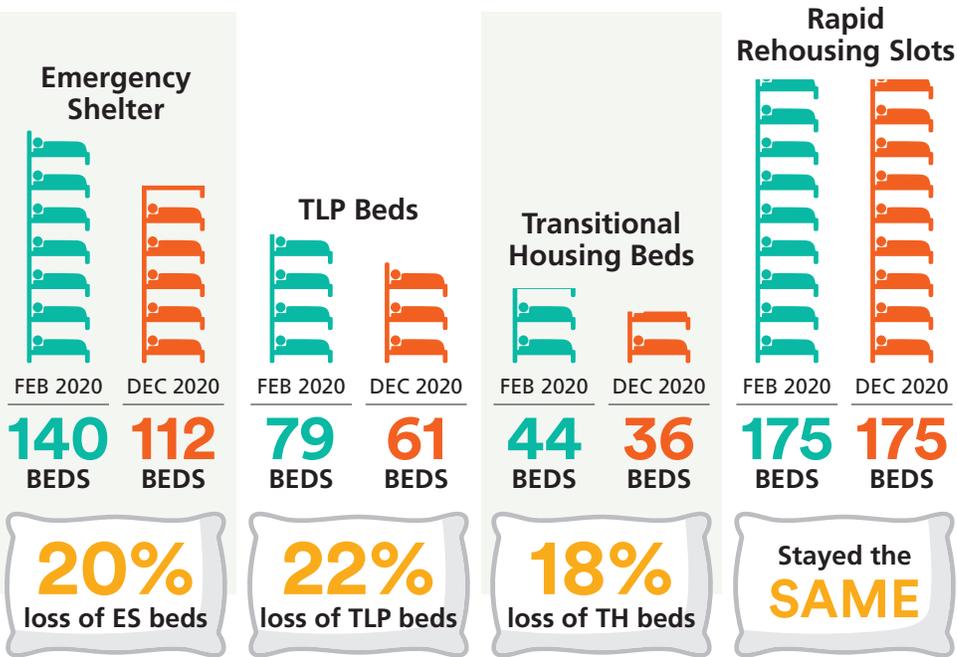
February 2020 – December 2020

Impact of COVID-19 on the system of care for youth experiencing homelessness in Hollywood

The COVID 19 pandemic caused massive disruption in all sectors of our social safety net, including the homeless youth service delivery system. All agencies in the Hollywood Homeless Youth Partnership adapted service delivery to ensure safety for youth and staff while maintaining the critical access to services for young people experiencing homelessness. We surveyed HHYP agencies to learn about the impact of the pandemic on their service delivery and on the needs and concerns of young people.

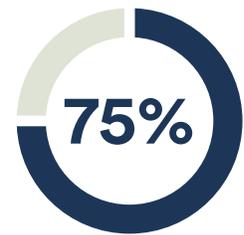
Bed Count

Many agencies experienced a loss in bed count during this time due to various reasons. Some had to reduce bed count to allow young people to quarantine on site while shelter settings reduced their bed count to allow for social distancing between beds. Agencies had to follow DHS and LAHSA guidelines, which recommended that they decompress. While LAHSA didn't report a loss in beds due to Project RoomKey (PRK) additions, young people were less likely to go to PRK sites. Rapid rehousing utilization changed dramatically because youth were less likely to leave during this time, so fewer spots opened up to house new young people.



Change in Services

Different phases of the pandemic prompted different responses to service delivery. Below are changes that agencies made between February 2020 and December 2020. Page 2 of this brief explores the impact of these changes on agencies and young people.



of agencies **offered telehealth services** and **changed the way services were delivered**



offered **virtual programming** and **reduced the array of in person services available**



reduced service hours & number of young people allowed on site and **reduced bed capacity**

Overall HHYP agencies saw a **17% loss of beds**



Examples of Service Delivery Changes & Innovative Approaches



Modifications

Throughout the various phases of the pandemic, agencies made modifications to service delivery and discontinued some services temporarily to ensure safety for young people and staff.



Some agencies paused group workshops, **transitioned education and mental health services to telehealth** and stopped transporting clients in cars. Because of the increased risk of exposure to COVID, some agencies offered incentive pay to staff that worked face to face with young people.



Drop in centers moved their services outdoors, discontinued shower and bathroom services for periods of time, and began offering food and hygiene in a “grab and go” model.

Impact on Young People and Service Delivery

The pandemic has had a **significant impact on the mental health, physical health, and wellbeing of young people experiencing homelessness**. At the onset of the pandemic, young people couldn't shelter in place at home and couldn't access places they normally used for connection with peers. They often struggled to access the Internet and charging stations due to the closure of libraries, fast food restaurants, and limited agency hours. While agencies offered telehealth services, many found that it didn't work well because young people didn't have the means to connect to technology. There is concern about the long term impact of the pandemic on young people.



Agencies noticed an increase in **food insecurity** and the need for mental health services due to reduced services available to meet their needs, financial challenges, and **a loss of social connections**.

Some agencies reported a decrease in youth seeking services and found street outreach to be more challenging. When youth moved into Project RoomKey sites, some agencies followed youth there to continue providing support. One agency noticed that while their numbers dropped, the young people who did visit were more engaged in clinical services, **visited more often and returned for additional assistance**. Relationship building was harder and some agencies found that telehealth was not an effective way to engage young people.

Impact on Staff and Agencies

During this time, some agencies reported **an increase in staff burnout, turnover, and concern about staff wellbeing and retention**. Other agencies experienced the highest retention rate of staff in the midst of the pandemic.



In addition, many agencies experienced funding cuts due to lower reimbursement on fee for service contracts due to reduced services and capacity, staff illness, and quarantine requirements.

