

# RYAN'S PLACE

by KCEOC Community Action Partnership

Region 4B • Gary, Kentucky  
kceoc.org



## Young Adults • Homelessness

### INITIATIVE OVERVIEW

**Ryan's Place is a crisis center for youth aged 18-24 who are experiencing homelessness.** There are multiple forms of homelessness, such as staying in a place not meant for human habitation and fleeing a domestic violence situation. Services offered include:

- Housing search and counseling services (finding and obtaining housing)
- Employment services (obtaining employment)
- Education services (obtaining a GED, applying for college, etc.)
- Life skills training (money management, conflict management, parenting skills, etc.)
- Case management (referrals to professionals, assist with obtaining benefits, etc.)

Ryan's Place is equipped with four apartment units. Each unit is two-bedrooms and fully furnished with a kitchen, appliances, and furniture. Each client is given bedding, clothing, and essential supplies as needed for their apartment. There is a laundry room for clients, a common area complete with a full kitchen for group dinners, a living area with a TV and furniture, and a meeting area for Youth Voices meetings and workshops.

### LOCAL NEED ADDRESSED BY INITIATIVE

Homeless youth (ages 18-24) need stable housing. Ryan's Place is named in memory of Ryan White, a former client at the KCEOC Community Action Partnership Emergency Support Center who tragically passed away at age 18. Recognizing and understanding the scale of the youth population experiencing homelessness or at risk of becoming homeless



was a challenge. Homeless youth are sometimes not as visible, as they couch surf and experience housing instability for a long period of time. No entity in our area was truly focusing on this population, yet agencies in the focus area desperately sought resources to assist homeless youth as the number of calls and results related to youth homelessness grew.

KCEOC, by invitation, teamed up with the Kentucky Housing Corporation and other agencies to provide much-needed services to address this ever-growing need in our community. The development of the Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness was the initial step in determining the needs and resolutions to address the issue. As a result of planning, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) made multiple Continuum of Care Youth Homeless Demonstration Program funding streams available. KCEOC also requested funds to provide a Youth Crisis Center.

The agency converted a building it already owned into an apartment unit for homeless youth to stay in while working with a case manager to secure permanent housing. While at the Crisis Center, youth receive other supportive services to ensure their day-to-day needs are being met, as well as other preparatory needs to ready them to be on their own (like life skills and job training).

The agency also received Permanent Housing Rapid Re-Housing funds to help transition youth from the Crisis Center to permanent housing. This program assists with up to 12 months of rental assistance and a utility allowance. Case management support and other services continue after youth leave the Crisis Center.

## ROLE OF CSBG FUNDS

CSBG has provided funding for several parts of the initiative, primarily in the form of staffing support. KCEOC staff were at the table for the planning and development of the Coordinated Community Plan to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness. The agency also provided staffing support to produce much needed data reports demonstrating the program's impact.

## TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT

The initiative addresses family-level needs and is transformative in nature. Not only does it have a significant impact on those served, but the effect is extremely positive, and the duration is expected to be long-lasting. During the last two program years, 38% left with earned or other income, 15% gained or increased their income from employment, 58% exited with at least one non-cash resource, and 100% percent exited into permanent housing. The local university, Union College, has also promised full scholarships to any Ryan's Place client who would like to attend college.

Ryan's Place customers also sing its praises. One client, Freedom, had this to say about her experience in the facility: **"My favorite part about Ryan's Place was seeing that I was not alone and there were other young people who were homeless as well."**

**Ryan's Place is an amazing program and is very beneficial to those in need, and it helps that there are people on staff with KCEOC who can connect with residents to offer more support."**

The qualitative impacts are manifold. The Crisis Center has generated significant awareness of youth homelessness in the area. The Crisis Center Coordinator has reached out to other counties served, informing them about the program. Service providers are making referrals. The agency anticipates that as more outreach is conducted, referrals will continue to grow. Broadly, the program has demonstrated the importance of having reliable, youth-specific crisis housing available in the community.

KCEOC has also become more familiar with partnerships in mental health and substance abuse because it has been more prevalent among the youth population. We have also learned that we must try to do everything we can to prevent situations where clients may encounter more trauma. Our clients are still very young, continue to deal with childhood trauma, and have not had the resources, knowledge, or counseling services they require.

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## EVIDENCE-BASED OUTCOMES

When planning for the program, KCEOC proposed that 25 youth would be served at the Crisis Center over the 2-year grant period. To date, 49 individuals, including 4 children under the age of 3, have been served.

When planning the rapid re-housing program, KCEOC proposed that 15 youth would be served by the program over the 2-year grant period. To date, 29 individuals with 11 children under the age of 3 have been served by rapid re-housing funds.

## EQUITY LENS

**Despite the relatively homogenous demographic makeup of our community, the program ensures that anyone that seeks assistance and qualifies will receive service.** As always, racial and ethnic equity is an assurance for all KCEOC programming. The Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) database utilized by the program collects demographic information on all clients served and permits the analysis of programmatic impacts on different racial/ethnic groups in the community.

## CUSTOMER VOICE

The Crisis Center provides clients an opportunity to give feedback and input on program operations and services. Youth residents have developed local leadership initiatives to help dispel stereotypes of the homeless youth population. They also serve as peer mentors to each other and stay connected through a special app for continued support after leaving the Crisis Center. KCEOC utilizes regular customer service satisfaction surveys as well as informal individual feedback sessions with program oversight staff. The agency seeks impact stories from clients for use in newsletters. Some clients have even posted their own Facebook Live stories.

## Contact

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