



Evonne M. Klein
Commissioner

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
Department of Housing
Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services



Miriam Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D.
Commissioner

January 23, 2017

Dear CAN Provider:

In October 2016, the State Departments of Housing and Mental Health and Addiction Services issued guidance on when to administer the VI-SPDAT. Since that time, we have adopted the Next Step Tool (NST) for youth experiencing homelessness and guidance on when to conduct this new tool. The Next Step Tool offers a more accurate assessment for this specific population – predicting which youth are most likely to experience long-term homelessness while determining who is currently the most vulnerable or at risk in order to support youth in ending their homelessness.

The Next Step Tool should be used in place of the VI-SPDAT for all youth and young adults aged under 25.

Attached is guidance on when to administer the NST. The Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness (CCEH) has been conducting trainings on the tool. A webinar on administering the NST and additional information on the tool can be found on CCEH's website at <http://cceh.org/administering-the-next-step-tool/>. It is important that all providers switch to using the NST to assess youth aged 24 and under to ensure we are uniformly measuring the vulnerability of youth entering our system.

In addition, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development issued guidance on determining the homeless status of youth. This guidance document provides information on how youth meet HUD's definition of homelessness, outlines the documentation requirements, and includes youth housing crisis examples. We strongly encourage all providers to view the guidance at <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Determining-Homeless-Status-of-Youth.pdf>.

Don't forget the CT Youth Count will take place from January 25th to the 31st. It's not too late to get involved by either signing up to volunteer at <http://cceh.org/volunteer-registration-2017/> or contacting your local Youth Engagement Team Initiative Contacts (see attached list). Communities should strive to gather an accurate count of the youth experiencing homelessness in their area since these numbers will factor into where resources are allocated, such as the approximately \$6.5 million HUD recently awarded to the CT Balance of State CoC under HUD's new Homelessness Youth Demonstration Grant Program. Connecticut was selected as an awardee thanks to all of you and the continued successes we've achieved in our homeless efforts as well as the progress the Reaching Home Youth and Young Adult Homelessness workgroup has already accomplished.

If you have any questions, please contact Katie Durand, DOH Director of Strategic Initiatives, at kathleen.durand@ct.gov or Mary Ann Haley, CCEH Deputy Director, at mhaley@cceh.org.

Sincerely,

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