

A GUIDE TO PREVENTING
YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Pathways to Success

A comprehensive model for supporting foster care youth through the transition to adulthood — using coach-like engagement, community connections, and youth-driven goal setting.

PREPARED BY

Lanae Davis, M.P.A.

Ali McLagan, MA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Thank You

The authors would like to thank the following for their contributions to this report.

We are especially grateful to the individuals listed here for their expertise and commitment in developing this manual.

We also want to thank the youth and young adults with lived experience and the navigators and supervisors who contributed to the planning and implementation of Pathways.

Without their insight, partnership, and hard work, Pathways would not exist.

CONTRIBUTORS

Denise McHugh, JD

Executive Director

Spark Community Foundation

**Trevor Williams, CPCC,
ACC**

Youth Services Unit Manager

Colorado Office of Children, Aging,
and Community Services
Division of Child Welfare

**Jeffrey Romero, M.P.A.,
PCC**

Learning & Development Specialist
and Youth Services Liaison

Colorado Office of Children, Aging,
and Community Services Learning
and Development Team

SUGGESTED CITATION

Davis, L., & McLagan,
A. (2026). Pathways to
Success Intervention
Manual. Center for
Policy Research. [https://
centerforpolicyresearch.
org/pathways-to-success/](https://centerforpolicyresearch.org/pathways-to-success/)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction	1
Background	2
Development of the Model	3
About Pathways to Success	5
Evidence Supporting Pathways to Success	6
Purpose of This Manual	8
II. The Intervention	9
Navigator Recruitment, Selection, and Training	11
Roles and Required Qualifications of Navigators	12
Training Curriculum and Onboarding	13
Ongoing Training and Technical Assistance	14
Identification/Enrollment of Youth	17
Target Population, Referral and Recruitment	17
Screening and Consent	18
Delivering the Intervention	19
Flow and Timeline of the Intervention	20
Core Components of the Intervention	20
Navigator Practice Requirements and Minimum Expectations	25
Tools	32
Resources and Partnerships	34
III. Measuring Program Performance and Fidelity	36
Quality Improvement and Support	38
Data Collection and Management	39
Fidelity Measures	41
Conclusion	43
Appendices	44

I.

Introduction

The background, context, and evidence base behind the Pathways to Success model — and what this manual is designed to help practitioners accomplish.

- Background
- Development of the Model
- About Pathways to Success
- Evidence Supporting Pathways to Success
- Purpose of This Manual

Background

1.2 M

PEOPLE AGES
14–24 EXPERIENCE
HOMELESSNESS
NATIONALLY

3-5x

ESTIMATED
UNDERCOUNT OF
YOUTH HOMELESSNESS
IN COLORADO

High

FOSTER CARE
YOUTH AT
ELEVATED RISK OF
HOMELESSNESS

Youth homelessness is a pervasive issue across the nation. Estimates of the number of youth and young adults 14–24 years old experiencing homelessness vary widely depending on the data source and methodology used. However, some estimate that 1.2 million youth and young adults aged 14–24 experience homelessness across the country, and many suspect that this is an undercount due to logistical barriers and differing definitions of homelessness.¹ A 2025 study estimated that the number of youth experiencing homelessness and receiving services in Colorado is undercounted by three to five times the number of youth known to a system.² Additionally, homelessness during youth is linked to a range of negative outcomes, including poor health and well-being,^{3, 4} higher rates of unemployment,⁵ and increased exposure to violence.⁶ Given these consequences, there is a clear need for efforts aimed at addressing and preventing youth homelessness.

Youth and young adults in the child welfare system experience an increased risk of becoming homeless as they age out of care. A report published by the Congressional Research Service⁷ notes that youth who emancipate from foster care are particularly vulnerable to homelessness because they lack the proper support to successfully transition to adulthood. Several Colorado studies offer further and compelling support for this national report. They have found high proportions of youth and young adults with foster care histories and/or juvenile justice involvement in homeless populations across urban, suburban, and rural parts of the state.^{8, 9} Policymakers and practitioners across the nation are actively working to prevent and address homelessness among youth leaving foster care, but evidence on effective interventions remains limited. Additionally, there is currently very little evidence on how to meet the needs of this population overall.

1 National Conference of State Legislatures. (2025). *Youth homelessness overview*.

2 Davis, L., et al. (2024). *Building a sustainable and replicable approach to estimating the prevalence of youth homelessness: Final Report*. Center for Policy Research.

3 Collins, J. L., & Thomas, L. J. (2018). *The influence of social determinants of health among young adults after they have left foster care in the US*. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 27(9–10), 2022–2030. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.14317>.

4 Gultekin, L. E., et al. (2020). *Health risks and outcomes of homelessness in school-age children and youth: A scoping review of the literature*. *The Journal of School Nursing*, 36(1), 10–18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1059840519875182>.

5 Parpochi, M., Moniruzzaman, A., & Somers, J. M. (2021). *The association between experiencing homelessness in childhood or youth and adult housing stability in housing first*. *BMC Psychiatry*, 21(1), Article 138. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-021-03142-0>.

6 Smith-Grant, J., et al. (2023). *Risk behaviors and experiences among youth experiencing homelessness—Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 23 U.S. states and 11 local school districts, 2019*. *Journal of Community Health*, 47(2), 324–333. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-021-01056-2>.

7 Fernandes-Alcantara, A. L. (2014). *Youth transitioning from foster care: Issues for Congress* (CRS Report No. R40218). Congressional Research Service.

8 Orsi, R., Clemens, E., Thibodeau, H. (2021). *Characteristics of youth formerly in foster care who experienced homelessness as young adults: A Denver metro area study*. Colorado Evaluation and Action Lab.

9 Orsi-Hunt, R., et al. (2023). *Young adults with lived foster care experience who later experience homelessness: An exploratory latent class analysis*. *International Journal on Child Maltreatment: Research, Policy and Practice*, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42448-023-00160-1>.

In response to this issue, the Children's Bureau funded the multiphase Youth At-Risk of Homelessness (YARH) grant program. The objective of the YARH grants was to, "Support communities in designing comprehensive service models intended to prevent homelessness among youth and young adults involved in the child welfare system, and test one of these models to build the evidence base on promising strategies that support these youth."¹⁰

Colorado Pathways to Success (Pathways) was developed under the YARH grant funding. The development of the model intervention called "Pathways to Success" and how the YARH funding supported this work is described below.



Development of the Model

YARH was structured into three phases (see below).

I **PHASE I · 2013–2015**
Planning & Development — YARH funding awarded to 18 state/county providers. Colorado's DCW, CPR, and lived experience youth co-developed the Pathways model.

II **PHASE II · 2015–2019**
Formative Evaluation — Model implemented and tested across rural, urban, and suburban Colorado settings. Evidence gathered through surveys, interviews, and case data.

III **PHASE III · 2020–2028**
Summative Evaluation — Ongoing rigorous evaluation to build the evidence base for replication across other child welfare jurisdictions.

¹⁰ *Building program capacity to support youth at risk of homelessness (YARH): Phases I-III*. Mathematica. (n.d.). <https://www.mathematica.org/projects/youth-at-risk-of-homelessness>

During Phase 1 of YARH, the Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Child Welfare, and Center for Policy Research, developed a committee comprised of youth with lived experience, county departments of child welfare, RHY providers, community organizations, and other state partners to develop the Pathways to Success Program designed to support youth aging out of foster care and prevent homelessness. The committee's discussions focused on identifying the needs of transition-age youth and brainstorming strategies to address those needs. These conversations led to the Pathways model intervention and implemented in three pilot locations. The purpose of YARH was to build evidence to support the Pathways model intervention and Phase II (2015-2019) centered on testing the model through a formative evaluation. Following the promising results from Phase II, CDHS was awarded Phase III (2020-2028) to further build evidence through a summative evaluation. The Theory of Change and Logic Model developed during Phases II appear as [Appendices A](#) and [B](#) at the end of this document.

OVERALL GOAL OF PATHWAYS

Improve core outcomes and prevent homelessness among Colorado youth and young adults with current or previous foster care involvement, by planning, testing, and implementing a comprehensive statewide intervention targeted at transition-age young people who are at an increased risk of becoming homeless.

A unique aspect of the Pathways model features the input and guidance from youth with lived experience. Youth with lived experience of homelessness and housing instability and multi-system involvement played a central role in developing the Pathways Model intervention. Youth shared their perspectives and experiences to better understand the needs of youth transitioning out of foster care and were central to the decision-making process in adopting the model's components.

YOUTH-DRIVEN FROM THE START

One example of youth-driven decision-making in the development of the Pathways model was a youth-led Shark Tank exercise. In this exercise, experts and youth service providers pitched different model components, and youth “invested” varying amounts of “money” based on how much they valued each component. Their “investments” helped to zero in on the most essential needs of youth and ultimately, the development of the Pathways model.

About Pathways to Success

PROGRAM AT-A-GLANCE

Pathways to Success (Pathways) is a voluntary, intensive, youth-driven, strengths-based case management approach with the long-term goal of preventing homelessness among youth with foster care experience.

The primary focus of the intervention is on preventing homelessness among youth ages 14–22 who are currently in or transitioning out of foster care placement, with an additional emphasis on serving youth up to the age of 23 who have foster care histories, but who are no longer in care and are homeless. The intervention works specifically to improve youth outcomes in these five areas.¹¹

 HOUSING

 EMPLOYMENT

 EDUCATION

 HEALTH & WELL-BEING

 PERMANENT CONNECTIONS

The Pathways model is designed to be short-term, intensive, and to continue until youth are ready to graduate to a less intensive care management model, when their goals are achieved and the intervention is complete. The model is built around case managers, called Navigators, employing an engagement strategy called “Engaging Youth in a Coach-like Way” (EYCLW) to build a relationship with youth and work alongside youth to develop and achieve their goals, provide services, and connect to referral partners in the community.

Providing services from the standpoint of coach-like engagement means promoting the youth’s strengths and self-advocacy. Youth direct the intervention, while Navigators meet regularly with them to provide crisis stabilization support and individualized services such as mentoring, financial literacy, and sexual and relationship health training, tailored to each youth’s needs and strengths. To support their coach-like engagement, Navigators use a variety of tools and resources to support youth, such as flex funds, housing vouchers, and referrals to relevant resources. It is important to note that the model is flexible; each youth’s experience may look different depending on their goals, strengths, Navigator, and available community resources.

¹¹ Permanent connections are sometimes referred to as “permanency” throughout this manual and its materials. Permanent connections (or permanency) refer to lasting relational support in a young person’s life.

Evidence Supporting Pathways to Success

Evidence building for the Pathways model began during Phase II through a formative evaluation. Findings from the project's formative evaluation suggest that the Pathways model is linked to a range of positive outcomes.^{12, 13} The formative evaluation used case management data, follow-up surveys, and interviews with youth to understand the impact and outcomes of the Pathways model twelve months post intervention enrollment. Key outcomes suggest that the Pathways model was linked to improved outcomes related to housing, employment, education, permanent connections to supportive adults, and healthcare:

Housing

Follow-up surveys with youth 12 months post enrollment revealed a significant decrease in homelessness after enrolling in the Pathways program. **The percentage of youth reporting that they lived in a shelter, hotel room, or on the street dropped from 37% at enrollment to 10% 12 months later.** Further, in interviews and focus groups, many youths shared that they believed they would be homeless without the support of their Navigator. For example, one youth shared, *"(Without my Navigator,) I'd be sleeping on the side of the street."*

Employment

Follow-up surveys also revealed that there was an increase in employment and wages from intake to follow-up. **Youth reported a 4% increase in part-time employment and a 10% increase in full-time employment.** Additionally, for youth who reported their income, the average earnings for youth between intake and follow-up increased by \$425 a month.

Education

For youth aged 18 or younger, enrollment in the Pathways program was associated with a significant **increase in the percentage of youth currently enrolled in school** and those who graduated high school ($p < 0.05$), as indicated by pre- and post-survey results.

Permanent Connections

At both the intake and follow-up, youth were asked how often they were in touch with their parents or other relatives such as grandparents or aunts and uncles. At baseline, 6% of youth reported seeing three or more relatives at least once a month. At follow-up, that number had risen to 16% of youth. While Pathways did not seem to help youth identify more supportive adults in their lives, it did seem to **help increase the number and frequency of contacts with relatives.**

Healthcare

Follow-up surveys showed that **youth felt more prepared to manage their own healthcare**, and the percentage of youth reporting medical coverage increased from 77% at baseline to 90% at follow-up.

12 Davis, L., & Thibodeau, H. (2023). *Preventing homelessness among youth aging out of foster care: Formative evaluation results of a coach-like engagement model*. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 105(4), 703–715. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10443894231193272>.

13 Davis, L., Thoennes, N., & Matyasic, S. (Sept. 2020). *Colorado Pathways to Success formative evaluation final report*. Center for Policy Research.

Additionally, interviews and focus groups with youth indicated that many youth receiving services within the pathways model found the program helpful and empowering. Others reported an increase in knowledge of how to be self-sufficient.

“It gave me hope ... I was ready to give up. But because of Pathways, I was able to get stability and get my life back on track for me and my baby ... I really didn’t think there could be a person who could help me because everyone turned their backs on me and it was really nice to have that person to be there for [me] ... It means a lot.”

- PATHWAYS YOUTH

“I’m a visual learner; you have to really show me for me to catch on. Pathways is not just like ‘here’s your resources,’ it’s ‘let me show you how to do this,’ so later on down the line when [my Navigator] isn’t there, you still know.”

- PATHWAYS YOUTH

Purpose of This Manual

This intervention manual is designed for practitioners and policymakers to learn about and implement the Pathways program. It has two main sections.

SECTION II

Intervention

Details on how to recruit, hire, train, and support Navigators and their supervisors; how to identify and enroll participants; and how the program operates

SECTION III

Evaluation

Guides users in evaluating the program and provides tools to monitor fidelity and support continuous quality improvement, ensuring the program is delivered consistently and effectively.

Who This Manual is For:



PRACTITIONERS

Navigators, supervisors, and agency leaders implementing Pathways



POLICYMAKERS

State and county officials considering adoption or funding of the model



RESEARCHERS

Evaluators and partners monitoring fidelity and program outcomes

II.

The Intervention

This section details how staff are selected and trained as Navigators, how youth are recruited and screened into the program, and the specific intervention criteria that must be met to ensure proper application of the Pathways model intervention.

- Navigator Recruitment, Selection & Training
- Identification & Enrollment of Youth
- Core Components & Coach-Like Engagement
- Navigator Practice Requirements
- Tools, Resources & Partnerships



Pathways aims to prevent homelessness among youth aging out of the foster care system. Additionally, it focuses on achieving primary outcomes in the areas of housing stability, permanency, employment, education, and health and well-being.

The Pathways intervention is designed around a **Navigator who engages youth in a coach-like way** to provide youth-driven support and services to help them achieve their goals. Coach-like engagement emphasizes the youth's priorities and strengths, with a Navigator and youth collaborating on a plan tailored to self-identified needs. Navigators also draw on tools such as flex funds, crisis stabilization, and referrals to support youth needs and goals.

Pathways is designed to be time-limited, with youth graduating from the program typically around one year post-intervention.

Navigator Recruitment, Selection, and Training

Pathways requires specific staffing roles and positions to operate. The model requires a project management team for oversight that includes a Project Director, Project Manager/Coordinator, Project Evaluator, State Chafee¹⁴ Coordinator, trainers, coaches, supervisors and the Navigators. While each of these leadership and support positions are important for any project or program, the defining practitioners who are administering the intervention with youth are Navigators. Therefore, this section of the manual will focus primarily on the qualifications, recruitment, and training of Navigators.



A Navigator’s role is to walk alongside, rather than lead, the youth on their journey through the Pathways to Success intervention and to stability in the five key outcome areas. The range of work involved, and the unique youth-led style of Pathways requires that Navigators come pre-equipped with certain qualifying attitudes and experiences, described in the next section, that can be strengthened through training and ongoing support.

The Pathways to Success program was originally implemented and tested in both county child welfare agencies and in runaway and homeless youth service providers in rural, urban and suburban settings. Each of the sites¹⁵ in the initial implementation phase created brand new positions for the role of Navigator, though some shifted the responsibilities of existing caseworkers to train and provide services in the Pathways model. Agencies implementing Pathways had leeway over how they staffed the Navigator position and who would supervise them. The decision to let sites decide how best to staff positions to deliver the intervention was made early on through the counsel of the project management team. Sites wishing to replicate the model should determine internally the best approach given resources and scale of implementation.

¹⁴ The John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (commonly called the Chafee program) provides federal funding to support youth and young adults currently or formerly in foster care as they transition to adulthood.

¹⁵ A "site" refers to a state Division of Child Welfare, a county Department of Human Services, or a community service provider or agency. It can be any entity implementing the Pathways model.

Roles and Required Qualifications of Navigators

The Navigator job description was developed based on input from youth, Steering Committee members, demonstration sites, and project management. Youth articulated the skills, attributes, and experience to include in the job description. Overall, youth expressed that candidates need to demonstrate that they like working with transition-age youth. The job description may be modified to meet individual agency hiring requirements and to include any agency-specific materials or qualifications. Appearing as [Appendix C](#) is the Pathways Navigator job description and an example Navigator job description from the Denver Department of Human Services that shows the modifications made for their agency's requirements.

Youth and Navigators alike felt very strongly that Navigators must be passionate about working with older youth and should "appreciate working with transition-age youth and young adults" who are at-risk of homelessness or who are homeless. Experience with foster care, homelessness, and affiliated service agencies are extremely relevant qualifications for a Navigator's experience and should be considered at least as important as educational criteria. Further, because the program is youth-driven, an ideal Navigator will also have a flexible, solutions-oriented attitude and be comfortable trying new approaches. Flexibility of work style is also an important quality for intervention staff to possess, as the job requires working across a variety of settings both independently and collaboratively.

Navigators and program staff identified several other attributes that should be considered ideal for Navigators. Youth in Pathways often have histories that include trauma or instability, and Navigators considered having a knowledge of trauma-informed care to be extremely helpful in building connections with youth. Similarly, Navigators repeatedly stressed the importance of knowing about and being well-connected with community resource providers to establish referral relationships with.

Sites have flexibility in determining how to fill the position. Some sites may choose to advertise on their official job boards or external sites to draw in outside applicants, while others may wish to shift existing staff into a Navigator position. When using existing staff to fill a Navigator role, it is important to consider staff who have previous experience with older youth, such as foster care workers, case managers, or behavioral health coaches. Demonstration sites are encouraged to have youth participate in a meaningful way during the interview process and to have youth participate in interviews with outside candidates and new hires.

✓ IDEAL QUALITIES FOR NAVIGATORS

- Appreciate working with youth
- Experience with or knowledge of foster care or homelessness
- Flexible and solutions-oriented
- Works with minimal supervision
- Connected to or knowledgeable about community resources

Training Curriculum and Onboarding

The Pathways onboarding process dedicates the first week of training to familiarizing Navigators with staff and agency procedures, the goal of Pathways, coach-like engagement, and the Pathways manual. Just as our sites were given discretion over the hiring criteria that were appropriate for their agency, the sites each had their own slightly different onboarding process for getting their staff familiar with their agency. Sites implementing the Pathways model are responsible for training their Navigators on their own site-specific policies, procedures, and culture. This may look quite a bit different between agencies. For example, a RHY provider that has one of their regular case managers trained as a Navigator may have to familiarize that Navigator with shelter and other housing protocols, and facilities before training them in Pathways-specific curriculum, whereas a site that provides services for homeless youth in rural or frontier counties may not operate out of a physical location and will instead focus much more heavily on how Navigators will connect with various other agencies to identify and engage homeless youth.

A sample onboarding framework that was used during the formative evaluation is in [Appendix D](#). As shown, the implementation in Colorado during the formative evaluation dedicated the early weeks to staff receiving hands-on training from the evaluation team to learn about the role of collecting data and how to use an online management information system called Pathways Management Information System (PMIS) to support case management and data collection. Replicating sites may choose to use existing case management software or develop their own to track service delivery, monitor fidelity, and conduct ongoing continuous quality improvement (CQI) and reporting. Agencies will base training on systems as appropriate for their site.

After Navigators have reviewed their site-specific material, data collection, and an overview of Pathways, they will spend several weeks in partnership with a peer-practitioner at another site, if available. The goal of this pairing is to give hands-on demonstrations of the duties involved as a Navigator and how the program works for youth who are already enrolled and working with a Navigator.

Before practicing the Pathways model, Navigators and supervisors must also undergo training on **Engaging Youth in a Coach-like Way**. Trainings on coach-like engagement are conducted by the Child Welfare Training System in Colorado and contain several activities and breakout groups designed to familiarize participants with applied coaching techniques.

These training sessions are not only for navigators. It is equally important to train supervisors in coach-like engagement and other aspects of the Pathways model, as supervisors will be responsible for managing Pathways at the agency level, troubleshooting challenges arising for youth, and generally providing support to Navigators. Because the approach may be considerably different from existing strategies, it is also important to ensure that leadership throughout the agency understands how the intervention works and is supportive of its implementation. Additionally, ensuring that agency leadership and supervisors are trained on the model creates an opportunity for the site to reinforce ongoing learning and skill development and allows the site to incorporate Pathways into team and agency culture.

In addition to mandatory training and onboarding procedures agencies require for new staff, intervention staff are also encouraged to participate in supplemental training on topics such as trauma-informed care, Positive Youth Development, and special topics like human trafficking, substance use, immigration, and renter's rights. These trainings are often provided by the state, county, and local nonprofits.

REQUIRED TRAININGS

- ✓ Agency-specific requirements and onboarding
- ✓ Pathways model and fidelity
- ✓ Data management system user training (or review of other data collection)
- ✓ Engaging Youth in a Coach-like Way

RECOMMENDED/SUPPLEMENTAL TRAININGS

Methodologies and frameworks:

- Positive youth development
- Trauma-informed care
- Social case work
- Solutions-focused care

Techniques and practices:

- Motivational interviewing
- Setting boundaries and facilitating closure
- Harm reduction
- First aid

Specific/relevant topics:

- Youth mental health, trafficking, substance use, domestic violence, and interpersonal violence.

Sites may choose to have readiness assessments for Navigators and staff, if desired. At minimum, staff are considered able to begin working with youth once they have received their agency-specific training, reviewed the Pathways Manual, been trained in data collection methods (if applicable), and have a plan in place to acquire the necessary coach-like engagement training. Lastly, it should be noted that proper informed consent and release of information (ROI) procedures should be in place informing youth of how their data will be used, how it will be stored, and to whom it may be released.

Ongoing Training and Technical Assistance

In addition to initial onboarding and training, Navigators should receive ongoing support to refine their skills and address recurring challenges that arise while engaging youth. Table 1 summarizes a standard meeting schedule that focuses on ongoing support, technical assistance and program feedback at all program levels. The number of meetings a replicating site wants to hold might also depend on how their implementation is structured; if, for example, there is only one Navigator who only operates out of one location, it may be less important to formal meetings since they may have closer relationships with their supervisors and area supports. The Pathways model strongly encourages participation in technical assistance between all project levels. Navigators and program staff should also request support as needed for immediate issues, such as database management or technical questions about data collection, supervision, and training.

Table 1: Ongoing Technical Assistance Schedule

Meeting	Topic	Freq.	Attendees
All-Sites Meeting	Meeting to discuss project updates and issues regarding implementation	Monthly	Supervisors, Project Management team
Supervisor Coaching Call*	Supervisors meet to build skills to support Navigators and supervise fidelity	Monthly	Supervisors
Navigator Coaching Call*	Navigators meet to build skills to support Navigators and fidelity to the model	Monthly	Navigators
Navigator Workshops*	An in-person all-day workshop focused on building Navigator skills	Yearly	Navigators
Technical Assistance Calls	Calls with Navigators and Evaluation team to discuss issues/challenges and supervise fidelity	Monthly	Navigators, Evaluation Team
State Housing Calls	Calls to discuss housing voucher needs and issues with Navigators and the state housing lead at the Department of Local Affairs	Monthly, or as needed	Navigators, project manager, evaluator, Department of Local Affairs, Division of Housing
Group Supervision*	Meetings to discuss challenges with individual youth and generate "next steps" and get supervision as needed	Monthly	Navigators (supervisors, leadership as needed or on a rotating basis)
Co-Active Coaching Bookclub	Meetings with an expert in coach-like engagement to discuss a chapter in <i>Co-Active Coaching, Fourth Edition</i> , ¹⁶ which outlines the skills and philosophy inherent in coach-like engagement.	Monthly or Bi-monthly	Navigators, Supervisors
Drop-in Office Hours	A designated time for individuals to engage with peers and experts in coach-like engagement to discuss case-specific questions and apply coaching skills across different interactions.	Monthly	Navigators
Site Visits	In-person meetings between project management and sites to discuss issues sites are specifically facing in the model	Yearly	Site staff including Navigators, Supervisors, and other members of organizational leadership

* Indicates that these meetings are high priority and attendees have commended their effectiveness in keeping fidelity and receiving support.

16 Kimsey-House, K., Sandahl, P., & Kimsey-House, H. (2018). *Co-Active Coaching, Fourth Edition: The proven framework for transformative conversations at work and in life*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

Coaching calls are a core component of ongoing training and are essential for helping Navigators develop the skills and the understanding necessary to implement Engaging Youth in a Coach-Like Way (EYCLW) with fidelity. After completing their initial onboarding, Navigators join monthly cohort-based coaching calls where they practice and refine their coaching skills in a supportive learning environment amongst their peers. Each call follows a consistent structure: one cohort member volunteers to serve as the coach, another volunteers to serve as the coachee and brings a topic for the session, and the remaining cohort members observe and offer feedback once the coaching demonstration concludes. The feedback given focuses on coaching skills and does not allow for additional coaching questions directed at the coachee. This sequence mirrors the flow of a typical Navigator–youth meeting and allows Navigators to practice key elements of EYCLW, outlined in the section “Core Principles of Coach-like Engagement in Pathways,” including listening, powerful questioning, and creating a designed alliance between the youth and Navigator. These regular opportunities for structured practice are essential for Navigators to comprehend the practice of engaging youth in a coach-like way and understand how to apply it in practice.

Furthermore, it is important for Navigators to identify other opportunities to practice applying coaching skills and tools. Practicing coaching skills regularly is essential for Navigators to adequately engage youth in a coach-like way. Additional practice can be done in supervision, team meetings, and other meetings Navigators participate in. This practice allows for a Navigator to experience what may or may not work well with youth and gives them additional opportunities to practice and develop particular skills.



Identification/Enrollment of Youth

This section focuses on the process for identifying and enrolling youth for enrollment in the Pathways intervention.

Target Population, Referral and Recruitment

The Pathways intervention serves youth age 14–23 years old with child welfare involvement and who are at an increased risk of homelessness. Risk of homelessness is determined by the completion of the Pathways Screening Tool (See [Appendix E](#)) which identifies risk factors associated with homelessness. Eligible youth may be identified and referred to Pathways through a variety of referral sources. Most commonly, youth are identified by their county child welfare case worker, RHY case manager, referrals from community service providers that work with the target population, or a review of administrative data records.

Once a youth has been identified as Pathways eligible, they are referred to the appropriate Navigator who will administer the Screening Tool to determine their level of risk. The referral process can vary by site to integrate with existing case intake procedures—for example, a provider may have a point in their intake process that lends itself to a smoother transition or administration of certain tools.

Screening and Consent

Youth who are identified as Pathways eligible must complete the **Screening Tool**. The Screening Tool is an adaptation of the research-based Transition-Age Youth (TAY) triage tool¹⁷ used to identify youth most at risk of chronic homelessness and is informed by Colorado-specific research on homelessness among foster youth. The Screening Tool also incorporates trafficking questions from the Vera Institute.¹⁸ The Screening Tool consists of 12 yes/no questions that asks about risk factors such as parental incarceration and foster care history; the youth's involvement in the foster care system; use of marijuana; factors contributing to running away, such as conflict or abuse in the home; pregnancy; and human trafficking. The greater number of risk factors identified by the Screening Tool indicate a greater risk of homelessness. Pathways may enroll youth into the program who have a minimum of one risk factor identified; however, the threshold may be adjusted for program enrollment to moderate the flow of youth into the program and control caseload size.

The screening may be administered by a Navigator, by a service partner, or by the referring child welfare worker. No special training in using the tool is necessary, and the screening may be administered in person or by phone. When considering who is best suited to administer the screening, it may be helpful to consider the following factors:

- Does the screener have sufficient knowledge of Pathways to answer questions about the services youth may receive through the program?
- Does the youth have an established, positive relationship with the screener? Some questions, such as the human trafficking question, may be sensitive for youth to answer with an unknown adult.
- What are the procedures for getting completed screenings to Navigators to enroll eligible youth? If the screener is a referring child welfare worker, how will they transmit the referral to a Navigator? If a Navigator is the one who conducts the screening, they will know their capacity to take on new youth and can immediately transition the youth to the next steps (informed consent and enrollment).

Youth with previous foster care involvement who identified one or more risk factors on the Screening Tool are considered Pathways-eligible. If the screening was completed by someone other than a Pathways Navigator, the eligible youth should be referred to a Navigator and presented with the opportunity to receive Pathways intervention services. This Navigator will explain the Pathways program and present youth with the opportunity to receive Pathways services.

¹⁷ Rice, E. (2013). *The TAY triage tool: A tool to identify homeless transition age youth most in need of permanent supportive housing*.

¹⁸ Vera Institute of Justice. (June 2014). *Screening for human trafficking: Guidelines for administering the trafficking victim identification tool (TVIT)*.



Delivering the Intervention

Pathways to Success is designed to enable and empower youth to achieve goals that will impact their long-term success. These goals are organized along the five outcome areas of housing, education, employment, permanent supportive connections, and health and well-being. To help youth achieve these goals, Pathways employs a Navigator who acts as a coach and mentor to assess strengths and barriers to youth development, and to provide them with crisis stabilization, tools, and resources. Because Pathways is a voluntary, youth-driven and goal-oriented approach, the intervention is designed to remain flexible to the unique needs of each youth.

[Pathways] is a program that helps me achieve what I want to achieve in my life ... [it's] super focused around what I want and need, instead of what the system wants me to do.

- PATHWAYS YOUTH

Flow and Timeline of the Intervention

Youth engage with Navigators and receive intervention services when they are ready. The typical flow and timeline of Pathways is shown in [Appendix F](#). Pathways is divided into three phases:

1 ENGAGEMENT PHASE

- In this phase, Navigators screen youth for eligibility and invite them to participate in the program.

2 ACTIVE PHASE

- In this phase, Navigators engage youth in a coach-like way to support youth in setting and advancing their own goals. Navigators can support youth progression towards achieving those goals using tools available through the intervention including flex funds.
- For youth who are currently enrolled and active in the intervention, Navigators are expected to follow up with youth in person or by phone, text, email, or video conference at least once per week, based on the needs and ability of the youth. Flexibility and accountability are key, however, as some youth have full-time jobs and cannot meet in person every week. Other youth need more intensive support for specific periods of time, for example, when going through the process of securing and setting up a new apartment.

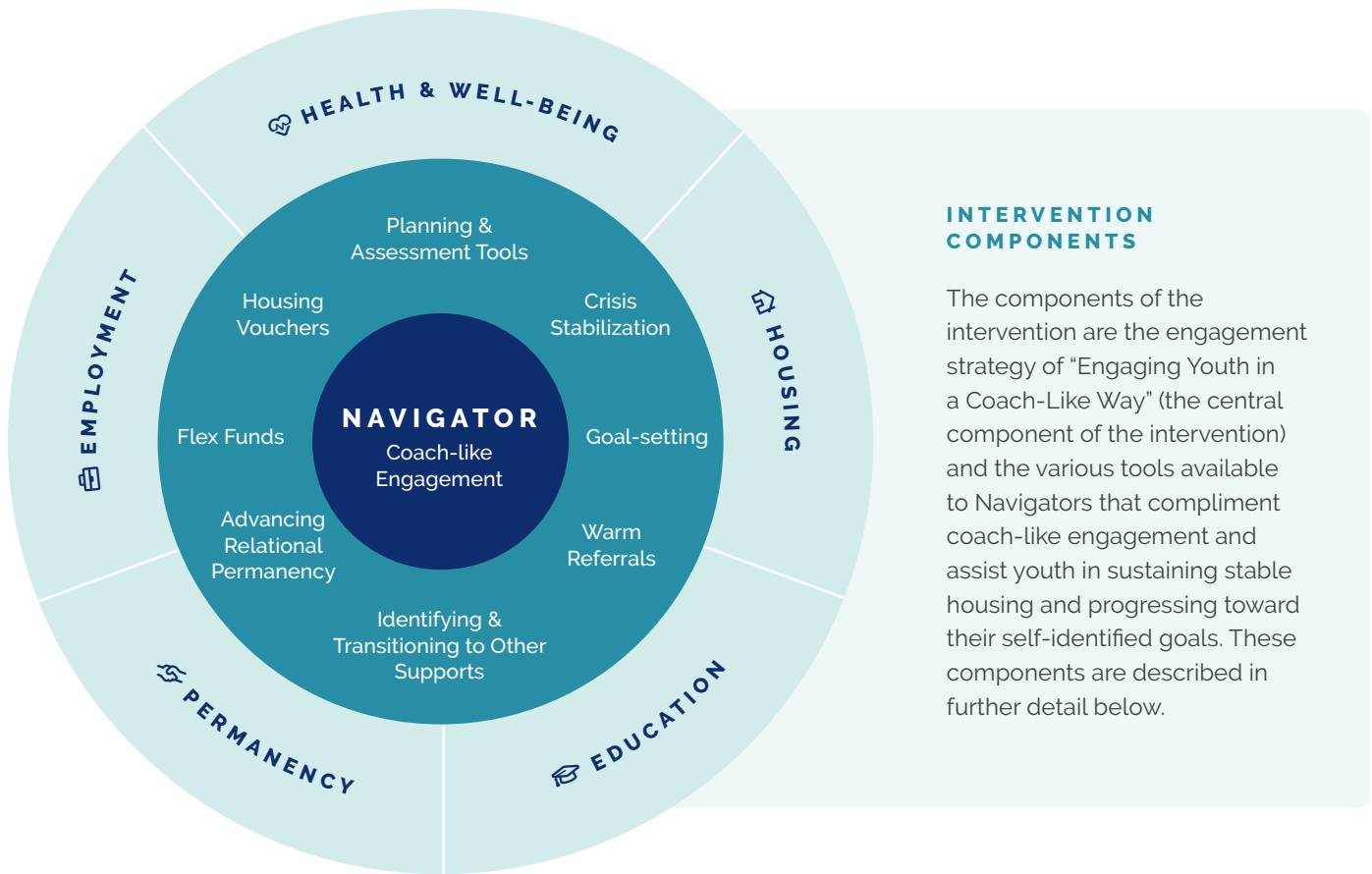
3 COMMUNITY TRANSITION PHASE

- In this phase, youth graduate and transition to a less intense intervention, reduce their level of contact with the Navigator, and focus on identifying and transitioning to other available community supports.
- If at any time after graduation youth decide they need more intensive services, they can re-enter the active phase of Pathways.

Core Components of the Intervention

The cornerstone of Pathways consists of a Navigator utilizing a coach-like model of engagement to help youth identify and work toward achieving at least two goals related to the five outcome areas of housing, employment education, permanent supportive connections, and health and well-being. Youth set the agenda and pace of their work with a Navigator while developing and making a plan to achieve their goals. A visual summary of the Pathways intervention is in Figure 1 on the following page.

Figure 1. Visual Representation of the Pathways Model Components



🕒 **(Core) Engaging Youth in a Coach-like Way:**

Each Navigator carries a small caseload (up to 12 actively engaged youth for a full-time Navigator) that allows Navigators to provide intensive and consistent support to youth in their caseload. EYCLW provides a framework of support through which Navigators administer all other components. The key feature that sets coach-like engagement apart from typical intensive case management models is that it is entirely youth-driven and assumes that the youth is a person to be supported versus seeing the youth as a set of problems to solve. When Navigators act as coaches, they build a supportive relationship with the youth that encourages them to set their own individual goals, plan, and pace. While regular case management may focus on achieving the same outcomes by providing services, coach-like engagement empowers youth to be their own advocates. As one youth summarized, “Pathways had me in this mindset that I’m trying to prove something and that I don’t want to let [my Navigator] down because of that relationship we developed.” In essence, youth are responsible for setting goals, while Navigators focus on helping youth develop the skills and capacities to achieve those goals. Coach-like engagement is further detailed in the section about Navigator Practice Requirements and Minimum Expectations.

II. THE INTERVENTION

Through the lens of coach-like engagement, a Navigator provides intensive **case management** services. Providing case management is not an approach unique to Pathways; what *is* unique is how the classifications of case management change when Navigators act as coaches. For example, spending multiple hours helping a youth clean their apartment might not be a traditional form of case management, but within Pathways this service might be vital to improving a youth's health and well-being, or to making them feel secure and safe in their housing. Below are some examples of what providing case management services while Engaging Youth in a Coach-like Way might look like in each of the five outcome areas:

Outcome Area	Activities
 HOUSING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helping the youth look on an apartment-search website• Calling potential landlords• Furniture shopping• Assisting with utilities• Taking youth to complete the housing application process• Filing appeals when a youth is denied housing• Helping a youth move• Creating a self-sufficiency budget
 EDUCATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Getting paperwork from human services agency to verify dependent status to apply for financial aid• Updating and installing software to make youth's computer compatible for online courses• Taking youth on a campus tour• Attending a graduation ceremony• Helping a youth study for a test
 EMPLOYMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helping a youth find a car so they could get hired for a job• Filing taxes with a youth• Driving youth to a job interview• Reviewing a resume• Obtaining vital documents• Plan around discussing issues with background checks
 HEALTH & WELL-BEING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transport to/from a doctor's appointment• Shopping for health insurance• Providing a listening ear for youth to vent frustrations• Pet shopping• Discussing healthy relationships and DV/IPV issues• Connecting to mental health resources
 PERMANENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helping a youth plan a party• Facilitating family reunification• Purchasing a suitcase for a family trip Inviting supportive people to meetings with youth• Providing support and company when meeting with family/friends/mentors

© **Crisis stabilization:**

Some youth, especially those who are experiencing homelessness, enroll in Pathways during a period of crisis. When this occurs, the primary focus of a Navigator is crisis stabilization. This involves utilizing all other components of the intervention to address immediate safety and/or housing needs before the development of goals (below).

© **Establishing Goals:**

Every youth works with a Navigator to develop two goals during the intervention. These relate to one or more of the five outcome areas and guide the work youth and their Navigators do together. The process of setting goals might include the use of a worksheet or be structured more as an informal interview with youth about what they would like to achieve to be ready to transition to independent living. Youth may set as many goals as desired and are free to add goals throughout the program. Progress toward these goals is tracked by Navigators, who maintain regular contact with youth and guide them through next steps. During the formative evaluation, the progress of goals was tracked through a data management information system; however, Navigators should be able to track progress by referring to the youth's goals and keeping case management notes. Additional goals may be developed but only two are required.

© **Securing and maintaining safe and stable housing:**

This can take many forms depending on the state of housing each youth is experiencing. In some cases, a youth has a plan to live with a friend or family member, in which case their Navigator acts as a facilitator for building and maintaining supportive relationships. More directly, Navigators can provide assistance by helping the youth to acquire housing vouchers and by building connections with landlords or developments that will rent to youth with challenges such as juvenile records, no rental history, low income, or special needs. Additionally, there are many barriers to getting housing for the first time and Navigators can provide support by helping youth understand and acquire the necessary documentation (letters of reference, acquiring necessary documentation, making calls for youth) to become a renter.

© **Case planning and assessment tools:**

To assess a youth's needs and opportunities for growth, Navigators are equipped with a variety of evidence-based tools. These tools are described in greater detail in the Assessment Tools section and are designed to help Navigators and youth understand what areas of focus a youth most needs to be ready to transition to self-sufficiency after graduation.

© **Flex Funds:**

Access to financial/tangible supports is key to staying on track in achieving goals. Therefore, Navigators must be able to provide immediate resources for youth in need. To provide these immediate resources, each site is provided with flex funds, which are described in greater detail in the Resources section and can be used to provide immediate assistance to youth when all other resources have been tapped and the youth has an unmet need.

© **Referrals:**

No agency or organization is a one-stop shop for helping foster care youth overcome the myriad of challenges necessary to be equipped for independence. Because of this, Navigators must be tapped into a wide referral network of partners in the human services field. When a youth has a particular problem or goal, a primary responsibility of their Navigator is to help the youth find solutions and refer them to the appropriate service agencies.

© **Establishing supportive connections with adults:**

A key indicator of long-term stability is relational permanency—ensuring the youth has at least one supportive adult they can turn to for help when needed. The Pathways model defines a supportive adult as any adult that the youth identifies as a supportive connection who is not providing professional support for them. The permanent connection could be a family member, mentor, coach, or support at a community agency. Navigators can foster connections by encouraging the youth to spend time building this connection or by providing a space or hosting an event that facilitates relationship-building.

© **Identifying community connections and transitioning youth to community supports:**

The Pathways model is designed to be short term and intensive, allowing the youth to graduate and transition to a less intensive care management model for the long term based on the graduation criteria described in [Appendix G](#). To facilitate this, Navigators must help the youth identify what areas of support exist within the community that youth will be able to rely upon following graduation. This could take the form of helping youth build supportive connections or other community assets (referral agencies) that will assist them after they are no longer Pathways-eligible.

Navigator Practice Requirements and Minimum Expectations

Coach-like engagement is the primary core strategy of the Pathways intervention and is defined as “an ongoing relationship which focuses on coaches taking action toward the realization of their [youths’] visions, goals, or desires.”¹⁹ Coach-like engagement has roots in the coaching models set forth by Co-Active and the International Coaching Federation (ICF), but is modified to reflect the unique needs, strengths, and circumstances of youth and young adults at risk of homelessness or currently experiencing homelessness. Navigators draw on the philosophy and relational approach of coaching while modifying its application to fit a service delivery context and the realities young adults face; hence, the term “coach-like engagement.” Coach-like engagement differs from other models in its underlying philosophy. Consistent with the Co-Active Coaching framework, Navigators regard youth as being “naturally creative, resourceful, and whole individuals who are capable of identifying and advocating for their needs”²⁰ rather than a problem that needs to be fixed.

Because some of the strategies included within the coach-like engagement skill set can feel so similar to other models like motivational interviewing and solution focused therapy, it is worth defining the strategy more clearly in this manual. This manual cannot be used as a substitute for formal training but gives context and sets expectations for the practitioner and agency leaders who are supporting the work.

Core Principles of Coach-like Engagement in Pathways

In applying coach-like engagement strategies, Navigators are primarily responsible for listening, asking powerful questions, providing encouragement, approaching youth with curiosity rather than judgement, setting achievable challenges, and establishing an environment that fosters the youth’s accountability to their journey. Most importantly, when Navigators act as coaches, it puts youth in the driving seat of their own intervention. Youth set the goals they want to work on and determine the pace of their work. Once a youth has chosen what they want to work on, their Navigator provides the support, tools, and resources of the Pathways program through a “coaching agreement” or “designed alliance”²¹ in which Navigators and youth discuss boundaries as well as strategies for maintaining an effective relationship. In addition to clarifying a youth’s agenda, the designed alliance becomes a tool for staying on track and maintaining focus.



The practice of coach-like engagement has to begin with how a Navigator, and the entire agency, view the youth who are served by the Pathways intervention. *Co-Active Coaching, Fourth Edition*

¹⁹ Colorado Child Welfare Training System. (2016). Engaging youth in a coach-like way Learner Guide.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Kimsey-House, K., Sandahl, P., & Kimsey-House, H. (2018). *Co-Active Coaching, Fourth Edition: The proven framework for transformative conversations at work and in life*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing.

elegantly describes the view through the lens of four cornerstones, or four principles, that underlay the way coaches work with their clients; “clients (youth) are naturally creative resourceful and whole,” “focus on the whole person,” “dance in the moment,” and “evoke transformation.” The context established by these cornerstones also align with the Core Competencies²² established by the ICF, and do a beautiful job setting the stage for the way Navigators engage youth.

These concepts clearly center engagement on the youth’s goals in a distinctly uncompromising way and establish a relational structure that empowers the youth as the central figure in their journey to a successful adulthood. More than simply adopting these principles as a view, they must become core to the work a Navigator is doing and need to be supported throughout the agency implementing the intervention for it to be successful. As described below, coach-like engagement requires a Navigator to refrain from advice giving/judgment and let the youth take lead. This can be very difficult when a youth makes mistakes or describes a life goal that may be contrary to generally accepted social norms or expectations. Pushing norms, testing limits, and making impulsive mistakes and decisions are all normal developmental behavior for youth, which heightens the need for Navigators to have the support of their agency’s leadership, at every level, as they do this work. If a Navigator is worried they will be held accountable for the youth’s goals or even mistakes the youth makes, they will not be able to implement coach-like engagement to fidelity. It is important to note that the agency also needs to ensure that Navigators are also following the Code of Ethics established by the ICF. This manual provides a framework that guides Navigators’ actions and reduces the need for individual agencies to establish additional policies that limit Navigators’ ability to work in the coaching space.

If these underlying principles are not centered in the work and supported by leadership, the coaching skills and techniques a Navigator employs loses impact and leads to a loss of trust. Not centering these principles is also contrary to the ethical guidelines that the ICF uses.

A key element of a Navigator’s role is to not just use coaching skills, but to provide the case management support that sometimes takes a Navigator out of the space where the use of coaching skills alone are appropriate. This is the reason the intervention uses “coach-like” engagement instead of “coaching” in its purest form. How and when a Navigator completes the case management activities described later in this manual is agreed upon at the beginning of the intervention and is outlined in detail within the designed alliance. Additionally, the shift between coaching skills and case management activities is done with intention and clarity. This practice, referred to as “switching hats,” involves recognizing when a shift is needed and communicating that shift to the youth. If a Navigator maintains presence and effectively uses self-management, the process of transitioning between coaching and case management can be powerful.

22 The International Coaching Federation. (2026). *Understanding the ICF Core Competencies*. Retrieved February 17, 2026, from <https://coachingfederation.org/credentialing/coaching-competencies/icf-core-competencies/>

Primary Coaching Skills

The skills described here are not all inclusive but should give a point of reference for individuals considering the Pathways intervention, or Navigators and supervisors who need a quick reference. As previously mentioned, these are skills and concepts based on both the CoActive Training Institute's coaching model, the Core Competencies established by the ICF, and are reinforced in both the Engaging Youth in a Coach-Like Way training materials and the book, *Co-Active Coaching, Fourth Edition*.

It is worth noting the interplay between the skills described below; each builds on and enhances the other. Without the full complement of skills working together, coaching loses its effectiveness. For example, listening at the level required for coaching cannot happen without self-management. Powerful questions become powerful when they are based on what a Navigator sees and hears while they are listening and when they use self-management to see and interrupt any judgement of themselves (and their skills) or the youth that might be arising and lean into curiosity instead.

Creating and Maintaining Agreements

The first thing a Navigator must do is establish a set of mutually created and agreed upon agreements through which the work with the youth will be done. The CTI describes this agreement as a "designed alliance" while the ICF refers to this as a "coaching agreement." The development of the alliance, or agreement, is the first thing a Navigator will do with every youth they begin working with. This agreement includes the goals the youth will be working towards, how and when information is shared with other professionals, how and when a Navigator will use various coaching skills, consent from the youth to use those skills, strategies the youth might want the Navigator to avoid, and how and when a Navigator transitions to and from the case management role. It would also highlight skills the youth would like to develop, and topic areas the youth would like to focus on. For a sample of a coaching agreement, see [Appendix H](#).



The "designed alliance"/"coaching agreement" is something a Navigator needs to re-discuss at the beginning of every session to ensure the coaching relationship stays focused and continues to maintain trust. It can always be adjusted, even in the middle of an interaction as long as the change is explicit and the youth is in full agreement.

Self-Management

The list of skills, by necessity, begins with self-management. It cannot be overstated how important it is that a navigator has clear awareness of themselves and their own thoughts, opinions, judgements, and they can see and control their reactions when a youth is expressing something that causes them concerns or rubs against their values. Self-management means a navigator is aware when their inner dialogue and values are taking center stage and allows them to consciously reorient themselves to the youth's goals and agenda.

Navigators wear multiple hats and often want to be the “fixers” and “doers” in support of youth. This is an area that is not encouraged and should be the exception. The goal, in part, is to engage youth to problem solve and build upon or develop a support system by asking questions such as “where can you go for support” and “who can you reach out to.” While this can be challenging for Navigators, the goal is to support youth in decreasing dependence upon system involved professionals while being intentional to build and develop their natural supports—those who have potential of being long-term supports, i.e., natural support system. And by having to put thought into identifying those resources, it reinforces problem solving and critical thinking skills.

With self-management, it is important to address what coach-like engagement is not. Many tools and approaches to what is done with coaching are equally important to what is not done.

In the coaching relationship, it is essential that a Navigator not:

1. Choose and direct the youth in what to do.
2. Judge, dismiss, or shame the youth in their choices.
3. Tell or choose the “best option.”
4. Push through and force certain discussions or avoid certain discussions.

Professionals wear many hats and often are messengers for Supervisor, agency or court directives, standards and values. This makes it challenging for a Navigator to shift hats and navigate the delicate balance of remaining curious, asking questions, and relaying directives and messages. Thus, requiring self-management and practice for ongoing skill development.

Listening

While most interventions include skill sets like “listening,” coach-like engagement uses this skill in a way that differentiates it meaningfully. As with the other skills, listening in the coaching context expands on solution focused concepts and becomes forward thinking, action oriented, and expansive. Navigators are listening to the youth, not to identify a way to further the goals of the program but are paying attention to what the youth is saying, how they are saying it, how they are impacted by the navigator, the environment, the topics, and the questions being asked.

It is important for Navigators to listen and respond by asking curious questions to provoke thought, reinforce action, and establish an awareness of how the youth is experiencing the process. A beautiful analogue to the word “listening” in this context could be “noticing.” A Navigator is not just engaged in listening with their ears; they are listening to the tone, body language, and what is not being said.

Powerful Questions

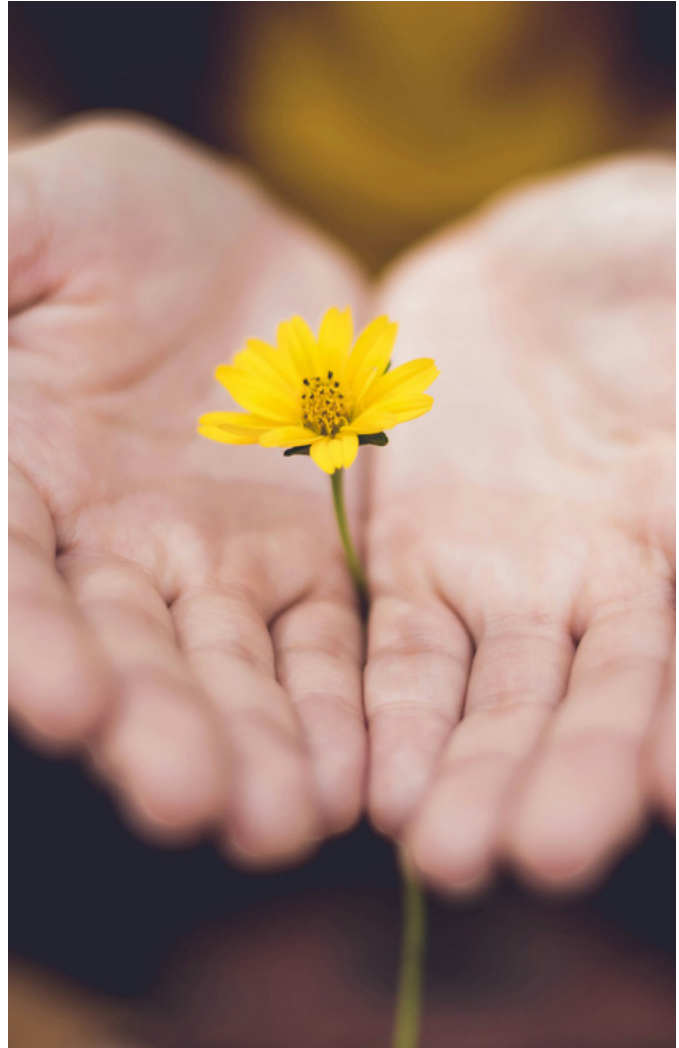
The questions a Navigator asks are not intended to further the goals of the program or agency, but to deepen the youth's understanding of their own experiences, the goals they have identified, and to assist them in identifying a path forward that honors their hopes and dreams. Unlike most other interventions, this requires a Navigator who is using coaching skills to set aside any judgement they may have about the youth's individual goals throughout this process. This has come up several times and is key when we describe the skill of asking powerful questions, because the "power" comes from the nonjudgmental, genuinely curious, and open nature of the questions.

When a Navigator finds themselves wanting to give advice or insert their own values into the interaction, they can use self-management to notice where they are and bring themselves back, think about what is happening in that moment, get really curious and ask a question from that space.

Example questions that may apply here include:

- What is important about that?
- How will you know you are going the direction you would like?
- How will you know when to pivot?
- How does this honor your values?

Finally, a Navigator needs to remember to let go of any attachment they may have to either the question itself, or how they think the youth will respond. If the youth answers the question in an unexpected way, it is an opportunity to celebrate a new doorway opening and get curious about where that new path might lead.



Transforming Ideas into Action (Accountability)

Accountability in this context is a little different than what traditional youth serving approaches might think it means. Establishing “accountability” is not punitive and is not meant to be something that places a Navigator in a position where they are judging the youth’s commitment or effort. Instead, a Navigator provides accountability through actions that include championing, encouraging, and providing follow up—serving as an “accounta-buddy.” Part of the follow up occurs with the next steps serving as a foundation follow up discussion for the next meeting as a check in on the inquiry or homework that was agreed to, and what the youth learned from that experience. This is where action oriented next steps are essential. Some questions a Navigator may consider include: “what worked,” “how’d that feel,” “where else in your life would that approach be helpful,” “what held you back,” and “what would you modify” as some examples. If the youth did not complete the inquiry or homework, they are not “accountable” to their Navigator or agency for that; it is an opportunity to explore what the youth did instead and/or what can be learned from the inaction. Through this approach, a Navigator is still able to establish a space where the youth can learn and deepen their understanding of their goals and what does/does not work for them in achieving those goals.

Ethical Action

Coaching is guided by a set of ethics that are established by the ICF. All Navigators are expected to understand these ethics and follow them with rigor. We strongly recommend that every Navigator and supervisor complete the free ethics course offered by the ICF when they are onboarded, and then at least annually thereafter.

Transitioning Between Coaching Skills and Case Management Activities

Through the coaching process, the youth is able to identify goals for themselves and see gaps that may need to be filled. Importantly, there may also be issues with housing or employment that the youth needs support with in a way that falls outside of the scope of “coaching.” As previously described, when a Navigator is acting in a case management capacity, they are shifting roles, a.k.a. “switching hats.” How and when this occurs must always be established as a part of the coaching agreement/“designed alliance,” is clearly articulated through a mutually agreed-upon shift in roles, and should never be used as an opportunity to give advice or engage in activities that undermine the trust and relationship developed through the coaching interactions.

Even with the switch in roles, a Navigator still works to ensure that the youth continues to take lead in decisions regarding their needs and should continue to use the skills included in the coaching skills section to the greatest extent possible while honoring the fact they are now in a role where the agency has a different level of power and control within the relationship. Skipping this step and moving fluidly between the roles in a manner that does not honor the transition risks undermining the relationship that was developed through the use of targeted coaching skills and will ultimately dilute the efficacy of both the coaching skills and case management activities.

Case Management Activities

Pathways case management is different from traditional case management models. Traditional case management can imply that youth need to be supervised and directed towards the appropriate intervention, compared to coach-like engagement that honors youth as capable of identifying their needs and advocating for themselves, and the Navigator enables the youth with the tools to reach their goals.

Traditional Case Management	vs	Coach-Like Engagement
<p>Focused on processing a caseload <i>One youth said case management "treats you like a file"</i></p>	↔	<p>Focused on individual youth treatment <i>Youth say their Navigator "really cares" about them</i></p>
<p>Limited to a defined set of actions for what a youth's progress and outcomes should look like.</p>	↔	<p>Youth-driven, focused on building relationships</p>
<p>Provide referrals and direct assistance <i>One youth described it as "they give you pamphlets"</i></p>	↔	<p>Hands-on learning and skills development <i>"Let me show you."</i></p>
<p>Inflexible interventions</p>	↔	<p>Navigators meet youth where they are at (literally and figuratively) and provide support for youth in a variety of non-traditional ways</p>
<p>Provide youth with resources to get housing or housing assistance</p>	↔	<p>Ask youth what stable housing looks like for them. Renting? Cohabiting? Living with parents or friends?</p>

One of the most important differences that youth described between traditional case management and their Navigators was the personal connection they'd developed with their Navigator. Youth recounted stories of times that their Navigator had "showed up" emotionally (i.e., attending their graduation, helping them move, going with them to food banks or grocery shopping, showing them how to look for and apply for an apartment). Youth stressed that they did not feel judged by their Navigator and that having the support of someone who showed them how to do things and build skills that improved their self-confidence and made them feel less stressed and alone. As one youth described, "It's the support and there's someone there reaching out to me instead and has belief in me and sees something in me. That's what helped me to move things along."

Tools

To help youth achieve goals, Navigators utilize a variety of tools as youth move through the program. These assessments are useful in getting to know the youth and to guide and track the intervention, as well as document progress towards key outcomes. All assessment tools used by Navigators are stored in the youth’s electronic case file and can be used by Navigators to track and monitor youth progress and engagement. The Screening Tool, Empowerment and Engagement Survey (EES), and Graduation Criteria Assessment can be found in the [appendix](#).

Table 2: Assessment Tool Administration

Data Measure	Frequency	When collected
Screening Tool	One-time	Prior to enrollment
Goals	At youth direction	Within first 90 days
Youth Connections Scale	Enrollment and exit	Within first 60 days and at program completion
Empowerment and Engagement Survey	One-time	Within two weeks following goal development
Case Management Records	Ongoing	At each contact, weekly for active youth
Graduation Criteria Assessment	One-time	Prior to graduating from the Pathways program

SCREENING TOOL

The Screening Tool was developed using items from the evidence-based TAY Triage Tool that was used to identify transition-age foster youth who were most in need of permanent supportive housing.²³ This instrument is implemented prior to enrollment in Pathways and is used to determine eligibility into the program. Application of the Screening Tool is described in greater detail on page 18 and the Screening Tool is included in [Appendix E](#).

INTAKE PROCESS

Agencies can utilize their standard intake process to enroll youth in Pathways. For Phase II and III, all youth enrolled in the project complete a Baseline Survey, which collects information about the youth’s experiences with foster care and how well it has prepared them for independent living. The assessment contains over 50 questions designed to create a picture of the youth’s overall status upon entry to the program, including basic demographics and measures on educational attainment, employment, readiness for independence, ties to parents and extended family, ties to non-family adults, and the types of assistance received from family and surrogate family. The Baseline Assessment also collects information on homelessness episodes experienced by the youth, including age at the time, reasons for homelessness, duration of the episode, how it was resolved, and resources utilized.

23 Rice, E. (2013). *The TAY triage tool: A tool to identify homeless transition age youth most in need of permanent supportive housing*.

GOALS

Within the first 90 days, Navigators and youth meet to discuss what they want to work on within the program. Youth identify at least two goals, which are grouped along one or more of the five outcome areas. The process of setting goals includes the use of a worksheet or is structured as an informal interview with youth about what they would like to achieve to be ready to transition to independent living and set up on a path to success. The goals are meant to be created by the youth and focused on what they want out of their time with their Navigator. Youth may set as many goals as desired and are free to add goals throughout the program.

EMPOWERMENT AND ENGAGEMENT SCALE (EES)

As part of Pathways programming, Navigators complete the Empowerment and Engagement Scale (EES) with youth. The **EES** ([Appendix I](#)) measures youth's perceptions regarding the extent to which their Navigator has engaged and empowered them to achieve their goals. This tool serves two purposes: first, it measures the youth's experience with coach-like engagement; and second, it serves as an opportunity for youth reflection and planning. It is administered within 14 days of identifying Goals and again as part of the Follow-up Survey, one year after enrollment.

GRADUATION CRITERIA CHECKLIST

When a youth feels that they are ready to transition out of Pathways to less intensive care, the Graduation Criteria Checklist can be used to help determine the youth's readiness to leave the program. To be considered ready to graduate from Pathways, a youth must not be currently in crisis, must be in stable housing, and have achieved a combination of two or more of the following additional program components and skills, including achieving goals, completing program assessments, demonstrating independent living skills, and demonstrating increased confidence and the ability to self-advocate. Once a youth and their have completed the checklist, it is reviewed by a supervisor. The Graduation Criteria Checklist is in [Appendix G](#).

SUPPLEMENTAL TOOLS (OPTIONAL)

A variety of additional tools also may be used to support relationship building and for case planning or reflection purposes, as determined by Navigators and their sites. Some examples of potentially useful assessment tools include the [Youth Connections Scale](#), the [Casey Life Skills assessment](#), Future Self, Mobility Map, and [Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths \(CANS\)](#) form. While these tools are optional, sites looking to implement a Pathways model might choose to equip Navigators with additional tools that seem relevant and appropriate in helping youth identify and advance their goals.

Resources and Partnerships

A critical component to providing comprehensive coach-like engagement is Navigators connecting youth to appropriate resources in the community, county, and state. These resources and referrals are youth-specific, may be related to any of the five outcomes areas, and include:

HOUSING SUPPORTS:

Navigators work with youth to secure safe and stable housing by helping them navigate the process of identifying, accessing, and maintaining appropriate supports. The Colorado Pathways program made use of resources such as **Family Unification Program (FUP) Vouchers, independent living arrangements, transitional living programs, Homeless Solutions Programs, State Housing Vouchers**, and other community-specific projects. Many of these resources were made available to Pathways in partnership with state agencies and local organizations; however, these resources are not distributed evenly across the state. In rural counties, housing resources are very limited. Pathways sites need to investigate all state and local resources and to think creatively about what partnerships and assistance is available that can provide long-term housing for youth with conditions that prevent them from living independently. In addition to utilizing these resources and leveraging their partnerships, Pathways Navigators also actively support youth through the process of securing leases for their own apartments and often locate suitable housing for the youth to consider. During YARH-2, Pathways secured 20 State Housing Vouchers from the Division of Housing for youth requiring a longer-term housing voucher. Other housing resources for youth may be accessed through “coordinated entry.” According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), coordinated entry is a process developed to ensure that all people experiencing a housing crisis have fair and equal access and are quickly identified, assessed for, referred, and connected to housing and assistance based on their strengths and needs. In Colorado, coordinated entry is administered by each of the four Continuums of Care (CoC), the Metro Denver Region, Pikes Peak Region, Northern Colorado, and the Balance of State. CoCs are regional or local planning bodies that coordinate housing and services funding for homeless families and individuals. Replication sites therefore would be well advised to develop a close partnership with their CoC, state and any local housing authorities, as well as homeless youth providers in their community for housing resources and support.

FLEX FUNDS:

The Pathways model recognizes access to supports when most needed by the youth is key to staying on track in achieving goals. Each collaborative site is provided with flex funds, which Navigators can access to provide immediate assistance to youth when all other resources have been tapped and the youth has an unmet need. Flex funds should be used creatively with the intention of serving youth and securing buy-in—Navigators are encouraged to use funds to buy meals for youth during meetings to build trust and comfort between youth and Navigators. Each site administers its own funds and has specific procedures around how Navigators are able to access and use funds.

EXAMPLE FLEX FUND USES:

- **Fees for:** housing applications, program/educational applications, acquiring vital documents, driver's tests
- **Transportation solutions:** bike, car insurance, gas money, bus passes, rideshare, repairs
- **School supplies:** laptop, books, prom dress
- **Bills:** phone, car insurance, utilities
- **Other:** a work wardrobe for a new job, meals for meetings, graduation ceremonies, moving costs, furniture, recreation activities

PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE PROVIDERS:

Interagency partnerships and referral relationships are critical to the successful implementation of a service model that targets this population. For Navigators to serve youth, they require strong relationships with state and local agencies, nonprofit partners (including homeless youth providers), and local landlords to dramatically cut down barriers when securing supports for youth—especially where conventional means are time-consuming, costly, or required navigating a complex organizational structure to get answers. In the formative implementation of the Pathways model, partnerships were sometimes formal and created Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) that explicitly spell out how the organizations interact with each other; however, in rural or more resource-scarce areas, many partnerships were informal “handshake agreements.”

Pathways sites had hundreds of referral partners that were essential resource providers for our youth and included services related to housing, physical and mental health, disability assistance, skills development and job training, education assistance, counseling, and many more. The table below shares a broad list of agencies, and a description of how their partnerships could be leveraged by Navigators to support youth. Replicating sites may find this list inspirational for considering which community partners are within their own service area. For cases in which systems barriers or case-specific complications do not allow for straight-forward service referrals to be made, the Pathways Navigator should turn to a wider referral and service network (such as a Learning Collaborative, Local Interagency Team, or Steering Committee) to receive technical assistance and address case-specific issues youth face.

III.

Measuring Program Performance and Fidelity

This section describes how sites can collect and use data to support implementation of the Pathways model and provides an example of how CPR applied these practices during the formative evaluation to guide future fidelity assessments.

- Quality Improvement and Support
 - Data Collection and Management
 - Fidelity Measures
-
-



Monitoring program performance and fidelity is essential to ensuring that the Pathways model is implemented as intended and achieves its desired outcomes.

During Pathways implementation, collecting and reviewing data on an ongoing basis will help sites assess if they are implementing the model as intended. This includes collecting data and reporting on how often Navigators are engaging with youth, what activities are part of a youth's intervention, and documenting flex fund spending.

Findings should be reported back to the project management team that consists of program staff, supervisors, Navigators, and other relevant stakeholders to determine if any adjustments need to be made to ensure greater service or program fidelity. Annual reviews of program data are also beneficial for producing impact reports to stakeholders and potential funders.

Each site should determine who is responsible for reviewing data and making program decisions. Programs might choose to use an independent or inside evaluator to review data, depending on their program's evaluation needs and desired program performance monitoring. During programming, the evaluator should be responsible for data monitoring and reporting on key outcomes and findings. Under the YARH grant, Colorado's Division of Child Welfare (DCW) contracted with Center for Policy Research (CPR) to support the design and implementation of Pathways and to conduct the evaluation across the multiphase project. CPR conducted data analysis, developed fidelity measures, and monitored implementation through monthly technical assistance calls, oversight of data entry and quality, and preparation of a monthly Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) report.

Quality Improvement and Support

A CQI approach to program monitoring collects real-time data and regularly reports key metrics to project management to ensure the Pathways model is implemented with fidelity and achieves desired outcomes for youth. Tracking selected metrics enables the project management team to monitor program enrollments and service delivery, assess the impact of each intervention component, and refine the model to support targeted outcomes. Sites replicating Pathways should adopt a CQI process that aligns with program goals and agency reporting requirements.

During the formative evaluation, CPR implemented this approach by producing monthly reports to monitor program enrollment, implementation, and progress toward key outcomes. These reports detailed differences by site, population, and youth status in the program. Key metrics included in these CQI reports are outlined below:

– YOUTH ENROLLMENT DATA

Including monthly screenings and enrollments, as well as demographics such as gender, race, and average number of risk factors for homelessness.

– CONTACT DATA

Number and types of contacts made with youth

– GOALS

Average number of goals set by youth.

– TOOL COMPLETION

Completion of tools supporting Navigators, such as the Empowerment and Engagement Scale (EES).

– FLEX FUND SPENDING

Amount of flex funds spent and for what purpose

CPR met monthly with the project management team, site Navigators, and supervisors to review the CQI report and address any issues it highlighted. Through regular technical assistance calls, oversight of data quality, and collaborative analysis, CPR ensured accurate and consistent fidelity assessment across sites while providing recommendations to support high-quality implementation.

Data Collection and Management

Systematic data collection and management help sites monitor services, assess effectiveness, and make informed adjustments to strengthen the Pathways model and its impact on youth. Organized data systems also support reporting to stakeholders, ensure accountability, and provide a foundation for continuous quality improvement and evaluation. Sites replicating Pathways should implement systems that capture both quantitative and qualitative information on program activities, youth engagement, and outcomes, while maintaining data accuracy, security, and accessibility for staff.

For the Pathways project, CPR developed an online management information system to collect key data necessary for the evaluation and provide an online case management system for Navigators to use in tracking intervention services to young people. This system, known as the Pathways Management Information System (PMIS), allowed the evaluation team to access data entered in real time, and analyze and report on program activities and outcomes. PMIS stored several data measures including:

ASSESSMENTS/TOOLS

Answers from the assessments and surveys conducted by Navigators over the course of the intervention were stored in PMIS and used to evaluate outcomes within the intervention. These measures (Screening Tool, Baseline Assessment, YCS, EES, and Goals) were implemented and tested during the formative evaluation and are described in the Tools section of this intervention manual. These assessments were also used as tools to support fidelity. The screening tool ensured that the intervention identified youth in the target population, and the recording of goals could be tracked to ensure Navigators were following the model as intended.

CASE MANAGEMENT DATA

The PMIS allows for collection and documentation of a youth's progress in the program and serves as a record of how often and for what purpose Navigators were in contact by phone, email, text, or in person. These records include information about the topics discussed and the outcome, including services or funds provided. Case management records help the evaluation team determine if the model has been implemented to fidelity, if Navigators are in regular contact with youth, when tools are completed, what topics youth must discuss, and how flex funds are being utilized. PMIS data is also used to keep track of enrollment, graduation, and length of intervention.

Additionally, CPR used a variety of other data sources to collect, analyze, and report on the enrollment, service delivery and outcomes of youth for the evaluation. These included:

Qualitative Data Sources—Interviews and Focus Groups

Over the course of implementation, CPR staff conducted interviews and focus groups with youth, project administrators, Navigators, child welfare staff, and RHY provider staff to gain a comprehensive understanding of service delivery. Discussions with site staff focused on barriers to implementation, aspects of the model that were working well, and Navigators' workload and use of available tools. Youth feedback was particularly prioritized: youth were asked to name helpful activities they participate in with their Navigators, how Pathways helped them, the importance of their relationship with their Navigator, and feedback on important considerations for Pathways. This qualitative data offered context for interpreting CQI findings and helped the evaluation team determine whether any site-level changes were needed. For example, when one youth reported not seeing their Navigator for months, CPR and the project management team reviewed case management data and reinforced the model's expectation of weekly youth contact.

Follow-up Survey

A 45- to 60-minute follow-up survey was administered by the evaluation team by phone 12 months after the youth's enrollment date. The survey duplicates many of the questions from the Baseline and other assessments and asks about the youth's experiences with Pathways and progress toward achieving their goals. Analysis of follow-up survey data helped determine program effectiveness by reporting on rates of program/goal completion and differences in the five outcome areas between graduated youth and youth who do not complete the program.

State Data Systems

Administrative data extracted from the state child welfare data system and homeless management information system (HMIS) kept at local RHY providers enhanced the analysis of youth participation in the program and related outcomes. Basic demographic information and information related to foster care history was extracted from the state's child welfare system known as TRAILS, to understand foster care experiences and measures related to case outcomes. This provided CPR with information about when youth entered foster care; the number of placements they had; experiences with and reasons for becoming homeless; and in-depth demographic data regarding education, income, disability, and involvement with various state services. CPR was able to merge cross-system data to report on key outcomes for enrolled youth. A table of suggested data measures, including when data should be collected, and how it is stored, is in Appendix J.



Fidelity Measures

To support regular monitoring through CQI, sites should develop specific fidelity measures based on collected data to track adherence to program implementation and ongoing intervention delivery. Sites should also consider how frequently each measure will be evaluated.

Table 4 provides a template for mapping fidelity measures to corresponding intervention components, based on the measures developed and applied by CPR during the Pathways formative evaluation. The table details each indicator, the component of the intervention it represents, and how it is measured. Replicating sites should adapt this template and right-size the threshold criteria for their site since not all thresholds will be appropriate for the type of service provider. For example, a site that does not receive many referrals or has one Navigator covering a wide service area might need to adjust the number of potentially eligible youth who are screened and enrolled.

Several components (screening, tools, enrollment) were evaluated on a monthly basis, while other components were assessed for fidelity on an as-needed basis as directed by supervisors and program/agency management.

Table 4: Fidelity Measures

Component of Intervention	Measure	Indicator
ADHERENCE		
Screening	Volume of screened youth	Caseload and size of Navigator waiting list. % screened in/out. Average number of risk factors of enrolled youth
Intake & Enrollment	Baseline survey completion	% of youth with Baseline Assessment at least 80% complete in each population, site, and program overall
Program participation	Frequency of meetings	% of youth who meet with Navigator at least weekly during the first 30 days of enrollment
Navigator Availability	Frequency and duration of communication with Navigator	% of youth who maintain, on average, weekly communication with Navigator throughout active phase of enrollment
Goal Development	Identification of two Goals	% of youth with at least two Goals identified (that related to at least one of the five outcome areas) within 60 days
Assessment Tools (EES)	EES administration	% of youth with EES completed within 14 days of goal development
Additional supports	Usage of additional supports	% of youth with at least one additional support accessed post-enrollment (flex funds, housing vouchers, referrals, CRT/PRT)
Identify & transition to external supports	Graduation criteria checklist outcome	Distribution of youth reporting graduation from Pathways on graduation checklist, by collaborative site and population
COACH-LIKE ENGAGEMENT		
Navigator training	Navigator participation in ongoing trainings	% of Navigator who participated in at least 75% of coaching calls and quarterly workshops
Goal oriented	Goal development	Youth identifies two Goals
Ongoing support/contact	Frequency of Youth contact	Contact at least weekly for active youth
Youth-driven	EES, Q5	% of youth who respond positively to this criterion
Encourages growth through action	EES, Q7	% of youth who respond positively to this criterion
Encourages self-efficacy self-advocacy	Graduation Assessment Criteria 8	% of youth who meet the criterion upon graduation
Encourages self-determination/goal setting	Graduation Assessment Criteria 7	% of youth who meet this criterion upon graduation



Conclusion

This manual provides guidance on how to implement and successfully provide the Pathways to Success model intervention, an approach designed to support youth aging out of foster care as they navigate the transition to adulthood and prevent homelessness.

The Pathways intervention is grounded in a commitment to youth self-determination, recognizing each young person as “creative, resourceful, and whole,” and acknowledging the unique strengths, goals, and experiences they bring to the process. The practices described throughout this manual emphasize a relationship-based and youth-driven relationship between youth and their Navigator and centers “coach-like engagement” to help youth drive the goals they make and accomplish.

While this manual provides guidance, child welfare and runaway and homeless youth serving agencies are encouraged to implement and adapt this model to fit within their existing agency parameters.

If you have any questions about the model, feel free to reach out:

Lanae Davis

ledavis@centerforpolicyresearch.org

Trevor Williams

trevor.williams@state.co.us

Appendices

Theory of Change

The problem

The persistence of high rates of homelessness among youth with a foster care history signals a gap in services within the Child Welfare system. In Colorado, thirty to forty percent of youth served by runaway and homeless youth service providers have prior foster care involvement. That number jumps to as high as seventy percent in the rural areas. Unfortunately, Colorado does not have a systematic method of counting the number of homeless youth with foster care involvement, but the State and community based service providers know the number is high and recognize that foster care youth have an increased risk of homelessness compared to those without foster care experience; and the risk of homelessness is higher among foster care youth who are either aging out of care or entered foster care at an older age compared to youth who entered foster care at a young age. The foster care and child welfare systems are not working as designed if they do not identify and assist youth with achieving intended outcomes such as stable housing, improved well-being, permanent connections, and educational and employment opportunities.

The root cause

- Several factors, including individual and environmental, contribute to the increased risk of homelessness among foster-care involved youth.

External factors

- Lack of social supports, lack of supportive family or friends, unstable housing, low educational attainment
- Traumas experienced by youth create challenges around youth engagement/trust

Environmental and systemic factors:

- The State TRAILS system and community-based service providers don't have a way of identifying youth at risk of homelessness, and do not screen for risk and protective factors in a systematic way.
- Youth transitioning out of care do not receive sufficient practical preparation or support for transition out of care (The Independent Living Plans (ILP) developed is often just a piece of paper for the youth).
- Youth coming into care at older age do not receive support for the transition into care.
- Youth are not engaged in their own decision making and planning; they do not drive decisions about their own lives.
- Other systems designed to support youth (education system, criminal justice system, workforce) are siloed, fail to effectively work together to support youth; and might not be traumainformed.
- Availability of services/supports in rural areas: Uneven distribution of resources by area, though even in urban areas where they may have more resources, the services might not be aligned (so there are gaps in services).

The solution

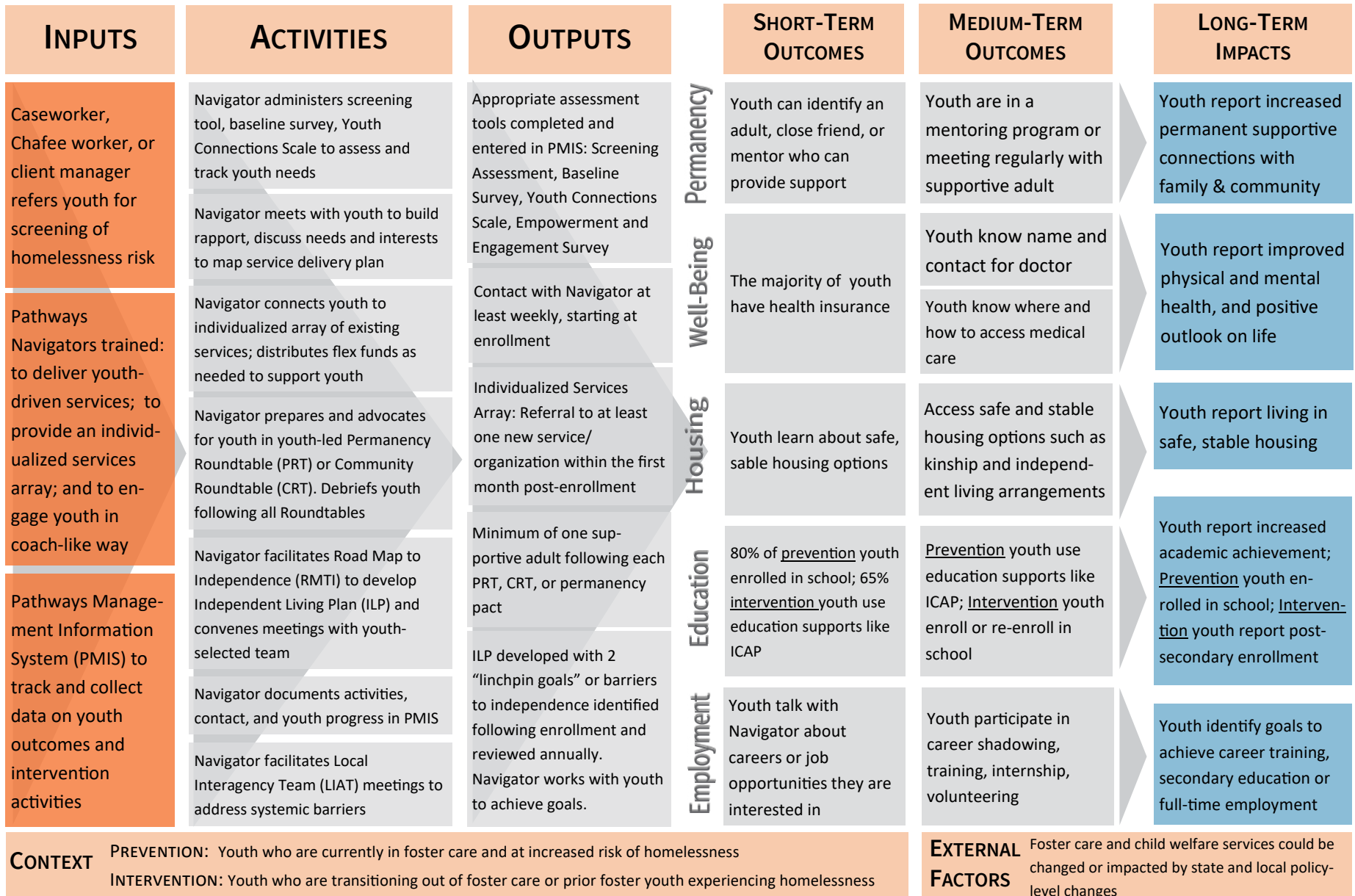
In order to address youth homelessness among foster-care involved youth, we will engage youth through a Navigator to ensure youth are on a path to secure stable housing, obtain education or employment, medical coverage, a positive outlook on life, and secure social supports. The following are action steps and strategies that will guide our work to address the problem including:

- All youth meeting population criteria will be screened for risk factors and referral to Pathways.
- A Navigator will meet with and develop relationship with youth. Navigator will provide intensive case management, complete assessments with youth and deliver the intervention as designed.
- Navigator will work closely with youth to provide the resources or guidance that youth need in order to make the system work for them. This will be done with a youth-driven approach facilitated by the Navigators.
 - The Navigators will make sure various processes, e.g. Permanency Roundtable (PRT)/Community Roundtable (CRT), are completed in a way that serves the youth's interests, needs, and goals. Navigators will ensure the youth's interests, needs, and goals are met by being an advocate for the youth, encouraging them to guide their meetings as well as those with other community members. Navigators will be serving youth in a coach-like way, meaning they will be coaching the youth to guide their own service plan, and encouraging them to speak up for their own interest, needs and goals. They will also step in when they see that a plan, process, or service does not align with the youth's goals. They will make sure youth are prepared for these meetings with goals in mind, also ensuring there is follow-up to the meetings. Navigators will follow-up with youth about how to achieve benchmarks and goals developed in the meetings as well as to confirm that the youth are pleased and confident in the outcome of the meetings.
 - One of the Navigator's roles is to utilize the systems that are in place for the youth, ensuring youth have access to all resources across multiple systems to achieve goals.
 - The Navigator will ensure access to the full menu of services available to the youth to achieve various outcomes, and provide a clear path to accessing those services (having a plan). Navigators are exposed to the available resources within their counties and communities. Navigators build relationships with community partners and agencies offering services across housing, education, employment, health, and social support.
 - Depending on what the youth's goals, they will refer to resources they are already familiar with or will find the appropriate resource/service for the youth. Navigators also participate in several learning calls each month where they share knowledge of community resources and agencies available to help youth enrolled in Pathways.
 - They will also ensure that services are delivered with the intensity/fidelity they were intended (ensuring the plan is carried out) and in a way that is sensitive to youth's needs (e.g., sensitive to history of trauma). Navigators are trained
- State Interagency Team (SIAT) and Local Interagency Team (LIAT) will help address barriers or gaps in systems (e.g., barrier in DOL system that needs to be addressed at system level; e.g., there are myths around who can get housing, e.g., based on criminal backgrounds, regarding fair housing act)

Intervention Components

	Housing	Employment	Education	Well-being	Permanency
Long-term Impacts	Youth living in safe, stable housing	<p>Prevention Population Youth identify goals for career training, secondary education, or full-time employment</p> <p>Intervention population Youth report stable employment, earnings at a livable wage</p>	<p>Prevention Population Youth enrolled in school and report improved GPA and test scores and grade completion</p> <p>Intervention population Youth report increased level of educational achievement and post-secondary enrollment</p>	Youth report improved physical and mental health and positive outlook on life	Youth report more permanent connections and deeper levels of trust and connection with family, community
Short-term Outcomes	Youth learn about safe, stable housing options	Youth talk with Navigator about careers or job opportunities they are interested in	<p>Prevention Population Youth are enrolled in school</p> <p>Intervention population Youth are enrolled in school and use education supports like ICAP</p>	Youth have health insurance and learn how arrange for basic care needs around health and wellbeing	Youth identify adult, close friend, or mentor who can provide support
Preconditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Youth maintains contact with and continues to build a relationship with their Navigator. ✓ Youth is willing and able to advocate for himself/herself and asks for services based on needs and interests. ✓ Youth is engaged in services and is following a plan to achieve the linchpin goals they identified with their Navigator. ✓ Navigator facilitates improved collaboration and service alignment among existing community and agency service providers. ✓ Local Interagency Teams (LIATs) help support resource allocation and collaboration at the state and local levels. 				
Intervention Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Navigator engages youth in a coach-like way; meets with youth to build rapport and discuss needs and interests. ✓ Navigator administers screening tool, baseline survey, Youth Connections Scale and EES to assess and track services and needs. ✓ Navigator works with youth to develop a set of linchpin goals along the five outcome areas and sets a plan with youth to achieve goals. ✓ Navigator connects youth to individualized array of existing services and distributes flex funds as needed to support youth. ✓ Navigator documents activities, assessments, contacts, and youth progress in PMIS. 				
Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Youth who are identified through screening are at an increased risk of becoming homeless. ✓ Youth want to be involved in determining their future and the services they receive (Youth-driven). ✓ Youth are motivated to engage in services offered to them with the goal of reducing risk of homelessness. ✓ There are available, identifiable, and appropriate services in the community capable of meeting the youth's needs. 				

Logic Model



Pathways to Success Basic Navigator Job Description

SUMMARY

The Pathways Navigator engages youth in a coach-like way and provides strengths-based case management as needed for youth and young adults participating in the Pathways to Success. Navigators carry an active caseload of about ten youth.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Assist youth to develop goals and a plan for achieving those goals. Monitor and adjust the plan with the youth based on progress toward goals until the youth graduates from Pathways.
- Participate and/or facilitate team-based planning meetings at the invitation of the youth such as wraparound meetings, family engagement meetings, and permanency or community roundtables.
- Assist youth/young adults secure necessary services and supports identified in the plan through warm hand-offs and other active methods. Enroll youth/young adults in appropriate public assistance and other benefit programs (e.g., Medicaid, Food Stamps). Address barriers to services through the Local Inter-Agency Team.
- Act as a liaison with community service providers. Coordinate with service providers to ensure that the youth/young adult's needs are being met. Develop linkages and collaborate with community service providers and other key stakeholders.
- Maintain updated client records with plans, notes, appropriate forms, or related information.
- Perform other duties as required.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

- Appreciates working with transition age youth and young adults with current or past foster care involvement who are at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness.
- Understands the functions of strengths-based case management and trauma informed practice.
- Demonstrates awareness of the value of cultural competence in task completion.
- Creativity in problem solving and effective communication and facilitation skills. Bilingual English & Spanish preferred.
- Knowledge about the availability of resources and the processes to access them.
- Coordinates enhanced service delivery and tracks data on all Pathways participants.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

- Good knowledge of human services principles and practices.
- Relevant experience in case management.
- Qualifications set by the lead agency.

New Employee On-Boarding and Training Timeline

PURPOSE

To establish an on-boarding system that provides consistent information to those joining Pathways.

Timeline	Key Element	Topic	Oversight
Week 1	Supervision	Review general organizational information. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting to know the organization • Learn contact information and organizational structure Discuss overview of Pathways to Success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the manual and schedule Enroll in next available Engaging Youth in a Coach-Like Way Training	Site Supervisor <i>(in person)</i>
Week 2	Project Administration	Review the manual and learn about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History and goals of Pathways • The Intervention of Pathways • Federal accountability • Flex funds, budget, funding 	Program Administrator <i>(in person or virtual)</i>
	Project Evaluation	Review the manual and learn about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation • Database reporting • Fidelity measures 	Evaluation Staff <i>(in person or virtual)</i>
When available	Engaging Youth in a Coach-Like Way (EYCLW) Training	Attend a 3-day intensive training course on the concepts and skills associated with EYCLW.	Training Entity <i>(in person or virtual)</i>
After EYCLW Training	Coach-like Engagement	Review the "Learner Guide" 1 on 1, covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall coaching model approach/practice • Continued practice including workshops, coaching calls, etc. Be assigned to a coaching cohort.	Learning & Development Specialist <i>(in person or virtual)</i>
Ongoing	Coaching Cohort	Meet monthly to practice coaching skills and discuss youth engagement strategies.	Peer Navigators and Learning & Development Specialist <i>(virtual)</i>

Screening Tool

PURPOSE OF THE ASSESSMENT

Colorado's adapted assessment tool is used to identify youth currently or previously in foster care who are most at-risk of homelessness. Homelessness is defined as living in a place that is not permanent, predictable or consistent or moving from place to place and/or relying on the kindness of others for a place to stay or couch surfing. **Youth of Interest** are Chafee-eligible youth between the ages of 14 and 23 who are either current or former foster care recipients.

Date of Screening: ____/____/____

Youth Current Age (Age at Intake): _____

Has the Youth ever been in foster care, currently or in the past?

Yes ...Continue with screening assessment

No ...STOP, no screening assessment needed

Check each box that applies to the youth ↓

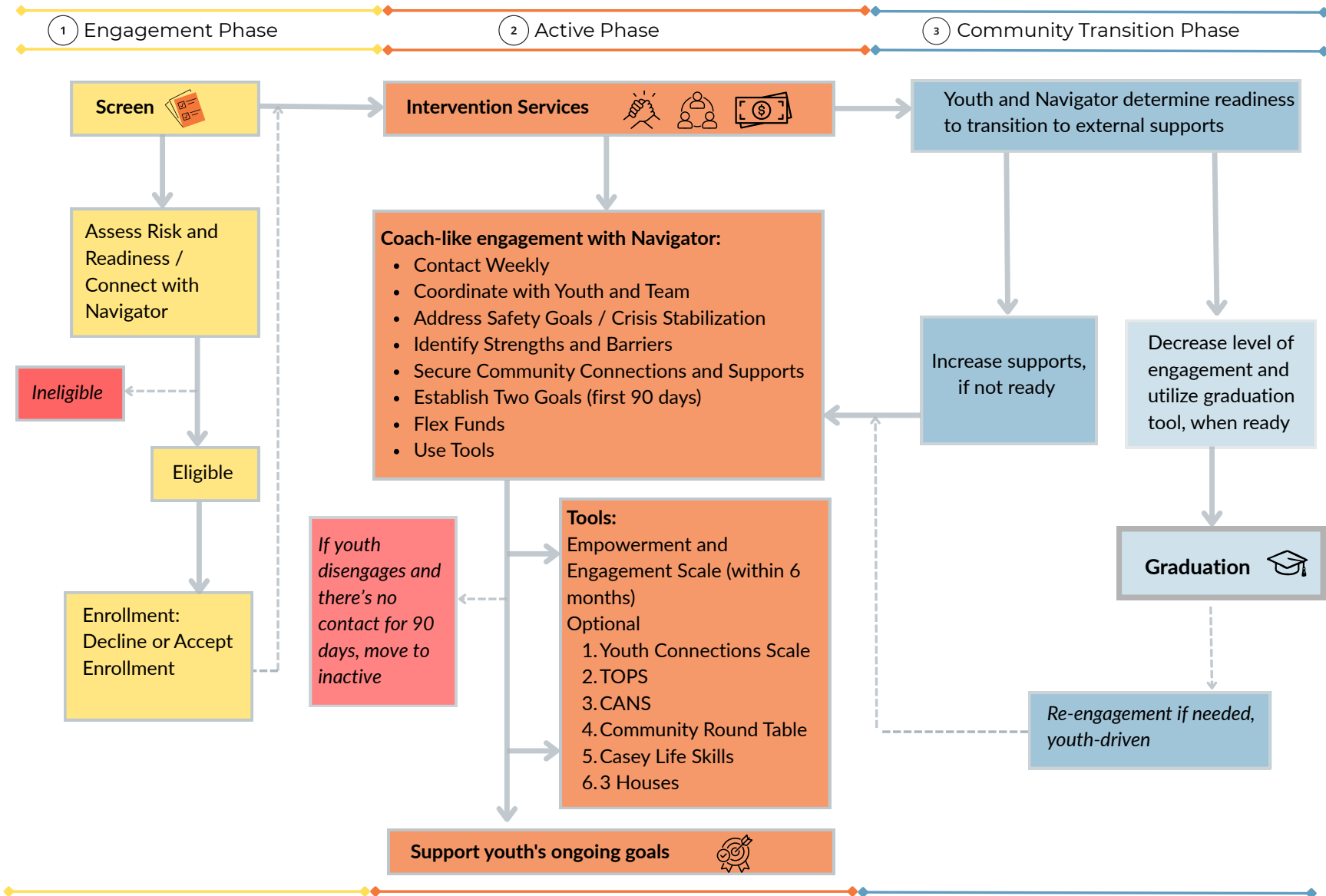
No Refused Unknown

	No	Refused	Unknown
1. Have you ever become homeless because you ran away from your family home, group home, a foster home, or placement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have you ever become homeless because there was violence at home between family members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Have you ever become homeless because you had differences in religious beliefs with parents, guardians or caregivers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Have you ever been pregnant or got someone else pregnant?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Have you used marijuana? If yes, how old were you when you first tried marijuana?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Before your 18th birthday did you spend any time in jail or detention?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Have you ever been homeless, used an overnight shelter, or got housing assistance like public housing or a housing voucher?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Has your mother ever spent time in jail or prison?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Has your father ever spent time in jail or prison?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Has your mother ever been in foster care?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Has your father ever been in foster care?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Have you ever engaged in a sexual act for something of value, such as money, food, housing, gifts or favors?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Enter Total Number of Yes Responses →

Youth First and Last Name: _____		Youth Phone: _____ - _____ - _____	
Youth Email: _____			
Youth Gender Identity: <input type="checkbox"/> Woman <input type="checkbox"/> Man <input type="checkbox"/> Trans woman <input type="checkbox"/> Trans man <input type="checkbox"/> Gender non-binary <input type="checkbox"/> Other (_____)		Youth Race/Ethnicity: <input type="checkbox"/> White, non-Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American, non-Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latinx <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Native American or Alaskan Native <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-racial	
Youth Referred by: (pick one) <input type="checkbox"/> Caseworker <input type="checkbox"/> Chafee-worker <input type="checkbox"/> Community worker <input type="checkbox"/> Individual (Community Member or Other Youth) <input type="checkbox"/> RHY provider <input type="checkbox"/> School or McKinney Vento <input type="checkbox"/> Other (_____)		Name of Person Referring: _____ Referring Phone: _____ E-mail: _____	
Pathways Coordinator: _____ Site/County: _____		Assessment Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Screened <input type="checkbox"/> Ineligible (0 "Yes") <input type="checkbox"/> Declined	

Pathways Intervention Flow Chart



Youth Graduation Checklist

Youth has met a minimum of 5 out of 8 criteria below
(check all that apply; must meet first two criteria)

- *Not in crisis
- *In stable housing
- At least one supportive adult connection (non-child welfare professional)
- Achieved 2 goals
- Completed documentation requirements (identified two goals, EES completion, etc.)
- Has daily living skills necessary to sustain independence
- Demonstrated increased ability to set goals and recognize what action steps need to be taken to achieve those goals
- Demonstrated increase confidence and ability to be assertive and self-advocate

Please provide 2 examples of each coaching outcome that applies:

Demonstrated ability to make and set new goals

- 1.
- 2.

Demonstrated increase in confidence, ability to self-advocate and be assertive

- 1.
- 2.

Supervisor Sign-off on Youth Readiness to Graduate:

SIGNATURE

Definitions

1. **Not in crisis:** basic needs are met
2. **In stable housing:** not currently homeless, can be in foster placement, shelter environment or other temporary housing
3. **Supportive adult connection:** adult can be family, friend or other community connection, non-child welfare professional
4. **Two goals achieved:** achievement or completion of goals is determined by youth and Navigator
5. **Completed documentation requirements:** screening and EES completed and entered into PMIS
6. **Youth has the basic living skills:** Navigator and supervisor deem necessary to sustaining safe and stable living arrangement and independence (e.g. hygiene, cleaning, etc.)
7. **Navigator & Supervisor determination** of youth's ability to make and set new goals
 - **Goal setting/self-determination:** "having the power to make decisions, to direct one's actions, to dream and take risks, and to exercise rights and responsibilities" (Powers et al., 2012, p. 2181).
8. **Navigator & Supervisor determination** of youth's increase in overall confidence and ability to self-advocate and be assertive.
 - **Self-efficacy:** "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave" (Bandura, 1994, p. 1).

Coach-Like Services Agreement

Agreement between:

Youth, _____ and Navigator, _____.

This agreement is not a legal agreement and does not add any requirements to your ability to participate in any Colorado Chafee, Colorado Foster Youth Successful Transition to Adulthood, or Foster Youth in Transition program. Instead, it promotes transparency and clarity between you and your navigator by establishing a meaningful agreement that can be revisited and adjusted throughout your working relationship.

There is no cost to receive coaching as a part of your participation in the Pathways to Success program. Coaching is being provided voluntarily as a part of your participation. All we ask is that you commit to prioritize our sessions and follow the cancellation policy described below. So long as you continue to be eligible and enrolled in a program that utilizes the Pathways to Success model intervention, you will remain eligible to participate in coaching activities with your navigator.

Coach-Like Services

Your navigator provides services to you that utilize both coaching skills and case management support. We call this “coach-like” because the services may move between coaching and case management. The navigator’s goal is to help you understand when they are in each role. This will be included in our ‘designed alliance’ and can be modified at any time with mutual agreement.

Coaching/ “coach-like” and Case Management are defined below:

- **Coaching/ “coach-like”** is not advice, therapy or counseling; it may address specific personal projects and issues, personal and professional goals/successes, or general conditions in the client’s life or profession. Other coaching services can include but are not limited to clarification of values, brainstorming, identifying plans of action, creating new vision/goals, asking clarifying questions and making empowering requests.
- **Case Management** includes direct and tangible support and potentially guidance that would support the client in maintaining safety in their home and community and may include support with housing, education, employment, well-being, and building safe and permanent connections.

If issues arise that cause the navigator to be concerned about your ability to be safe, or if it seems like you are seeking mental health advice or services, your navigator will pause the session and offer to refer you to a provider that is able to support those situations. This is important as it honors the relationship and ensures that your Navigator stays firmly within the ethical guidelines provided by the International Coaching Federation (ICF), which may be found [here](#).

Confidentiality

The navigator will ask personal questions about your life and will hold this information in the strictest of confidence (meaning it will not be shared with anyone other than your coach without your written permission) - except in the event something happens that makes the navigator believe you may hurt yourself or someone else. The navigator will also staff your case with their supervisor, administrator, or other supervising authorities as necessary to ensure they are providing services that meet minimum program expectations as defined by state and federal rules and regulations.

Cancellation Policy

If the youth or navigator cancels an appointment with less than 24 hours notice, the person responsible for the cancellation is responsible for rescheduling within 5 business days.

I am in agreement with the information outlined above.

 NAVIGATOR/CHAFEE WORKER

 DATE

 YOUTH

 DATE

Please send this signed and dated form to: *insert navigator email address*

Empowerment and Engagement Scale (ESS)

To be completed with all youth by Navigators following goal development (anytime from 7 to 14 days following goal development).

The next set of questions is about how you felt in deciding on the goals you worked with the Navigator to develop. Please answer these questions based on your experiences working WITH YOUR Navigator after you enrolled in Pathways.

	Always or almost always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never or almost never
1. When talking with my Navigator, I had plenty of opportunities to express my ideas.	5	4	3	2	1
2. I understand the goals I set with my Navigator and how to reach them.	5	4	3	2	1
3. When talking with my Navigator, we make changes to my goals based on my ideas.	5	4	3	2	1
4. The goals I set with my Navigator are unrealistic.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I get to make decisions about the best ways to reach the goals in my plan.	5	4	3	2	1
6. I understand everything that is decided while we are deciding on my goals.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Working with my Navigator helps me see that I can use my skills and abilities to reach my goals.	5	4	3	2	1
8. My plan includes the goals that are most important to me.	5	4	3	2	1
9. I have an open and trusting relationship with my Navigator	5	4	3	2	1

Now I am going to ask you some questions about how you feel about your life today and how you make decisions about the services and supports you may receive today and in the future. Please answer: *Always or almost always, mostly, sometimes, rarely or never or almost never* for each question.

	Always or almost always	Mostly	Sometimes	Rarely	Never or almost never
SELF					
1. I focus on the good things in life, not just the problems.	5	4	3	2	1
2. I make changes in my life so I can live successfully with my emotional or mental health challenges.	5	4	3	2	1
3. I worry that difficulties related to my mental health or emotions will keep me from having a good life.	5	4	3	2	1
4. I know how to take care of my mental or emotional health.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I feel my life is under control.	5	4	3	2	1
SERVICES					
6. When a service or support is not working for me, I take steps to get it changed.	5	4	3	2	1
7. I tell service providers what I think about services I get from them.	5	4	3	2	1
8. I believe that services and supports can help me reach my goals	5	4	3	2	1
9. I am overwhelmed when I have to make a decision about my services or supports	5	4	3	2	1
10. My opinion is just as important as my service providers' opinion in deciding what services and supports and I need.	5	4	3	2	1
11. I know the steps to take when I think I am receiving poor services or supports	5	4	3	2	1
12. I understand how my services and supports are supposed to help me.	5	4	3	2	1
13. I work with providers to adjust my services or supports so they fit my needs.	5	4	3	2	1

Fidelity and Data Measures

Table 1. Pathways Data Sources

Data Source	Collection Points	Who collects	Stored
Youth Eligibility Screening	1x before enrollment	Navigator	PMIS
Empowerment and Engagement Scale (EES)	2x: 14 days and 12-months after goal development	Navigator	PMIS
Navigator Interviews	Once a year	Evaluation Team	Evaluation team's servers
Youth Focus Groups	Once a year	Evaluation Team	Evaluation team's servers
Administrative Data	Regular extracts from state	Evaluation Team	Evaluation team's servers
PMIS records <i>(i.e. case management records, goals, flex fund utilization, youth status, and graduation checklist)</i>	Continuous	Navigator and Evaluation Team	PMIS

Table 2. Pathways Fidelity Measures

Component	Measure	Indicator	Data source
ADHERENCE TO MODEL			
Screening	Volume of screened youth	Case-load and size of Navigator waiting list	Youth Eligibility Screening/ Navigator Interviews
Program participation	Frequency of meetings	% of youth who meet with Navigator at least weekly during first 30 days of enrollment	PMIS records
Navigator availability	Frequency and duration of communication with navigator	% of youth who maintain, on average, weekly communication with Navigator throughout active phase of enrollment	PMIS records
Assessment tools (EES)	EES administration	% of youth with EES completed within 14 days of goal development	EES
Additional supports	Usage of additional supports	% of youth with at least one additional support accessed (flex funds, housing vouchers, referrals, CRT/PRT, LIAT)	PMIS records
Identify & transition to external supports	Graduation criteria checklist outcome	Distribution of youth reporting graduation from Pathways on graduation checklist	Graduation checklist in PMIS

Component	Measure	Indicator	Data source
COACH-LIKE ENGAGEMENT			
Navigator training	Navigator participation in on-going trainings	Percent of Navigator who participated in at least 75% of coaching calls	Meeting notes/ Navigator interviews
Goal development	Identification of 2 goals	% of youth with at least 2 goals identified	PMIS records
Ongoing support	Frequency of Navigator-Youth contact	Contact at least weekly for active youth	PMIS records
Youth-driven	EES, Q5	% of youth who respond positively to this criterion	EES/ Youth Focus Groups
Encourages growth through action	EES, Q7	% of youth who respond positively to this criterion	EES/ Youth Focus Groups
Encourages self-efficacy and ability to self-advocate	Graduation Assessment Criteria 8	% of youth who meet this criterion upon graduation	Graduation checklist in PMIS/ Youth Focus Groups
Encourages self-determination/ goal setting	Graduation Assessment Criteria 7	% of youth who meet this criterion upon graduation	Graduation checklist in PMIS/ Youth Focus Groups