



Sustainability Plan – May 2013

Rural Opportunities and Connections (ROC) has its origins in a federal demonstration project. In 2008, the Iowa Department of Human Services successfully competed for a five-year demonstration grant from the Family and Youth Services Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The purpose of the grant was to better coordinate formal and informal systems to address the issue of homeless and disconnected youth in rural areas. The *Support System for Rural Homeless Youth Demonstration Project (SSRHY)* called on the State to work in partnership with a rural community to increase the connectedness of youth who were homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless. Youth and Shelter Services was selected as the state's local collaborating partner through a competitive process in 2009 to implement the demonstration in Boone, which would serve as a "learning laboratory" for the project.

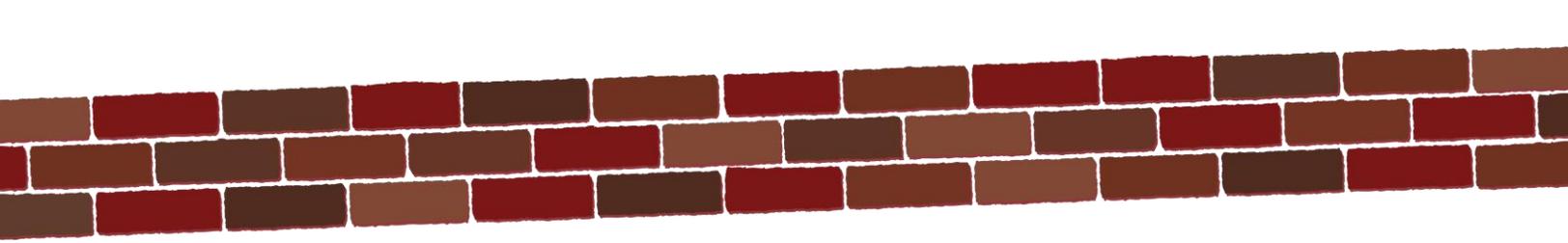
Over the last three years, ROC has established a HUB (community center for youth) and provided access to coordinated services and supports for youth from Boone and the surrounding rural areas. With the federal demonstration grant scheduled to end on September 30, 2013, YSS staff with the help of state partners have developed this plan, identifying the critical services now being provided and creating a financing plan to sustain them.

The Need:

The issue of "disconnected" youth has received increasing attention from policy makers and youth serving organizations over the last several years. Often defined as young people in their late teens to early twenties who are not enrolled in school or college and are not employed, this group is at particular risk for homelessness, incarceration, substance abuse and other poor outcomes. These young people face a wide range of challenges as they transition from adolescence to adulthood without connections to supportive families or communities.

For most youth, the transition to adulthood is a gradual process. From an early age their parents, grandparents, teachers and friends teach the skills of survival and self-sufficiency needed in adulthood, such as how to build relationships, manage health care needs, and handle money. And when they need help as a young adult, as is typical, most young people have family and friends to provide emotional and financial support during the process of becoming a self-sufficient and productive adult. Disconnected youth frequently have not had the benefit of learning life skills over time or of establishing strong ties to the community in which they live. The risks are heightened for these young people in rural areas where there are limited professional services, and where community supports are not well coordinated and have not been mobilized for this vulnerable population.





In Boone, we estimate that approximately 40 % of youth and young adults are homeless or at risk of homelessness each year. About 80% of these youth have co-occurring issues like substance abuse or mental health issues, that can make becoming self-sufficient harder for our at risk youth.

Programs with Results:

Current programming at ROC focuses on three primary areas – employment opportunities, supportive housing, and short-term support and access to community resources. Each area is described briefly below, along with details of the results achieved in fiscal year 2012.

Employment Opportunities: ROC’s eight-week pre-employment and paid work experience program helps young people develop employability skills and connects them to real jobs in the community with one of our business partners.

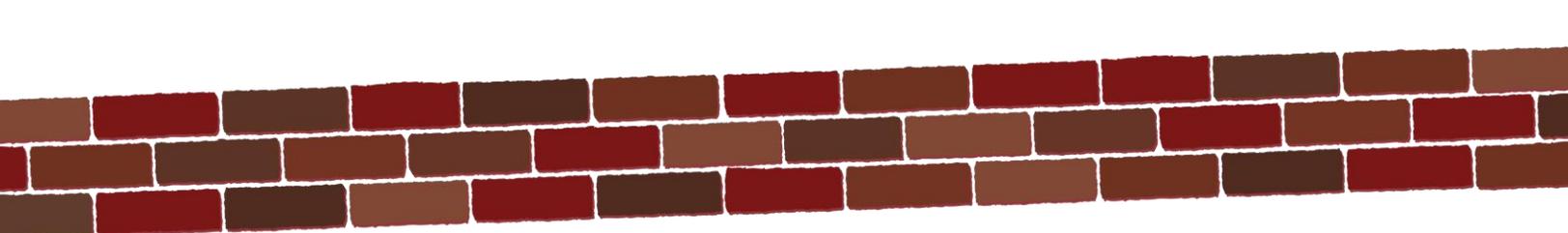
- Fifteen (15) young people completed 8 weekly sessions of pre-employment training
- Twenty-nine (29) youth were placed in a paid work experience job
- Eleven (11) employers were engaged in providing work experience opportunities for young people
- Seven (7) youth were retained by the same employer after the subsidized position ended.

Supportive Housing: ROC’s housing options include the Transitional Living Program (TLP) house and two apartments where youth are offered safe housing and supportive services while they work to becoming self-sufficient.

- Thirteen (13) youth were housed during the year; staying an average of 6.5 months.
- Eight of eleven youth (73%) exited the housing program to a secure independent housing arrangement.
- Eleven of thirteen youth (85%) were pursuing educational goals while participating in the housing program.

Access to Community Resources: The HUB offers a safe, informal setting where youth connect with ROC staff and their peers to access support, information, and recreational and life skill development activities.

- Thirty-five (35) young people participated in activities or accessed resources at the **HUB** during Open Hours (Wednesday afternoons from 1:00 – 5:00 p.m.)
- ROC staff provided information and referrals to dozens of youth to address individual issues.
- Monthly activities were arranged to engage young people in developing skills and contributing to the community.
- Youth have requested the use of this spot for appropriate activities like a baby shower, when they have no other safe spots to hold their events.



Current and Projected Expenses by Program Area:

YSS has received approximately \$100,000 each of the last four years to implement local SSRHY activities. These funds have enabled us to expand and enhance the services available to homeless youth in Boone. This section provides an overview of the costs of ROC's three primary program components. A no-cost extension of this year's grant is anticipated, which will allow us to continue implementation of many of these activities through June 2014. Beyond that, services will be restructured or eliminated to reduce costs and a financing gap will result when the SSRHY funds are depleted.

Employment Program

	Current Year 7/12 - 6/13	Projected Costs 7/13 - 6/14	Projected Costs 7/14 - 6/15
Case Management/Staffing	\$ 13,227	\$ 13,492	\$ 27,413
ICHS Subcontract Staff	\$ 22,000	\$ 6,000	\$ -
Youth Wages (20 youth)	\$ 26,000	\$ 6,000	\$ -
Materials/Miscellaneous	\$ 6,206	\$ 6,206	
Oversight/Management	\$ 1,991	\$ 2,031	\$ 2,031
Subtotal	\$ 69,424	\$ 33,729	\$ 29,444

The employment component has been entirely funded by the ROC grant through a separate contract with Iowa Comprehensive Human Services (ICHS) with additional staff support provided by YSS. As the availability of the SSRHY funds end this year, this component of ROC programming will be reduced in FY'13-'14. Some services may, however, continue through collaboration with Workforce Investment Act funded agencies or a partnership with DMACC-Boone Campus. With the loss of dedicated revenue from the ROC grant to subsidize youth wages and the challenges to putting youth on the YSS payroll, this aspect of the employment program will be discontinued when current funds are depleted. In order to maintain an employment component in FY'14-'15 the YSS Case Manager will work with youth and employers on a pre-employment job placing program and be available to assist youth with soft skills to maintain successful employment.

Subsidized Housing

	Current Year 7/12 - 6/13	Projected Costs 7/13 - 6/14	Projected Costs 7/14 - 6/15
Case Management/Staffing	\$ 37,019	\$ 37,760	\$ 38,893
Facilities - beds	\$ 29,266	\$ 29,266	\$ 20,000
Materials/Miscellaneous	\$ 14,141	\$ 14,141	\$ 9,333
Oversight/Management	\$ 13,435	\$ 13,704	\$ 12,119
Subtotal	\$ 93,861	\$ 94,871	\$ 80,345

Transitional, supportive housing for homeless youth has been funded in Boone for many years through grants to YSS from HUD, HHS Transitional Living, and Emergency Shelter Care funding. These grants are competitive but expected to continue in the next two years to maintain 5 of the 7 beds currently available. Two of the beds funded by the RHY grant will unfortunately be discontinued until new revenue can be secured.

HUB/Short-Term Supports

	Current Year 7/12 - 6/13	Projected Costs 7/13 - 6/14	Projected Costs 7/14 - 6/15
Case Management/Staffing	\$ 26,093	\$ 26,615	\$ 13,896
Facility	\$ 15,952	\$ 15,952	\$ 3,000
Activities	\$ 6,766	\$ 6,766	\$ -
Youth Incentives	\$ 4,555	\$ 3,569	\$ 2,000
Materials/Miscellaneous	\$ 3,135	\$ 3,135	\$ 1,000
Oversight/Management	\$ 9,455	\$ 9,645	\$ 3,000
Subtotal	\$ 65,956	\$ 65,682	\$ 22,896

Maintaining the HUB component of current ROC services is the most vulnerable due to the cost of renting the HUB space without the ROC grant. We therefore anticipate terminating the lease for the HUB space by fiscal year 2015. The HUB has provided a focal point for services for youth and while we would hope to maintain some space, if sustainable funding cannot be secured, we will provide the connections to youth through staff outreach to where youth are in school and in the community.

General Administration

Tech support	\$ 2,303	\$ 2,303	\$ 1,500
Marketing/Printing/etc.	\$ 1,264	\$ 1,264	\$ 150
Subtotal	\$ 3,567	\$ 3,567	\$ 1,650

GRAND TOTAL EXPENSES \$ **232,808** \$ **197,849** \$ **134,335**

