

Charleston YOUth Count 2017

GOALS

Research Goal: Inform policy makers and service providers about the size, needs, assets and coping skills of Charleston’s youth population (25 years of age and younger) who are experiencing housing instability and/or food insecurity.

Direct Service Goal: Build resources, support systems and a coalition of advocates for youth experiencing housing instability and/or food insecurity in order to assist them in preventing and reducing negative physical, mental and social outcomes caused by the consequences of lack of stable housing and the absence of consistent access to nutritious food.

OBJECTIVES

1. To develop and implement methods of accurately counting and estimating the size of the population of housing unstable and food insecure youth; and to describe and understand the experiences, needs, assets and coping skills of people 25 years old or younger who are experiencing housing instability and/or food insecurity in the Charleston Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA).
2. To gather and analyze data to determine the number and characteristics of housing unstable and food insecure youth by county and within specific groups and to understand causes, correlates, and risk factors. These include, but are not limited to:

Life Experiences	Disability	Mental Health	Special Populations
Loss of job or familial financial support	Developmental disability	Severe and persistent mental illness	College of Charleston students
System involvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juvenile justice • Adult criminal justice • Foster care 	Physical disability	Addiction to drugs or alcohol	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning youth
History of abuse or neglect			
Direct or vicarious victims of domestic or other forms of violence			

3. Based on evidence developed and needs specifically defined through this initiative, advocate for and encourage and facilitate community-wide dialogue leading to strategic action planning to reduce and ultimately end housing instability and food insecurity (and its effects) among those 25 years old and younger in the Charleston MSA.
 - One portion of the response will likely be to develop safe places where youth can come to find food, showers, laundry, electrical outlets to charge cell phones, clothes and referrals to physical and mental health care providers and an array of supportive social services.

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METHODS

Backgrounding, Literature Review, Site Visit to Atlanta (GSU)

- review of lit. to ground work based on latest, most relevant existing research
- visit with authors of Atlanta Youth Count and Needs Assessment (2016)
- pilot test magnet event
- volunteer as part of 2017 HUD PIT count to gain practical field experience

Email Survey of College of Charleston Students

- assess prevalence of housing instability and food insecurity among the approximately 11,000 undergraduate and graduate students
- assess correlations between housing instability and food insecurity and factors like GPA and academic self-efficacy

Tri-County Canvas and Intercepts

- employ “engage/re-engage” approach looking for housing unstable and/or food insecure youth in order to estimate total number and associated needs/assets

Phase I: Spring 2017

- build coalition of partners
- pilot test instruments and data collection methods
- train cadre of data collection personnel, especially team leaders
- gain practical field experience
- develop and refine canvassing and magnet event methods, locations, times and other details
- test and refine incentive approaches
- distribute tokens
- develop street outreach plan (maps)

Phase II: October 2017

- canvass and hold magnet events
- implement updated procedures based on learning from spring pilot
- distribute tokens to newly engaged youth and count those re-engaged so we can estimate total number experiencing housing instability or food insecurity
- provide emergency supports as needed, minimally provide incentives (food, gift card, toiletries, socks, etc.)

Analysis, Reporting, Dialogue and Strategic Planning for Direct Service

- provide reports with recommendations to direct service providers, policy makers and interested community members
- support public education efforts of our partners
- facilitate dialogue and planning to build on youth assets and be able to offer drop-in center and other supports as the research indicates

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Partner Organizations



Funders

Alliance For Full Acceptance (AFFA)

Requests

Emergency Service Grant State of SC

Arcus Foundation

In-Kind Commitments

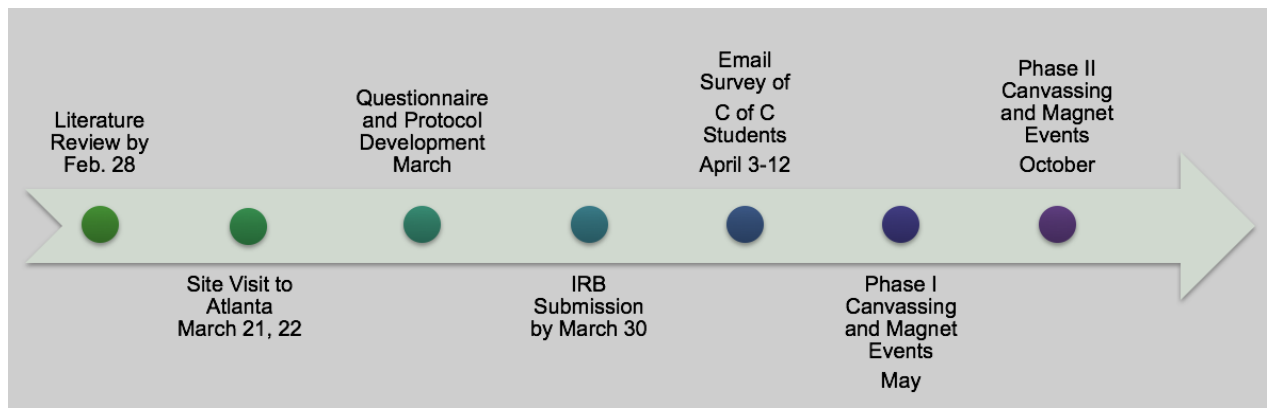
C of C Riley Center

Low Country Food Bank (\$10K worth of food)

Whole Foods (5% day = \$5,000)

Coastal Crust (Pizza at Events)

Research Project Milestones



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Top Ten Driving Principles Fueling this Effort

Livability/Sustainability

Empowerment

Asset Emphasis

Integrated Research and Direct Service

Unconditional Positive Regard

Collaboration for Community Cohesiveness

Short Term Action and Long Term Systems Focus

People First, Papers Later

Standing on the Shoulders of Others

Voluntary Peer Review