

FY 2022 Clark County CoC Unsheltered Homelessness Set Aside Project: SSO-Outreach or SSO-Other

1. Agency Name: **Janus Youth Programs, Inc.**

2. Your Name: **Dennis L. Morrow**

3. Email: **dmorrow@janusyouth.org**

4. Project Name: **Outreach Program Coordinator**

5. Specify the Type of Project: Is your agency applying for SSO-Street Outreach (to fund street outreach activities or is your agency applying for SSO-Other (to fund stand-alone support services to those experiencing homelessness or who have been homeless in the prior 6-months but are now residing in permanent housing (that is not PSH or RRH). Specify SSO-Street Outreach or SSO-Other in the box.

SSO-Street Outreach

Project Description

1. Please give an overview of the proposed project design. (10 points)

Janus Youth Programs operates Yellow Brick Road Washington (YBRW) Street Outreach Program, which serves youth and young adults ages 12-24 throughout all areas of Clark County, Washington. YBRW employs a team-based, mobile service delivery model to meet the basic emergency needs of young people on the streets. The program also provides crisis support and intervention to young people who are experiencing homelessness or unstable housing. YBRW is designed to be a visible resource to young people on the streets, and to facilitate referrals and access to off-street services that will ultimately assist youth in moving into stable housing and preparing for independence. Street outreach is integrated with Janus' drop-in center to provide a safe step-up service. Programming is designed to connect youth with a variety of community-based services that support exiting street life, including but not limited to emergency shelter options, mental health and substance abuse treatment, employment, education, and housing. Beyond street-based survival aid and service coordination, YBRW Outreach Specialists provide aftercare and follow-up services. All outreach services are grounded in Positive Youth Development, Trauma Informed Care, and Harm Reduction approaches, and all staff are trained in the Core Competencies of Youth Workers.

This project proposes to hire an Outreach Program Coordinator. The Outreach Program Coordinator will serve three primary purposes within the YBRW program: 1) They will support more accurate and efficient outreach data collection. 2) They will coordinate training, connection to the Clark County coordinated entry system, and access to supports for Outreach Specialists to provide housing assessments directly to youth and young adults encountered through YBRW. 3) They will directly participate in outreach activities to support continuity of the program and to ensure data tracking methodologies promote the most efficient access to housing support.

YBRW outreach is currently funded by three different sources, each of which requires its own location for data entry. One data entry location is for youth encountered on the streets or in community settings

(HMIS/YBRW Program). Another is for youth served within Janus' drop-in center (HMIS/Perch Program). The last one is for youth who are also victims of human trafficking (InfoNet/Victim Services). Although YBRW Outreach Specialists all share the same outreach responsibilities and goals, different staff members are assigned to different data entry locations depending on which contract funds their position. This makes tracking goals and services for program participants a cumbersome process. The need to pull all staff members together on a regular basis to coordinate services for program participants detracts from the ability to directly engage with youth. Direct engagement is necessary to build relationships that will usher youth into higher level services that will help them obtain and retain housing. An Outreach Program Coordinator will free up time for all YBRW Outreach Specialists to perform direct street outreach services. Additionally, the Outreach Program Coordinator will have the ability to integrate participant data from multiple systems to build clear paths and strategies that will connect young people with housing. This process will further aid Outreach Specialists in their engagement focus with youth, as well as inform case conferencing for Clark County by-name list efforts.

Street outreach workers have the unique ability to bring services directly to people who may not otherwise access mainstream services. Youth under age 25, in particular, have pointedly avoided the community's coordinated entry system. As an agency, Janus has had success in getting youth housed by training in-house case managers to perform housing assessments. Youth who have built relationships with Janus' programs have been much more likely to participate in housing assessments and housing case management when they are able to limit their interactions to known program staff. YBRW has had the goal of training Outreach Specialists to also perform housing assessments, but capacity has been limited. The Outreach Program Coordinator would manage these capacity issues by coordinating the trainings themselves, building a more interactive partnership with the coordinated entry system, and determining/responding to other training barriers experienced by Outreach Specialists.

For the Outreach Program Coordinator to assess the usefulness of data tracking methods and the effectiveness of providing on-the-spot housing assessments, they need to be able to see the processes in action. The Outreach Program Coordinator will, therefore, participate in some direct service work in conjunction with Outreach Specialists. An additional programmatic benefit to having an Outreach Program Coordinator is the ability to improve morale among program staff. Hiring and retaining direct service staff has been much more challenging since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Incorporating an Outreach Program Coordinator position into the YBRW program will provide an attractive path to advancement for existing Outreach Specialists. The new position will also lessen the burden of data management for direct service staff whose skills are rooted in human engagement. Moreover, since staffing challenges have left some Outreach Specialists feeling like services to young people will be incomplete if they take personal time off, employing an additional staff member who can perform outreach will improve access to self-care regimens that keep staff engaged and committed to the work.

2. Please describe the programmatic strategies that will be used to reduce rates of households returning to homelessness and increase permanent housing placement. (5 points)

Intensive case management is Janus' key to reducing rates of households returning to homelessness and increasing permanent housing placements. The first and most significant housing connection for youth and young adults is typically with Janus' housing programs. Janus is the largest provider of housing for youth experiencing homelessness in Clark County. In addition to rental assistance options ranging from eviction prevention to rapid re-housing to permanent supportive housing, youth who seek housing through Janus have access to a 28-unit affordable housing complex built and maintained by the Vancouver

Housing Authority (VHA). Expanding on the success of this partnership, VHA is in the process of constructing a second similar building with Janus providing case management for youth in both programs. Janus programs have a housing retention rate of 85-95% (depending on program type) with ongoing case management support for youth who have lost or are in danger of losing their housing. Janus currently pays rent for over 100 youth each month in its Washington and Oregon-based programs.

The effectiveness of case management hinges on the ability of Janus staff to build trusting relationships with youth who have felt let down by other service providers and support systems. The core approaches Janus uses to build these relationships are Positive Youth Development (PYD), Trauma Informed Care, Harm Reduction, and Motivational Interviewing. Starting with YBRW Outreach Specialists, youth are approached with a standard PYD assumption that they have the knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal attributes needed to transition from the streets into self-sufficiency. Young people can build protective factors and develop these aspects of themselves in response to being held to high (but reasonable) expectations, having access to ongoing supportive relationships, and being involved with meaningful opportunities for participation in programs and/or the community. Across programs – outreach, shelter, housing – youth are perceived as active participants and partners, rather than recipients of services. Youth thus grow into competent, self-sufficient adults who have enough confidence in themselves to address future housing challenges and trust that they can find support from programs if needed.

Understanding trauma and how trauma is exhibited in young people experiencing homelessness is critical for all Janus staff so they can respond to youth in a way that will provide a sense of safety and security, and so they do not inadvertently re-traumatize youth. All Janus staff are trained in Trauma Informed/Trauma Responsive Care, with a particular emphasis on the role of trauma in brain functioning. To reinforce lessons and problem-solve specific relational challenges, regular consultation is provided to staff via supervision time, staff meetings, and as-needed sessions with a Janus-contracted therapist specializing in vicarious trauma.

The goal of YBRW outreach is to keep young people safe while encouraging them to exit street life. Harm Reduction and Motivational Interviewing (MI) are the primary models for engaging youth to make healthy choices that will assist them in leaving the streets. Starting with the creation of a single long-term goal, youth are able to avoid feeling overwhelmed as they shift their thinking processes from trauma and immediate needs to future planning. As youth open themselves to the possibility of a safe, stable lifestyle, Outreach Specialists can effectively introduce resources for substance use treatment, counseling, shelter, housing, and employment. Offering a range of resources ensures that youth have ample opportunity to exercise healthy choices while services are being arranged or coordinated. At the same time, young people are supported in identifying potential barriers to service acquisition and maintenance. This process prepares youth to face the challenges that will emerge through their transition into housing, as well as highlights service areas where Outreach Specialists and Housing Case Managers will need to monitor, evaluate, and advocate on behalf of youth.

Housing is not an endpoint for youth. Follow-up services are provided by Outreach Specialists and Housing Case Managers through in-person check-ins, phone conversations, text, and/or social media. The purpose of follow-up services is to ensure ongoing availability of safe adult role models, to evaluate progress on case management plans, to provide additional support and/or resource connection as needed, and to reinforce safe/healthy behaviors and choices. Youth are most successful at retaining housing when they have the support resources already at hand to navigate unexpected circumstances and challenges.

3. Describe the specific plan to coordinate and integrate with other mainstream health, social services, and employment programs for which program participants may be eligible. How will you ensure that program participants will be assisted to obtain all benefits for which they may be eligible? (10 points)

Resource connection is a primary focus of outreach, and this includes coordinating with other mainstream health, social service, and employment programs to ensure youth have and maintain access to the services they need. YBRW Outreach Specialists provide referrals to community partners and ensure available transportation to/from appointments with service providers. Depending on the distinct needs of each youth, transportation may include single day bus passes, monthly bus passes, medical transport, or direct transportation (including accompaniment throughout the appointment, if desired). Empowering youth to determine the level of support they need builds trust. Being available for higher-level support needs increases the likelihood that youth will engage with community partners and build out their mainstream support network.

YBRW works with the following community partners to assure participants are assisted in obtaining mainstream benefits:

Substance Use and Recovery: Lifeline Connections, Columbia River Mental Health Services, Sea Mar-Community Services Northwest (CSNW), Harm Reduction Center

It is important for program participants to have access to a variety of options to most effectively address their recovery needs. When young people experience withdrawal or dependency-related symptoms, Lifeline offers medical detoxification services, which include screening and assessment for inpatient or outpatient support. Columbia River Mental Health Services offer a young adult outpatient program, as well as medication-assisted treatment. Sea Mar-CSNW offers a range of addiction programs, including Parent Child Assistance Program and a gender-specific groups. All of these providers also have services for individuals with co-occurring mental health disorders.

Outreach Specialists use Motivational Interviewing to steer conversations and softly encourage young people to be more open minded about receiving help for their substance use. If participants are not yet ready to change their substance use behavior, Outreach Specialists encourage them to utilize the Harm Reduction Center for safe needle exchange. Additionally, the Harm Reduction Center has provided Naloxone kits and training to Outreach Specialists who can subsequently provide Naloxone kits and training to youth to prevent opioid overdose.

Mental Health: Columbia River Mental Health Services (Options Youth Program), Lifeline Connections, Sea Mar-Community Services Northwest

Like recovery services, not every mental health program is a good fit for every youth. Therefore, Outreach Specialists are well-versed in what each program has to offer so they can assist young people with making a choice that will work best for them. Outreach Specialists build relationships with staff at each program to guide warm hand-offs and to maintain open lines of communication in case additional service coordination or support are needed.

Physical Health: Free Clinic of SW Washington, Sea Mar Community Health Centers, Planned Parenthood, Options360, Birthright

Through the community's array of providers, young people have access to free and low-cost medical, dental, vision, and family planning services. Services that are not free are eligible for Medicaid, and navigation support is available to assist youth with obtaining Medicaid benefits.

Legal: Clark County Volunteer Lawyers Program, Legal Counsel for Youth and Children, NW Justice Project

Youth experiencing homelessness face a number of different legal challenges. Each of the community partners listed provides free legal assistance. Areas of focus include orders of protection, public benefits, child protective services, consumer and medical debt, emancipation, identity theft, immigration, record sealing, warrants, restitution, identity documents, gender marker and name changes, landlord/tenant disputes, housing, education, family law, and guardianships.

Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault/Human Trafficking: YWCA Clark County, Cowlitz Indian Tribe (Pathways to Healing program), Human Trafficking Task Force of Clark County

People experiencing homelessness are highly vulnerable to chaotic and unsafe interpersonal dynamics. Regardless of gender, the majority of youth encountered during outreach have at some point been impacted by domestic violence, sexual assault, and/or human trafficking (sex or labor). YWCA Clark County offers 24/7 hotline and in-person advocacy services that can provide confidential emotional support and safety planning. The Cowlitz Indian Tribe's Pathways to Healing program enables participants to tap into holistic methods of healing that can temper the effects of complex trauma. The Human Trafficking Task Force of Clark County provides access to multidisciplinary treatment teams that engage in creative problem solving and leverage support resources.

LGBTQ+: Queer Youth Resource Center (QYRC), Triple Point, PFLAG Southwest Washington

QYRC hosts regular events aimed at creating a sense of community for LGBTQ+ youth ages 12-24. YBRW shares information about these events with interested youth during outreach. Operated by Children's Home Society of Washington, Triple Point offers site-based and school-based LGBTQ+ support groups for school-aged youth. Outreach Specialists conduct outreach at Triple Point at least once per month. Youth who are facing homelessness as they reach the age of majority are directly connected with YBRW to support access to safe housing options. Although PFLAG's focus is on family and friends of LGBTQ+ people, monthly support meetings are fully inclusive of LGBTQ+ individuals, loved ones, friends, and allies.

Welfare Programs: Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS)

DSHS offers cash, food, and medical assistance to low-income individuals and families. Outreach Specialists assist youth with coordinating DSHS services particular to their needs and provide transportation to/from the local DSHS community service office for required in-person service needs.

Employment: Next, Partners in Careers, WorkSource, Goodwill Job Connections

With programs that specifically target youth and young adults, each of these community partners offers a range of employment services, including financial workshops, resume building, job coaching, job leads and paid internship opportunities, and support to complete high school equivalency exams. To build relationships and reduce barriers to housing access, Janus has a Housing Case Manager who works out of the Next building one day per week.

4. *What type of internal agency support services will be offered to program participants that will ensure successful retention in or help to obtain permanent housing? (5 points)*

Janus' service model strategically co-locates drop-in and housing services in the same building. This setup enables Outreach Specialists to directly connect youth with viable housing options, and to engender face-to-face contact with Housing Case Managers as rapidly and effectively as possible. As youth move from crisis intervention to case planning to resource connection, they are introduced to Janus' Housing Case Managers in the comfort of a trusted environment. This practice eliminates much of the anxiety of the referral process by enabling youth to build relationships with the housing team before committing to more intensive services.

Since housing and shelter are both accessed via the coordinated entry system in Clark County, any local shelter referral may also include conversation about long-term housing needs. Youth who desire a warm place to sleep for the night, but who are ambivalent about creating long-term goals or committing to any sort of housing program, can undergo assessment to address their many facets of need. In anticipation of this, Outreach Specialists can begin to plant the idea of housing stability without any pressure to commit. Once youth become housed – either independently or through a local housing program – they may continue to receive support from Outreach Specialists and to access services at Janus' drop-in center while they adjust to their new living situation. This enables youth to maintain support around basic needs, including relational connection, while tapering down from outreach services.

Once youth become housed through one of Janus' many housing programs, additional supports are utilized to ensure successful housing retention and/or permanent housing support. Janus' Housing programs utilize a Housing Stability Plan for each household. Each month, participants complete a Housing Stability Plan that consists of three goals. Within those three goals, participants write out how they can meet the goals and what steps they can take to achieve each of them. Each goal also has a youth-directed timeline in which to accomplish the steps. New Housing Stability Plans are created every 90 days to help participants stay on track and motivated to continue in the right direction. Housing Case Managers use the previous plans to determine what goals have been accomplished, what goals need to be revised, and what additional supports are needed to achieve updated goals. The Housing Stability Plans not only help youth maintain housing, but they also frequently help increase household income.

Individualized Skill Building is another internal agency support provided by Housing Case Managers. Using structured education plans, verbal communication, modeling, and side-by-side skill building, youth learn and practice basic independent living skills. Common skills Housing Case Managers work on with participants include making appointments, preparing food, housekeeping, landlord communication, conflict resolution, boundary setting, budgeting, paying bills, and grocery shopping. Janus' core relational approaches remain strong through these interventions. For example, Harm Reduction is utilized in determining what degree of assistance a young person needs with house cleaning. If chores have become overwhelming, the focus of a supportive intervention might be to clear walkways to ensure access to emergency exits.

Finally, Janus' Housing Case Managers have an established connection to SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Advocates for participants who need assistance in applying for SSI/SSDI benefits. Due to their age, young people often struggle to meet the SSI documentation requirements that determine length and degree of disability. SOAR is a valuable resource for youth who qualify for permanent

supportive housing, as well as for youth who have external housing supports but need a consistent method of income to maintain those supports.

5. How does the agency receive and incorporate feedback from persons with lived experience of homelessness? How will this project incorporate the feedback from persons with lived experience of homelessness? (5 points)

Janus receives feedback from persons with lived experience of homelessness in a variety of ways. Janus pioneered the concept of Positive Youth Development when it opened its first Transitional Living Program for homeless youth in 1986. The program design was based on weekly house meetings where youth met with staff and had direct input into program design, implementation, and changes necessary to address their needs. This has carried forward with a philosophy of constantly seeking input from youth in all our various programs to create the best model to address their immediate and often changing needs. Janus also works to recruit staff members with lived experience; oftentimes, these staff members can connect with youth on a different level, and they can provide a uniquely balanced perspective on programming.

Each Janus program has an established policy for reporting and resolving grievances – all of which encourage direct, respectful communication between youth and staff to address the physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs of young people. Similarly, programs have developed youth-friendly Client Satisfaction Surveys to elicit feedback when youth exit or complete a program. Surveys call attention to the most important goals of each service, as well as Janus' core values of safety and respect. They also give space for youth to expand on survey questions or share additional thoughts about anything that is not asked on the survey. Janus' programs are constantly evolving to meet the ever-changing needs of youth experiencing homelessness.

More recently, Janus has partnered with Council for the Homeless to advance Clark County's youth homelessness response system through A Way Home Washington's Anchor Community Initiative (ACI). Janus was selected by the ACI leadership team to host a Youth & Community Engagement Manager position that will be partially focused on recruitment and development of Clark County's Youth Advisory/Action Board (YAB). The YAB is exclusively comprised of youth and young adults with lived experience of homelessness, and their mission is to guide the CoC's efforts to functionally end youth homelessness in Clark County. The existing YAB was established by Janus' housing team, so this new position will serve to bolster participation and expand the reach of the YAB.

6. What strategies will this program use to ensure the needs of historically underserved populations are met? (5 points)

Janus' PYD approach to service delivery means that every youth we work with has the opportunity to communicate their unique needs and goals, and to receive tailored support to exit street life and maintain safe housing. The agency goal is to be constantly aware of increasing access for all youth and of how to be culturally flexible to address the unique needs of each young person who walks through any of our doors. Janus' core values are safety and respect. These values cannot be upheld without a solid commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work interlaced with all aspects of service delivery. Janus' DEI Committee, which was formed in 2014, developed the following vision statement to reflect the agency's stance on equity: "Janus Youth Programs is invested in advancing equitable services for all children, youth and families, and for all staff. We recognize both advocacy and

education about equity is important for the success of marginalized communities. Collaborations with the communities we work with informs our lens.”

Janus’ DEI Committee is comprised of staff representatives from each program site. The committee has overwhelming support from Janus’ Clark County programs, including middle and upper management staff. This steadfast commitment enables Outreach Specialists and Housing Case Managers to be both aware of and highly responsive to the needs of historically underserved populations. An example of how Janus supports a culture of accountability in this area is through the Equity Feedback Form (EFF). Accessible at all Janus programs, the EFF enables staff to bring up concerns about DEI-related issues within their programs. Youth have a separate grievance process, but their concerns can also be brought to the broader attention of the agency via the EFF. Completed EFF’s are reviewed by Human Resources and the DEI Committee to assess and implement changes to policies and procedures where appropriate.

As discussed in question #5, Janus will host a Youth & Community Engagement Manager position as part of the community’s ACI involvement. In addition to recruiting and developing the YAB, this position is responsible for conducting community outreach to culturally specific organizations. The overarching goal is to better integrate the homelessness crisis response system and culturally specific organizations in the community that may be serving people experiencing homelessness. The relationships between organizations are expected to be mutually beneficial, in that mainstream service providers will have regular access to consultation and support in serving BIPOC and LGBTQ+ participants, and culturally specific organizations will receive technical assistance to better address the needs of the people they serve who may be experiencing homelessness or unstable housing.

7. How has the agency reviewed disaggregated data, what did it learn and what is the current plan to create more equitable programs? (5 points)

Young people who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC), and/or as lesbian, gay, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ+) are disproportionately impacted by homelessness. Therefore, individual Janus programs regularly review disaggregated data to determine ways we can make our services more equitable for people who belong to one or both of these groups. Janus also completes an annual agency-wide report/analysis of programs utilizing disaggregated data for the roughly 3,000 young people served in Janus’ 30 programs. This report is then made available to Janus’ Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, BIPOC Affinity Group, and Board of Directors. The report is used to frame Janus’ strategic planning efforts, which always include goals to create more equitable programs and increase access for underserved populations. Efforts appear to be working, since Janus’ Clark County programs typically see between 30% and 45% of participants identifying as BIPOC, and roughly one-third identifying as LGBTQ+. Clark County’s population is predominantly white, with fewer than 15% of people during the 2020 census identifying as BIPOC. Similarly, estimates for the number of LGBTQ+ people in the United States range from 2% to 10%.

Janus also works with the CoC to disaggregate data through community-wide accountability processes aimed at increasing equitable practices within all homelessness crisis response system programs. One report focused on the disproportionality reduction from year to year in the housing vs. unhoused systems. This report showed that BIPOC individuals were significantly more likely to experience homelessness in Clark County, particularly Pacific Islander and Black/African American community members. An analysis of the assessment tools being utilized demonstrated noticeable differences based on racial identity. The

assessment workgroup recommended a change to the C-CAT assessment tool, which was implemented. After one year of using the revised C-CAT tool, the score gap between racial/cultural groups was reduced significantly. Advocacy opportunities are also becoming more visible through the use of disaggregated data. One example is supporting the creation or purchase of larger family homes to aid multi-generational households.

Earlier this year, Janus hired a Clark County Youth Outcomes Manager to help streamline data processes for Janus' outreach and shelter programs, and to build/facilitate a community-based Youth By Name List (YBNL) workgroup. By Name List strategies are heavily dependent on quality data. They aim to reduce disproportionality by zeroing in on trends and inequities that are evident through disaggregated data. YBNL workgroup meetings will be focused on identifying specific youth in the community who need more intensive interventions to move from unsheltered homelessness into housing. Data regarding identified needs, services received, and case plans going forward will be analyzed twice monthly to determine what available resources can be tapped, as well as what service gaps exist in the community. Through this coordinated process, the YBNL workgroup will be able to leverage resources more effectively, identify trends within distinct subpopulations of homeless youth, and demonstrate the need for funding increases and/or policy changes as they relate to equitability.

8. Describe how the applicant is an active participant in the local Continuum of Care meetings. (5 points)

Janus has multiple staff representing all areas of programming who attend every Clark County CoC meeting. Additionally, Janus' Housing Director is the Vice Chair of the CoC Steering Committee Board. Participation in local CoC meetings is about more than showing up. Janus is the only agency specifically representing the interests of Clark County's homeless youth population, so staff members are vocal during broad group discussions, willing to take the lead in small group activities, and diligent about following up with CoC representatives when additional tasks or thoughts are relevant to the trajectory of our shared work.

I agree that the information herein is true and correct

Dennis L. Morrow, Executive Director
