Safe Shelter Collaborative

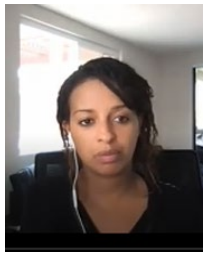
Runaway and homeless youth product development updates

April 21, 2023







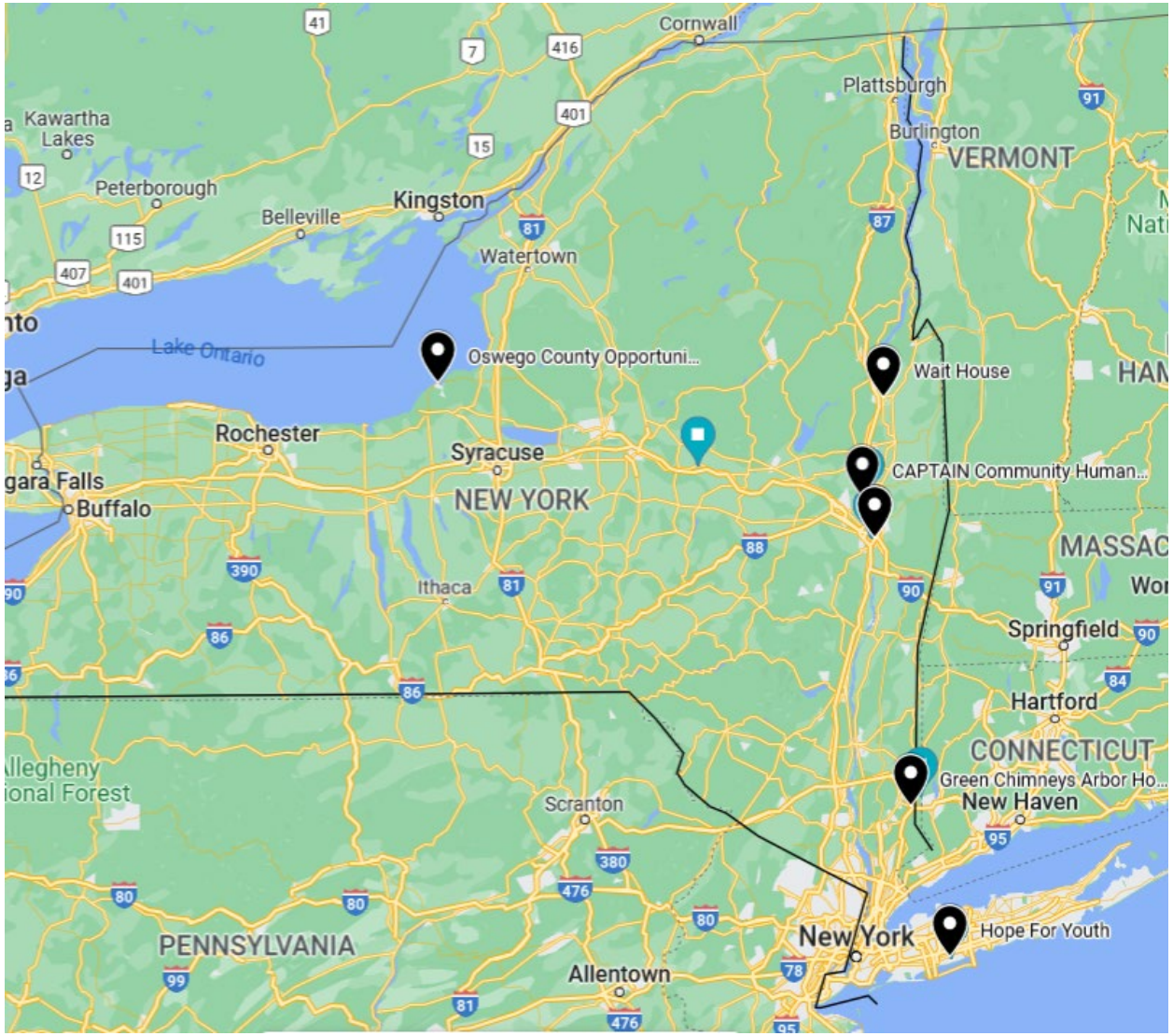







Our process

- Determine how agencies that support runaway and homeless youth might be able to use the Safe Shelter Collaborative service to find shelter for that population.
- Learn from the community of agencies about how they find appropriate shelter resources and place youth
  - Learnings direct from agency staff inform tool design and increase adoption. When staff see their input and feedback, they use those tools that fit into their particular context.



Who participated

- Talked to eight agencies across the state, outside of NYC
- 11 staff (program directors, shelter managers, crisis coordinators, program administrators)

Insights from interviews



Rarely full

Three agencies (out of eight) reported they are often full.



Call shelters directly

Agencies call known agencies in their network to advocate when their shelter is full or not appropriate to a youth's needs.



Few barriers to accessing shelter

Age and severity of mental illness (determinate for hospital care or shelter) are important deciding factors for shelter fit.



Lack of visibility of agencies in their region

Keep lists, but not always up to date.

Insights from interviews



Faster is better

Everyone was interested in speeding up the process



More information early will help

Everyone felt that providing critical information up front to determine appropriate space was a good feature (referring to intake questions)



Proximity is a concern

Some were concerned about proximity to shelters and lack of transportation options.



Rarely full, and want to help

Some shelters that often have space available were hopeful they could more easily accept referrals

Examining the Safe Shelter Collaborative intake questions

RHY agencies reported this information is key for placement in appropriate shelter.

Questions 4, 5, 6 are important for determining if hospital or shelter is a best fit.

1. Age
2. Gender identity
3. Accompanying children/derivatives *[it's rare, but sometimes "kids have kids"]*
4. History of violence, aggression, or self-harming behaviors
5. Current mental health
6. Current substance abuse
7. Language spoken
8. English proficiency
9. Type of trafficking situation
10. Physical mobility concerns requiring special consideration for the client.

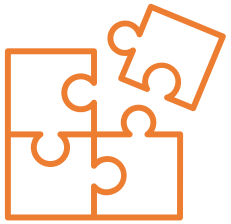
Current SafeShelteronline.org questions

Age groups served by NY agencies

Out of 8 agencies
7 different age
groups served

- 12-17
- 13-17
- 16-22
- Under 18
- Up to age 21
- 16-25
- 18-25

Tech development plan



Leverage as much existing functionality as possible



Create a dedicated Hub for RHY agencies



Modify the intake form to specifically fit the needs of RHY agencies (e.g. age ranges)

Agency needs to find shelter for a 16-year-old.

Create a New Bed Request

CASE REFERENCE #

Selected groups

(Please select a value)

1. Age

16 - 17

2.

3. /derivatives

4. ression or self-harming behaviors

- Under 12
- 12 - 15
- 16 - 17
- 18 - 21
- 22 - 24
- 25 or Over

5. Current mental health

(Please select a value)

6. Current substance use

All agencies receive request for shelter for a 16-year-old.

Request from: Center for Children and Families

Request #: 4249
Sent: 12/2/2021 2:40:33 PM
Status: open

Age: 16 - 17
Gender: Male
Children: None
Violence/aggression/self-harming behaviors: History of violent behavior, Previous suicide attempt(s), Perpetrator of sexual abuse/violence
Current mental health: Yes, mental health diagnosis with no prescribed medication
Current substance use: None
Primary Language: english
English Proficiency: Limited
Physical disability or mobility None

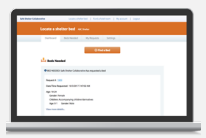
Now | Soon | Not now

Keep in mind: if you click **Now** or **Soon**, the agency or survivor will contact you to make sure your shelter is a good fit.

Back

Timing for development + learning period

Development timeline
[2 months]



July: Learning period where agency staff use technology and provide feedback [6 weeks to 2 months]

Quotes from the community

"We're very, very rural, no public transportation, don't have the benefits that urban areas have. It's hard, we might get a call from a youth 40 miles away and we can't have staff go alone to those situations. Youth have no way to get to us."

"That's perfect. The questions. All of them." [Safe Shelter Collaborative]

"I foresee it being a great tool to use and maximizing our youth's ability to access shelter." [Safe Shelter Collaborative]

"I don't see a downside or a way that it wouldn't help. It seems great, honestly. We often have beds here that are available. I hate that there's another youth in another county is without a bed because they can't access shelter when we have one." [Safe Shelter Collaborative]

"We honestly do not have many youth contact us who are truly runaway or homeless that we turn away. If they have a need, we have the space, we have the capability to do it."

"This is a phenomenal idea, in that you're listing all of this criteria and there might be someone who can help. And you just don't know it." [Safe Shelter Collaborative]

"It's a great idea, a really good idea because I know a lot of times we'll get transient kids without any attachment to our county, and they may be suited to another community." [Safe Shelter Collaborative]

"I think it would be useful, depending on the ages and what proximity." [Safe Shelter Collaborative]

Proposed RHY Intake Questions

CASE REFERENCE #_____

1) Age
- ○ Under 12
- ○ 12-15
- ○ 16-17
- ○ 18-21
- ○ 22-24
- ○ 25 and older

Legend

Items with ○ only one option can be selected.

Items with ❑ multiple options can be selected.

2) Current housing situation
- ○ Runaway
- ○ Homeless

3) Gender identity
- ❑ Male
- ❑ Female
- ❑ Trans male
- ❑ Trans female
- ❑ Other

4) Accompanying children/derivatives
- ❑ None
- ❑ Pregnant past first trimester
- ❑ Accompanying children/derivatives
  - ❑ *Number of children*
    - ❑ *Age/gender of children*

5) History of violence, aggression or self-harming behaviors
- ❑ None
- ❑ History of violent behavior
- ❑ History of aggression
- ❑ Current state of inflicting self-injury
- ❑ Current suicidal ideation
- ❑ Previous suicide attempt(s)
- ❑ Perpetrator of sexual abuse/violence

6) Current mental health
- ○ None disclosed
- ○ Did not ask
- ○ Yes, mental health diagnosis with no prescribed medication
- ○ Yes, compliant with medication for mental health diagnosis
- ○ Yes, noncompliant with medication for mental health diagnosis

7) Current substance use
- ○ None
- ○ Unsure
- ○ Yes, while in trafficking situation
- ○ Yes, recreationally
- ○ Yes, substance use disorder as defined by the DSM-5 (use, intoxication, or withdrawal)

8) Language spoken (drop-down list)
- ○ English
- ○ Spanish
- ○ ASL
- ○ Mandarin
- ○ Arabic
- ○ Japanese
- ○ Other _____

9) English proficiency
- ○ Limited
- ○ Basic
- ○ Proficient

10) Violence experienced
- ❑ None
- ❑ Sex trafficking
- ❑ Sexual assault
- ❑ Other _____

11) Physical disability or mobility concerns requiring special consideration for the client
- ❑ None
- ❑ Needs elevator and ramp access
- ❑ Has visual disabilities
- ❑ Has hearing disabilities
- ❑ Accompanied by a service animal
- ❑ Other _____