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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 16, 2018

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NEW FEDERAL RESOURCES TO REDUCE HOMELESSNESS AMONG YOUTH

(Columbus, OH) – Community Shelter Board has been awarded a \$6M demonstration grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development intended to dramatically reduce homelessness among youth, age 24 and younger. More than 1,300 youth, age 24 and younger, were served in Columbus and Franklin County shelters in 2017. More than 900 unaccompanied youth, between the ages of 14 and 24, visited a drop-in center for homeless youth.

The federal award is over two years and is being blended with resources from the private sector, in keeping with CSB's longstanding tradition of public/private partnerships. Funds have been committed by The Columbus Foundation and others to support planning efforts.

“We can't lose another generation to the ravages of homelessness”, said Michelle Heritage, executive director of Community Shelter Board. “We now have a path forward to create a coordinated, comprehensive, community solution to assure that the most vulnerable young people in our community have the opportunity not just to survive - but to thrive.”

A committee of stakeholders will collaborate to develop the plan, including representatives from local government, youth service providers, homeless service providers, The Columbus Foundation, and young people who have experienced homelessness.

“It's important that young people who have first-hand experience of homelessness are deeply involved in this planning”, said Becky Westerfelt, executive director of Huckleberry House. “We'll learn from them about what kinds of services youth want and need, and they'll have a direct role in choosing which project ideas get funding.”

Once the new coordinated community plan for youth is approved by HUD, the majority of the federal funds will be spent on implementation of new project models and services for youth, anticipated to begin in 2019.

Use of the federal award is restricted to planning for and implementation of new housing and service options for youth. Private sector investments will continue to be needed to round out a broad array of options for youth, including prevention services. The federal award for youth does not

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diminish the need for funds to operate the current homeless system of care that serves 12,000 people a year with homelessness prevention, shelter, street outreach, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing.

Factors most frequently reported by youth as contributing to their homelessness include child abuse, family conflict, neglect, generational poverty, and inadequate job training opportunities.

In total, HUD awarded \$43 million to reduce homelessness among youth in 11 communities across the United States. [Learn more here.](#)

Community Shelter Board leads a coordinated, community effort to make sure everyone has a place to call home. CSB is the collective impact organization driving strategy, accountability, collaboration, and resources to achieve the best outcomes for people facing homelessness in Columbus and Franklin County. CSB brings together 16 agencies across the community to work together as a cohesive system for change. With the support of a compassionate community, its system of care served 12,000 people last year with homelessness prevention, shelter, street outreach, rapid re-housing, and permanent supportive housing. CSB is funded by the City of Columbus, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners, the United Way of Central Ohio, The Columbus Foundation, Nationwide Foundation, American Electric Power Foundation, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the State of Ohio, and many other public and private investors.