



Department of Commerce

# Prevention of youth homelessness

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# Agenda

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- OHY background
- Housing instability and youth
- SSB 6560
- Process :Human centered design & co-design
- Findings



# Office of Homeless Youth

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Background



# 2015 Homeless Youth Act

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- Established Office of Homeless Youth (OHY)
- Set 5 priority areas:
  1. Stable Housing
  2. Family Reconciliation
  3. Permanent Connections
  4. Education & Employment
  5. Social & Emotional Well-Being



# Who are Homeless Youth?

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- *Youth (under age 18) and young adults (age 18 through 24) who are living on their own, without a parent or guardian, and are without a safe, stable living arrangement.*
- Also referred to as “unaccompanied” youth



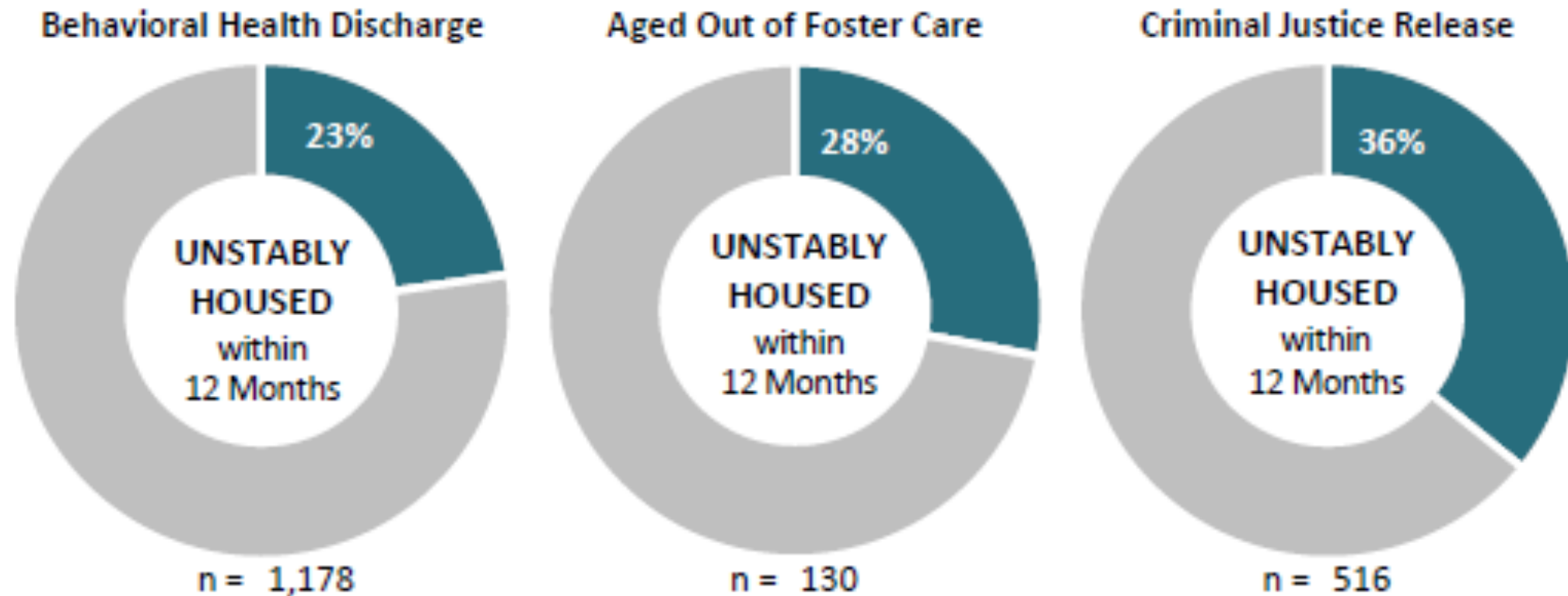
# How Do Young People Become Homeless?

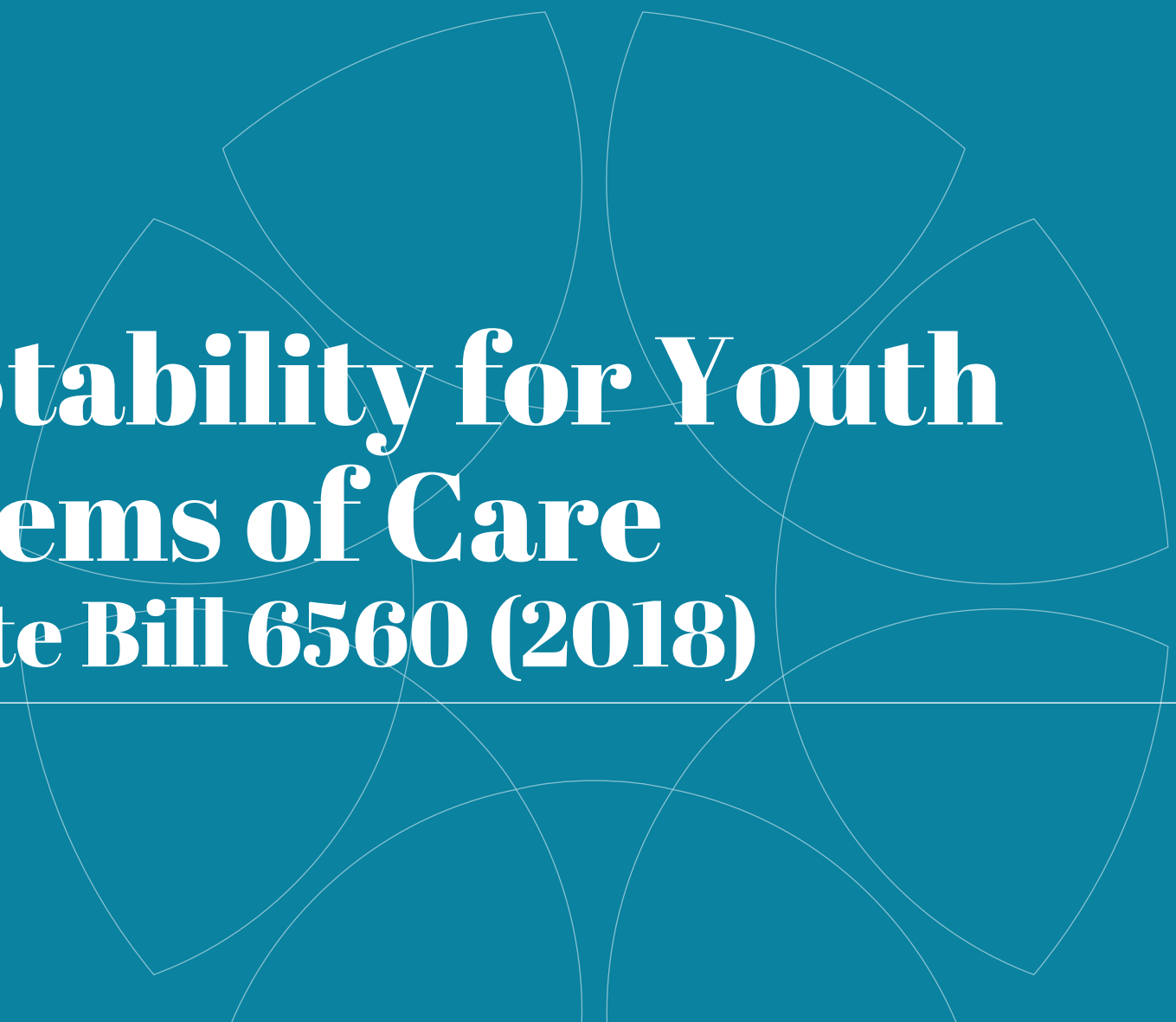
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- Intellectual and developmental disability
- Abuse or neglect (trauma)
- Economic instability or family poverty
- Historical trauma (forced migration)
- Structural racism (housing policies, redlining, in employment)
- Sexual orientation or gender orientation leading to family abandonment
- System (foster care, justice system, behavioral health) involvement

• Approx. 1,800 are unstably housed within  
• one year of exit

### STATUS AT 12 MONTHS BY POINT OF DISCHARGE



A large, stylized white flower graphic is centered in the background. It consists of eight overlapping circular segments that form the petals of a flower. The text is overlaid on the left side of the flower.

# **Improving Stability for Youth Exiting Systems of Care Substitute Senate Bill 6560 (2018)**

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## SSB 6560 (2018)

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*“... it is the goal of the legislature, that beginning January 1, 2021, any unaccompanied youth discharged from a publicly funded system of care in our state will be discharged into safe and stable housing.”*

*“The department of children, youth, and families and the office of homeless youth prevention and protection programs must jointly develop a plan...”* to ensure this goal is met.



# Publicly funded systems of care

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- Child welfare
- Juvenile justice
- Behavioral health
- Office of Homeless Youth programs

# Approach

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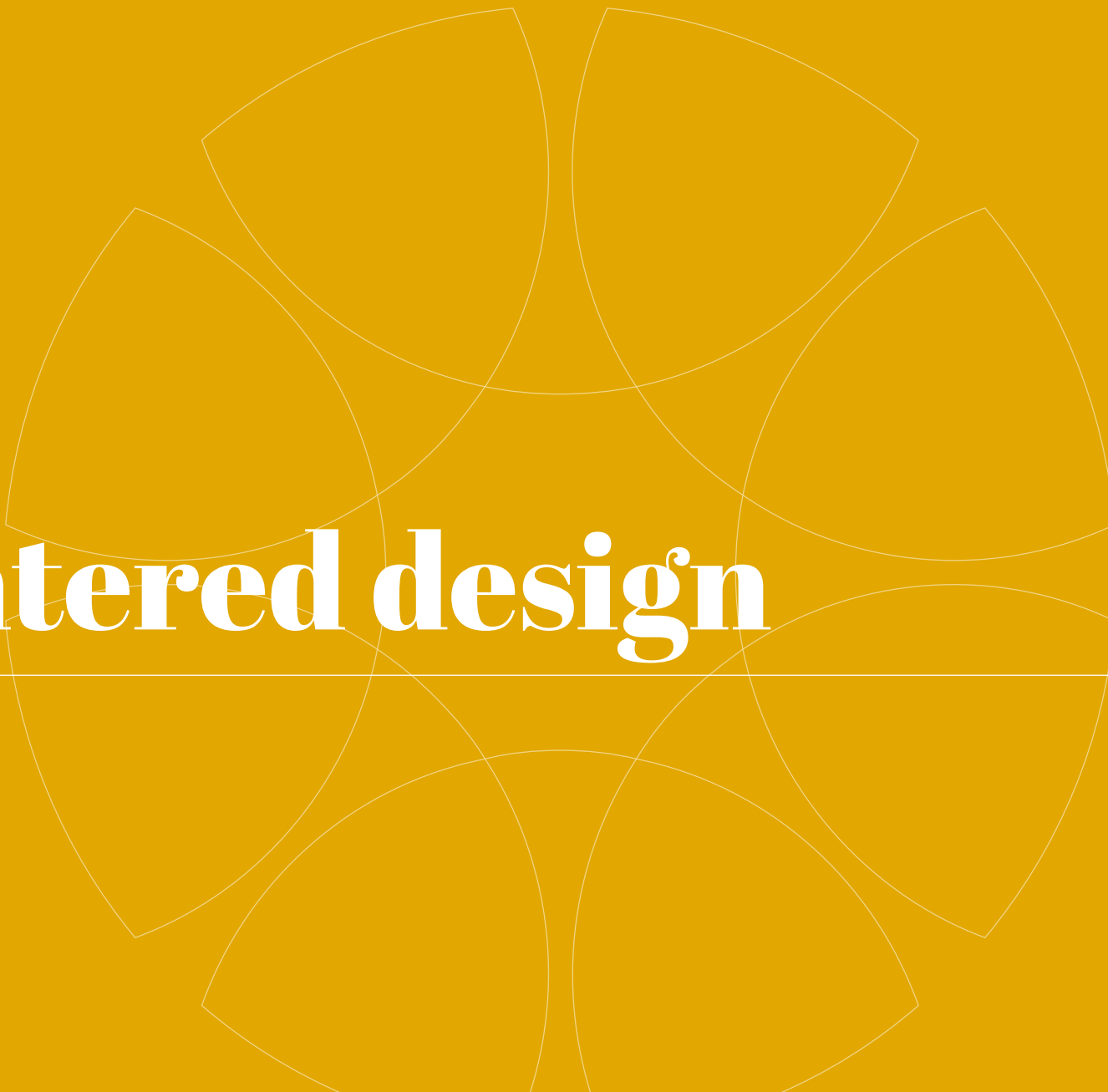
# Strategies to Develop the Plan

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- Core team of agency representatives
- Input from field staff
- Stakeholder engagement
- Literature review
- Research of best practices
- Data analysis
- Co-design sessions with young people
- Co-design session with line staff from agencies

# Human centered design

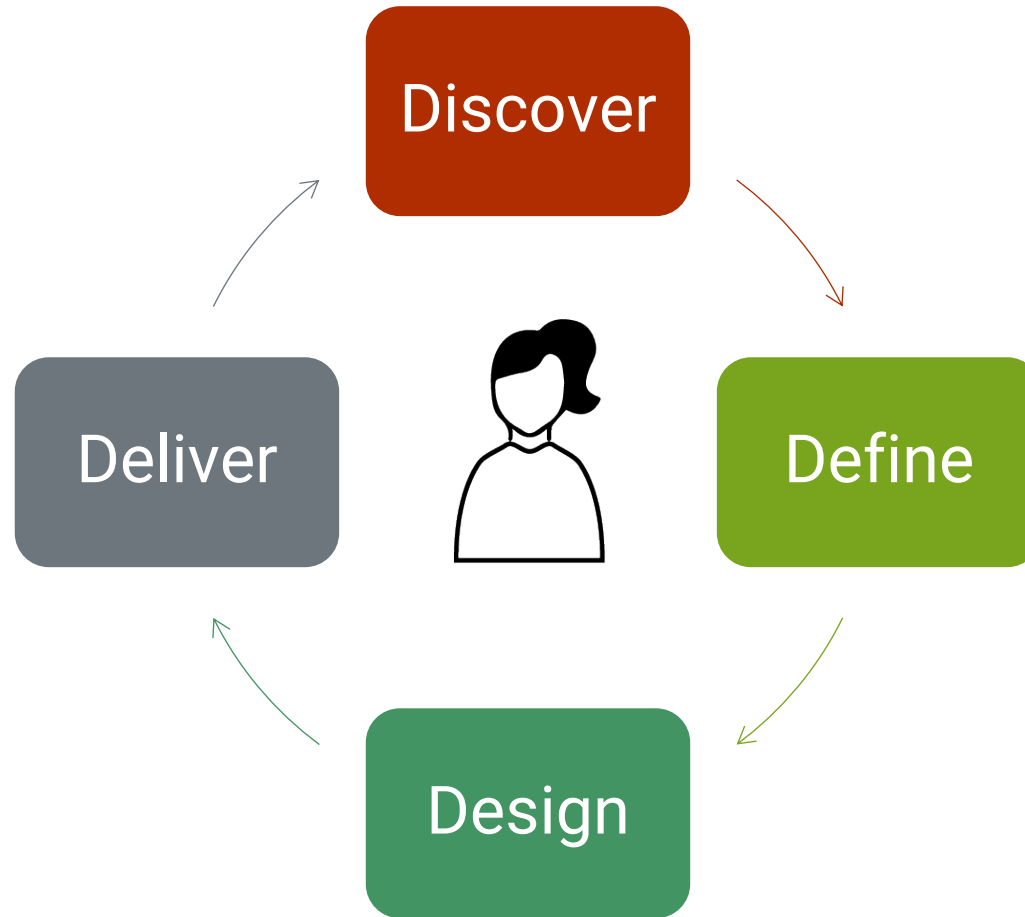
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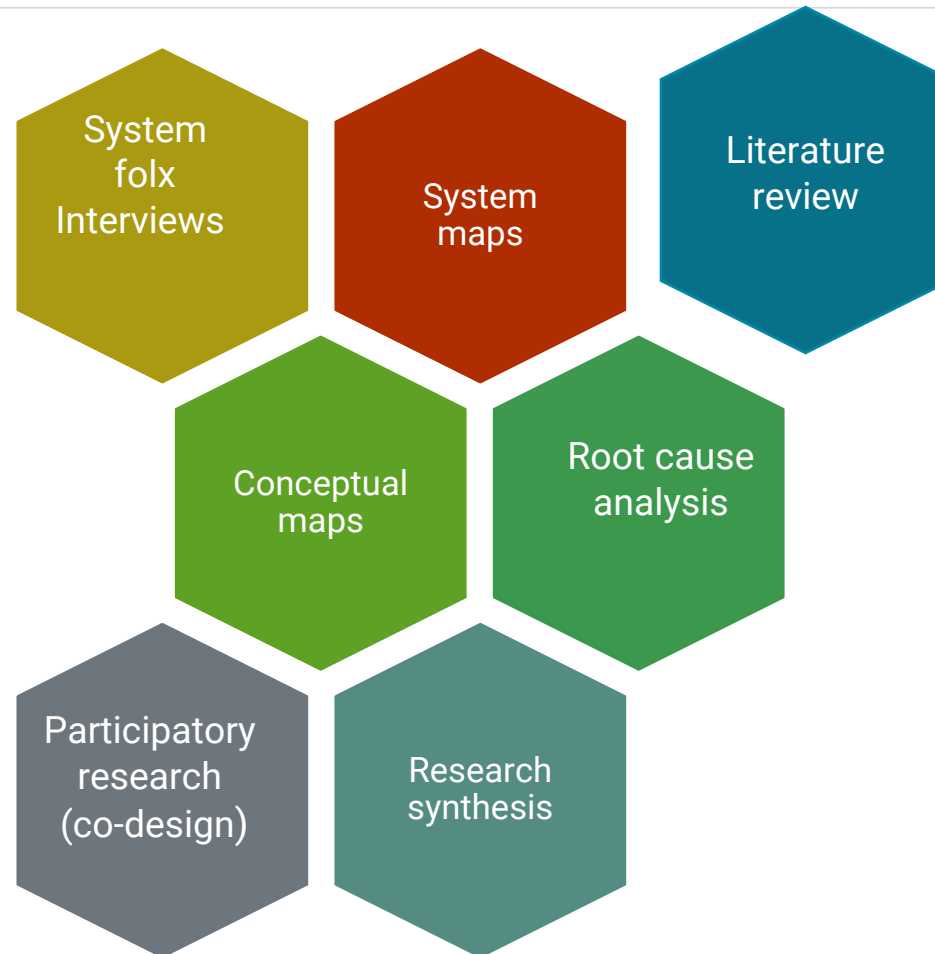


# Human centered design

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# Human centered design methods and tools utilized



# Co-design

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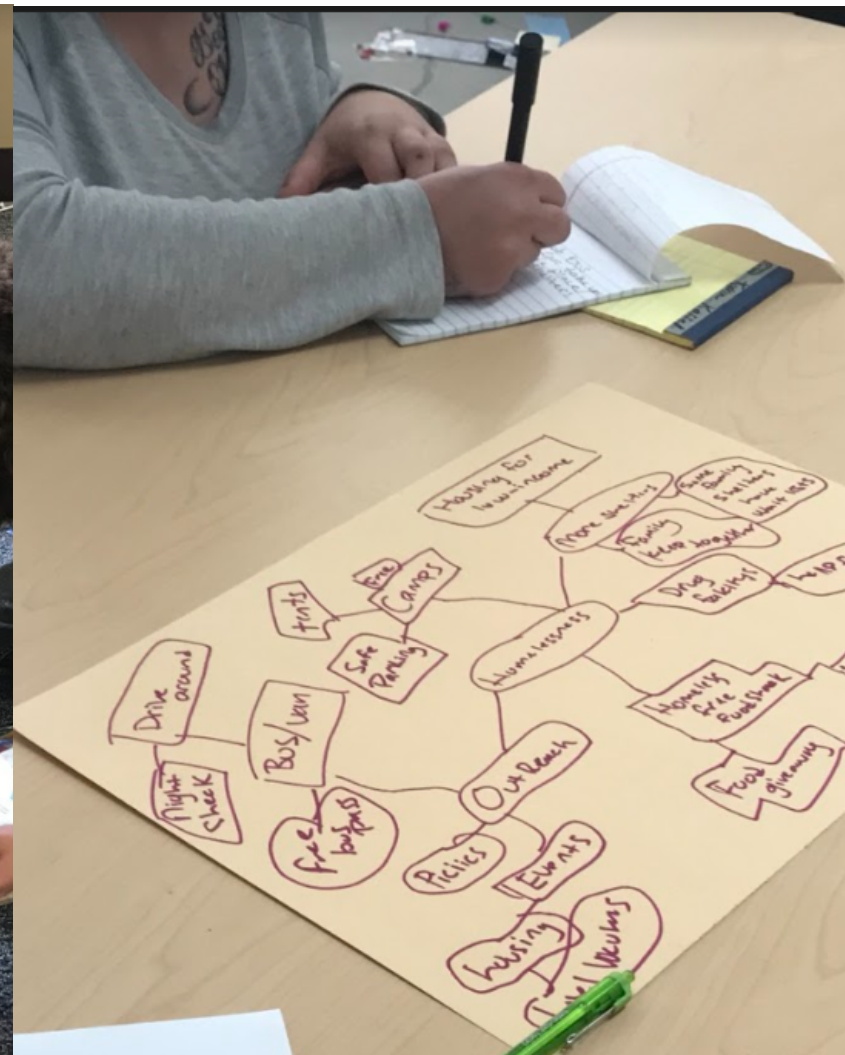
Designing solutions with the people impacted by the issue.





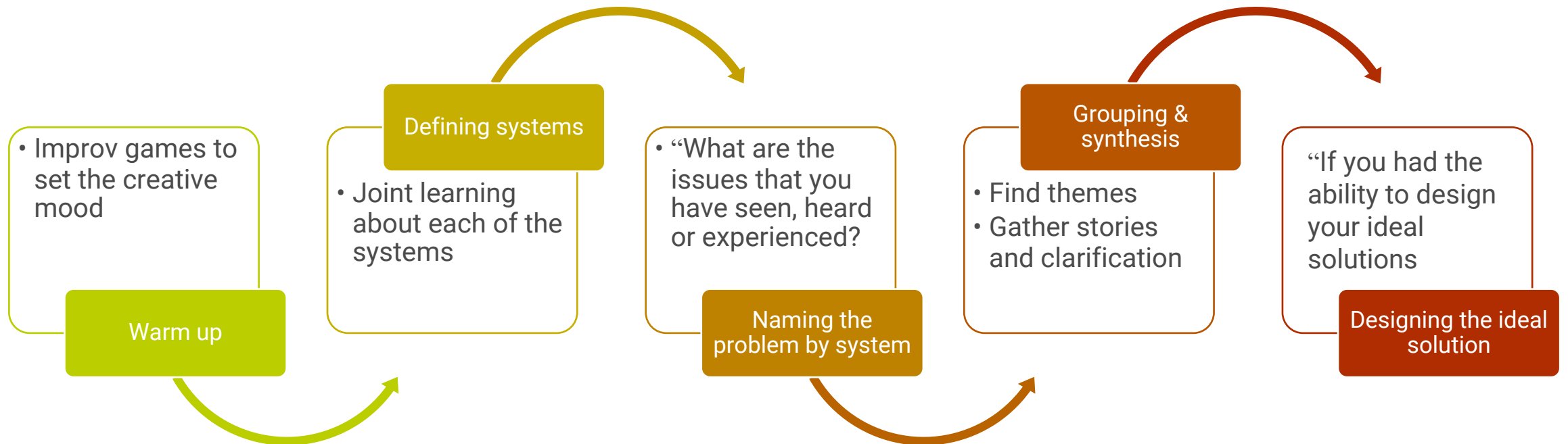


# Designing the research and design sessions

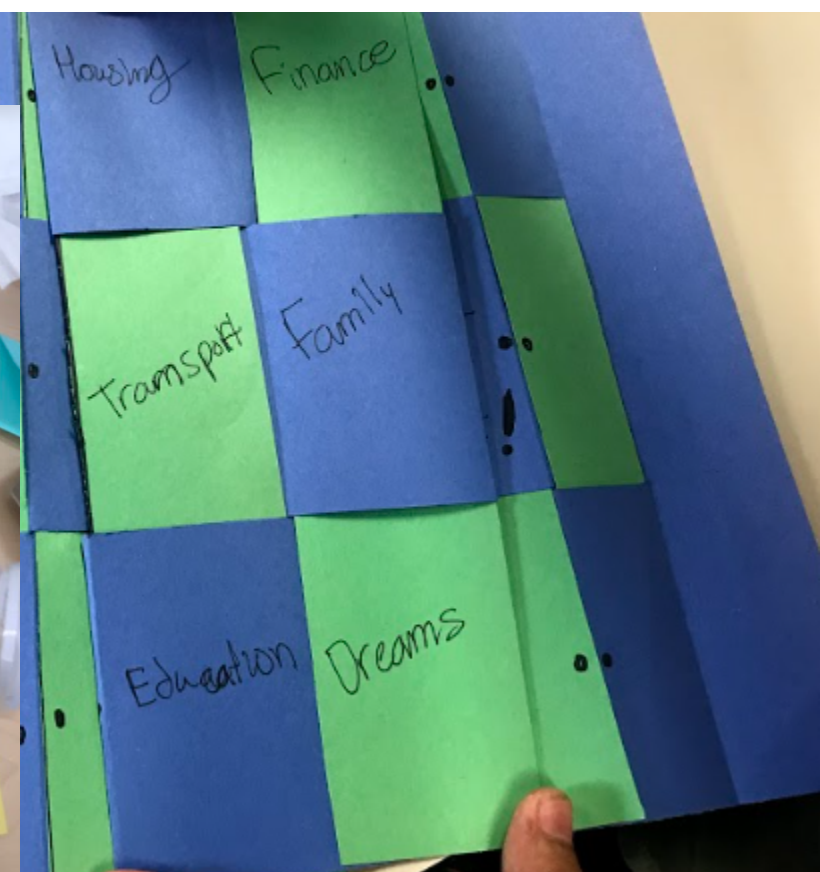
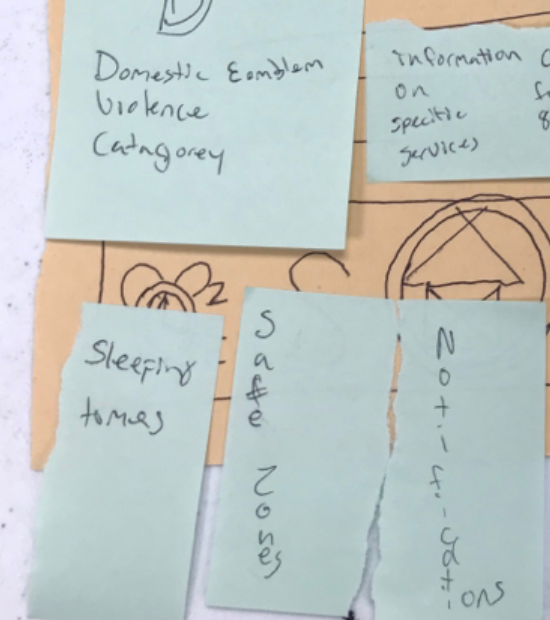
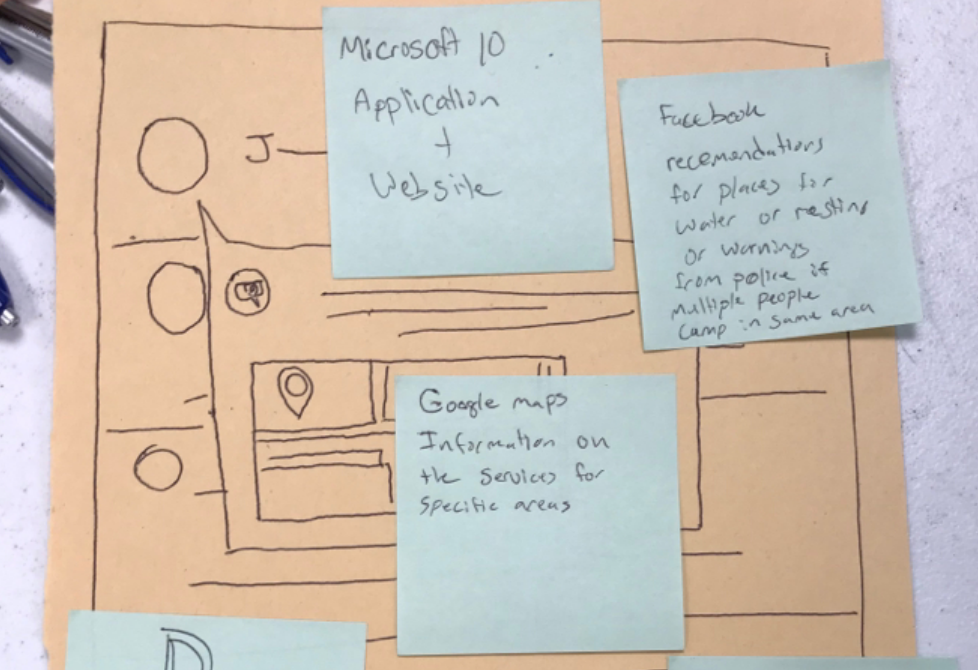




# Session flow









# Co-design's impact on young people

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- Prevented tokenization
- Created a space for joint learning and healing.
- Created safe spaces for LGBTQ2 and POC youth to talk without their white peers.
- Allowed youth in rural areas to participate on statewide recommendations.
- All participants were provided \$100 gift cards for their time and expertise.

*“I am happy that you are doing this (recommendation design) this (group setting) way instead of talking to us individually” – Participant Yakima Session.*



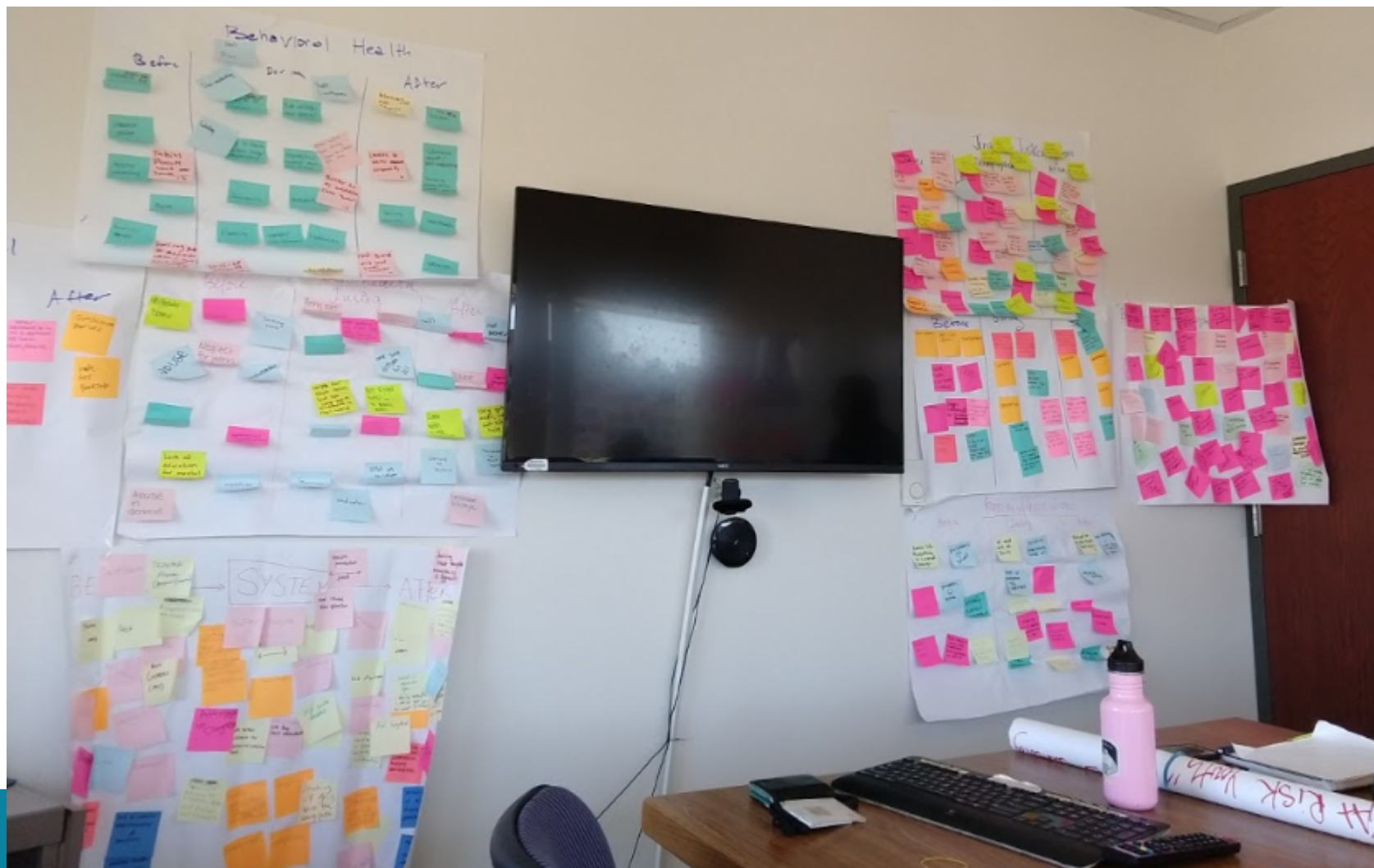
# Learnings

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- Each session will be vastly different
- Be open to iteration and improve
- Debrief, debrief, debrief
- Ensure that there is a mental health counselor available to support any young person who might be triggered by the topics their peers bring up.
- Always have lived experts on the design team.



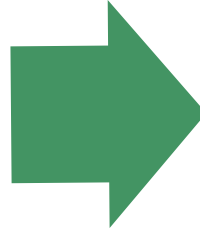
# Synthesis





### System led recommendations = siload

- Requests for housing by system population.
- Little emphasis on longer term post system stability.
- Expectation that housing only will reduce instability.
- Limited system change requests.



### Youth-led recommendations = cross system & youth centered

- Identified unique opportunities for cross system impact.
- Recommendations also spanned post exit stability with ideas for community level support.
- Called out strong system changes that impact youth's longer term stability.

# Questions

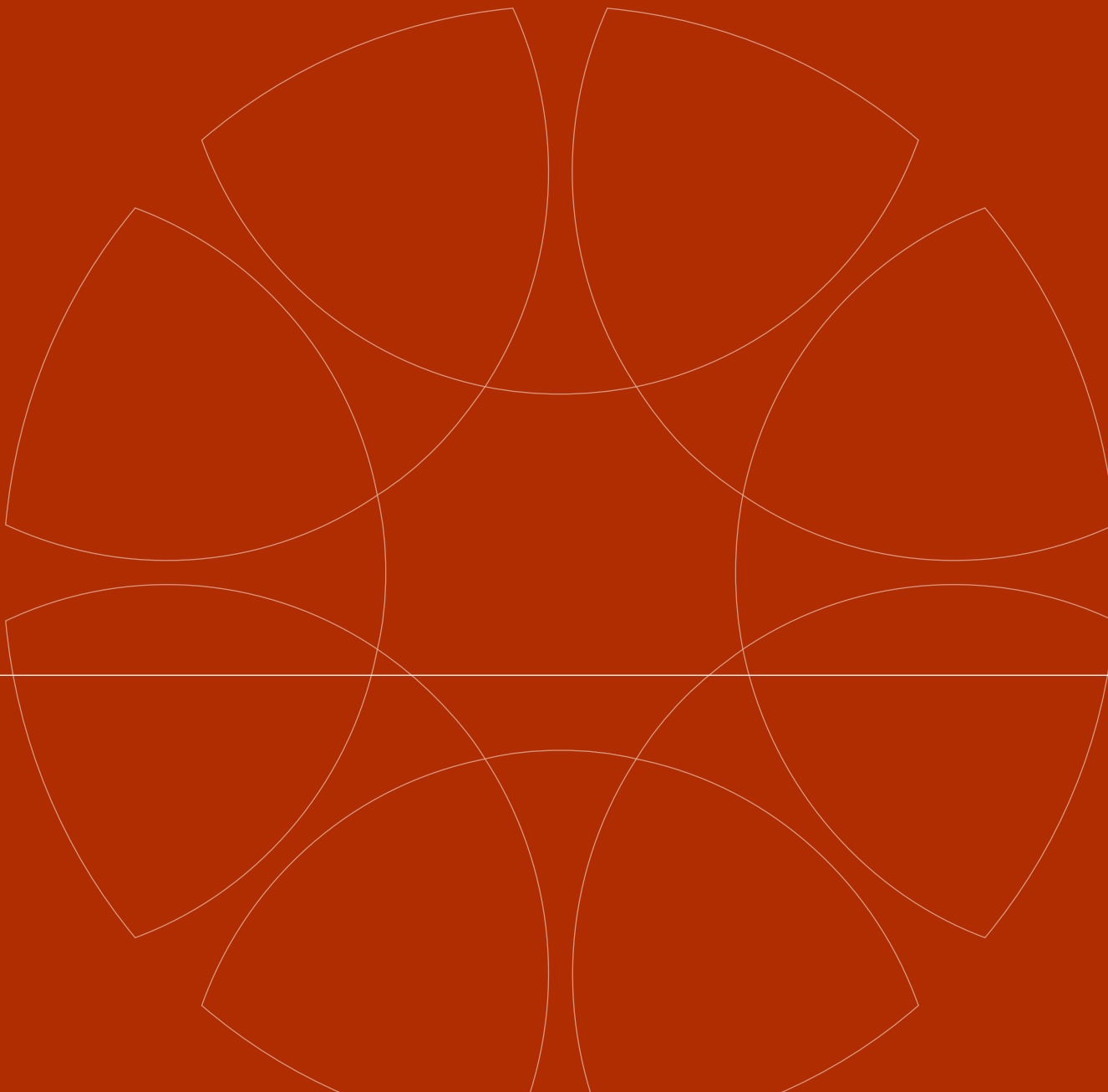
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# Findings

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# What's needed: Warm Handoff

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1. Effective Transitions from Systems of Care
2. Community Connections
3. Housing



# Effective Transitions from Systems of Care

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- **Internal efforts** are underway in Child Welfare, Juvenile Rehabilitation, and Behavioral Health to improve transition planning prior to discharge that focus on family engagement and connection within community.
- **Improved capacity** is needed to fully implement effective transition planning for youth and young adults



# Community Connections

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- Partnerships with state agencies, tribes, counties, and community-based providers
- Connections to housing navigation, basic needs support, coaching, family engagement, employment and education support, and other services that promote stability and success



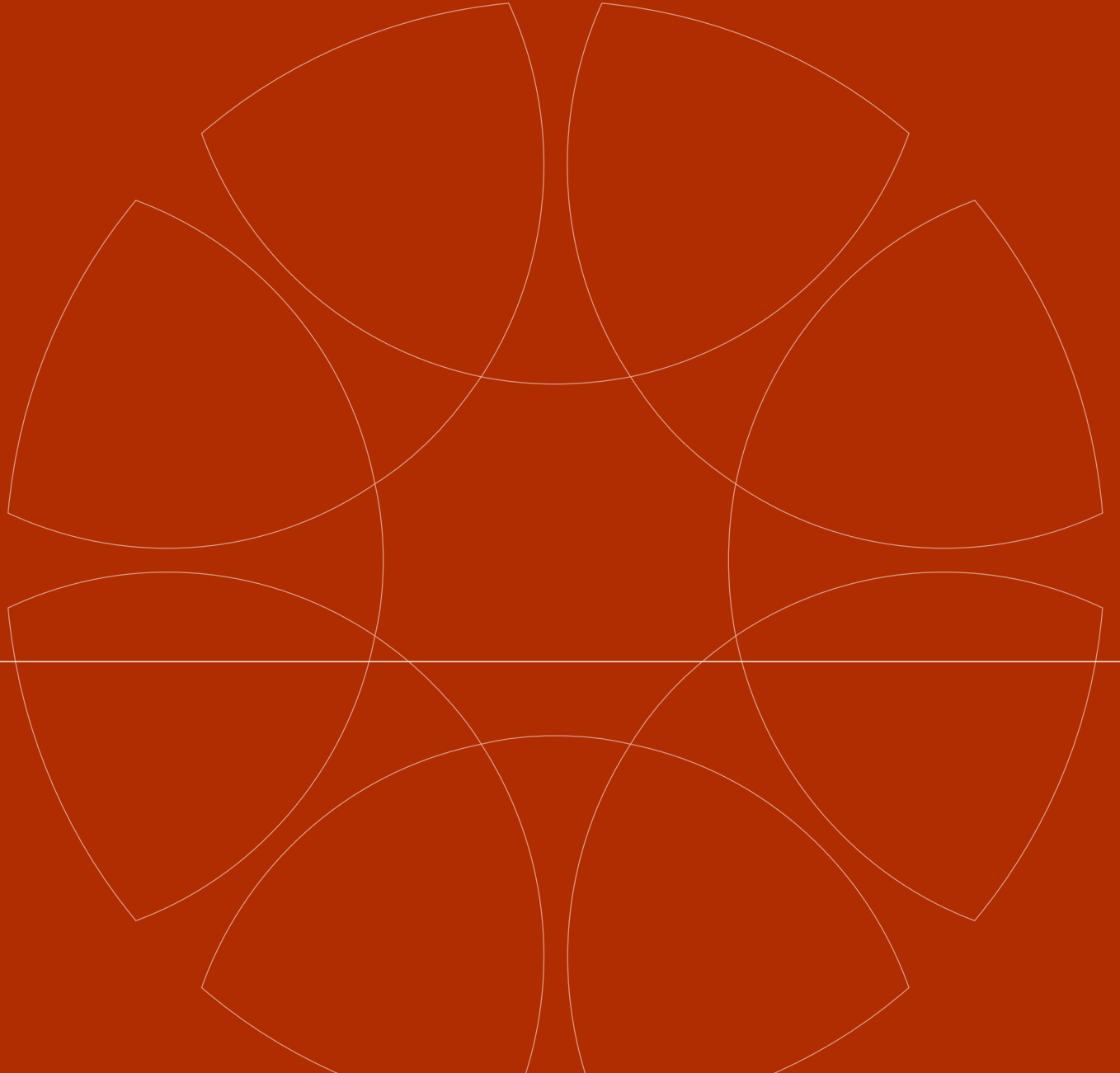
# Housing

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- **Transitional housing** for 16-17 year olds designed to help youth make a successful transition to stable living
- Expanded **master leasing programs** for young adults with support to maintain their housing and achieve education and employment goals

# Questions

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# Thank you!

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