

# YouForward: Engaging the Un-engageable

*Flexible Peer-Driven Strategies for Engaging and Retaining at-risk Youth and Young Adults in Services*

Susan Wing, NE Area Director  
Alexis Henry, Lead Evaluator  
Emmanuel Hernandez, Peer Specialist  
Betsy Edes, Program Director



DMH Centers for Excellence Conference  
March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017

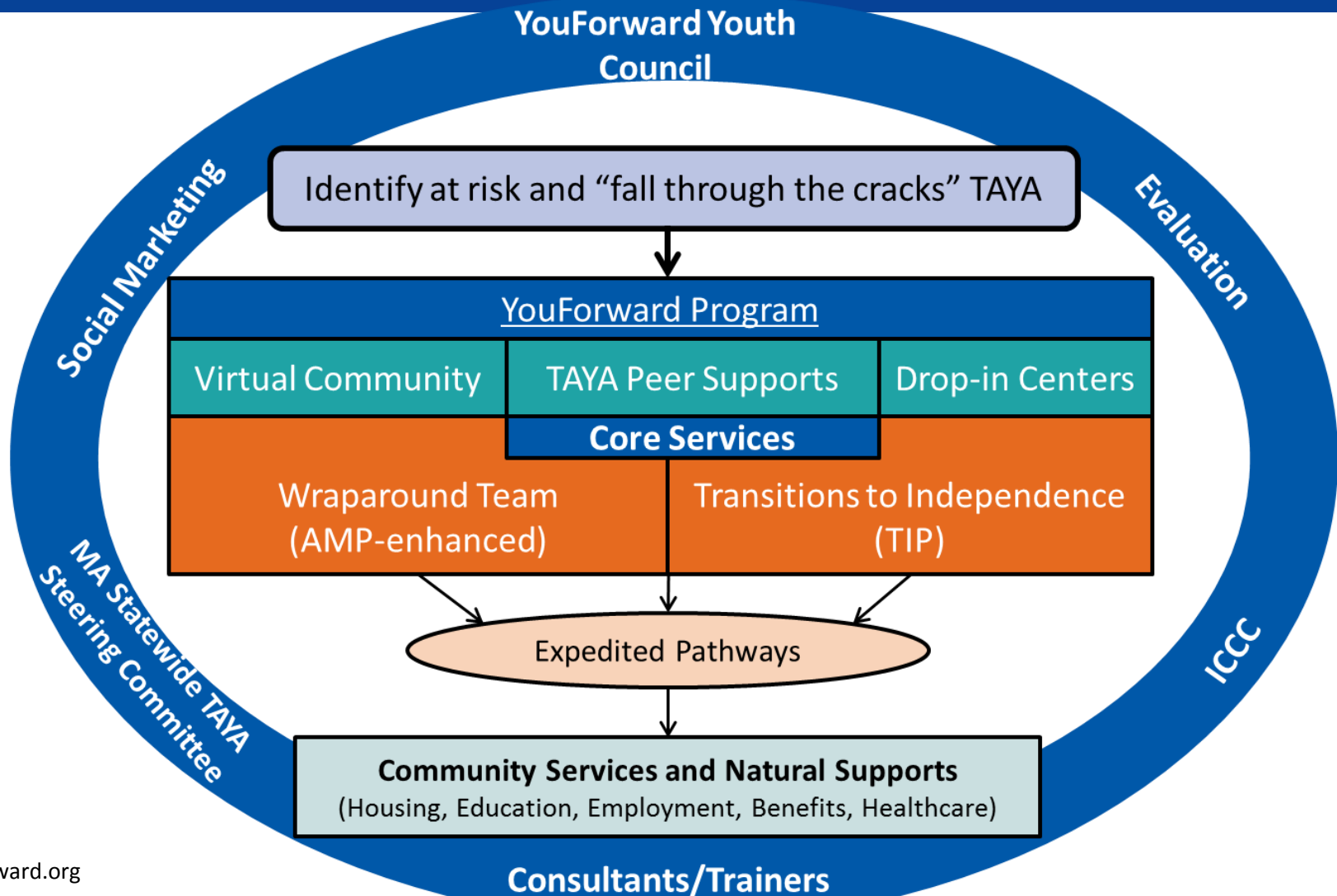
[YouForward.org](http://YouForward.org)



**You Forward**  
Support. Connect. Inspire.

# Now is the Time - Healthy Transitions

## The YouForward Model



# A Look at Who's Come Through Our Door

Percentage

|                                   |   |     |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----|
| <b><u>Race</u></b>                | White   | 71  |
|                                   | African American/Black  | 20  |
|                                   | Other   | 17  |
| <b><u>Ethnicity</u></b>           | Latino/Hispanic   | 65  |
| <b><u>Gender</u></b>              | Male  | 41  |
|                                   | Female  | 59  |
| <b><u>Sexual Orientation</u></b>  | Heterosexual  | 73  |
|                                   | Gay/Lesbian   | 8   |
|                                   | Bisexual  | 12  |
|                                   | Other   | 5   |
| <b><u>Age Distribution</u></b>    | 16-17 Yrs.  | 8   |
|                                   | 18-19 Yrs.  | 36  |
|                                   | 20-25 Yrs.  | 56  |
| <b><u>Housing</u></b>             | Homelessness  | 24  |
| <b><u>Education</u></b>           | Enrolled Full/Part-time   | 59  |
|                                   | Not Enrolled  | 37  |
|                                   | 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade/High School Diploma/Equivalent (HiSET)/Voc Diploma | 39  |
|                                   | Some College/University   | < 3 |
| <b><u>Employment</u></b>          | Employed Full/Part-time   | 39  |
|                                   | Unemployed/Looking for Work   | 44  |
| <b><u>Violence and Trauma</u></b> | Has Experienced   | 76  |

# Engagement By Design

## Necessary Design Elements:

- Hire a Culturally and Linguistically Representative Team
- Low Barrier/No Barrier Design
- Flexibility
- Youth-Voice Centric

# Engagement: From Concept to Practice

- Community Partners
- Outreach at “the Drop of a Hat”
- Peer Mentors
- Youth Voice & Youth Leadership Opportunities



# Peer Mentors, Youth Voice & Youth Leadership



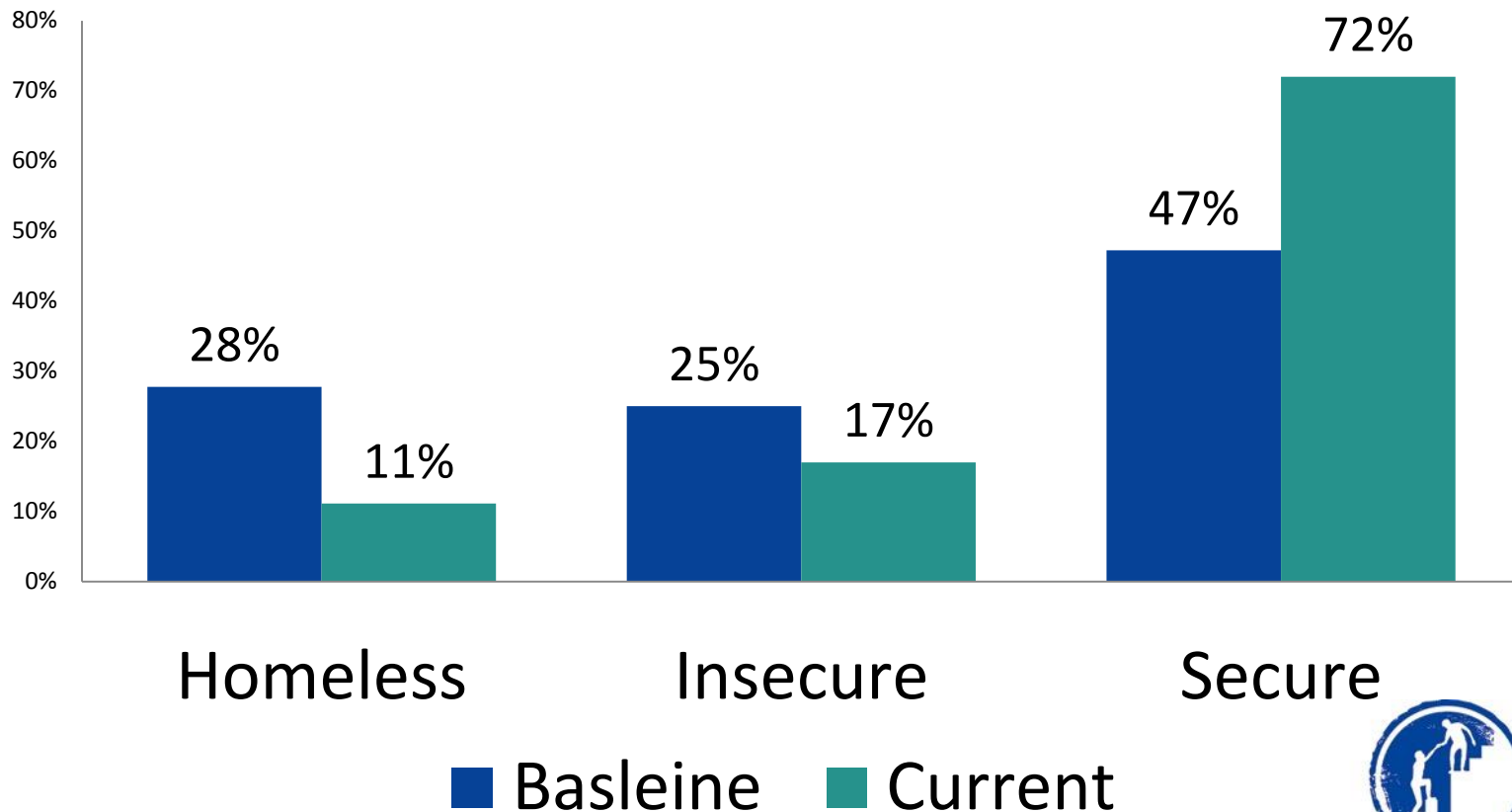
# National Evaluation of NITT-HT

- SAMHSA-required Client-Level Data Collection
- National Outcome Measures (NOMs)
  - Previous 90 days; baseline, 6 month reassessment, discharge
  - Functioning; symptoms; substance use; criminal justice; violence/trauma/PTSD; social connectedness; housing; employment/education; perception of services
- Additional Measures (YouForward)
  - Physical/mental health; housing and food security; lifetime criminal justice involvement; satisfaction education/employment satisfaction with YouForward
- Engaging Youth in Data Collection
  - Peer mentors as data collectors
  - Incentives



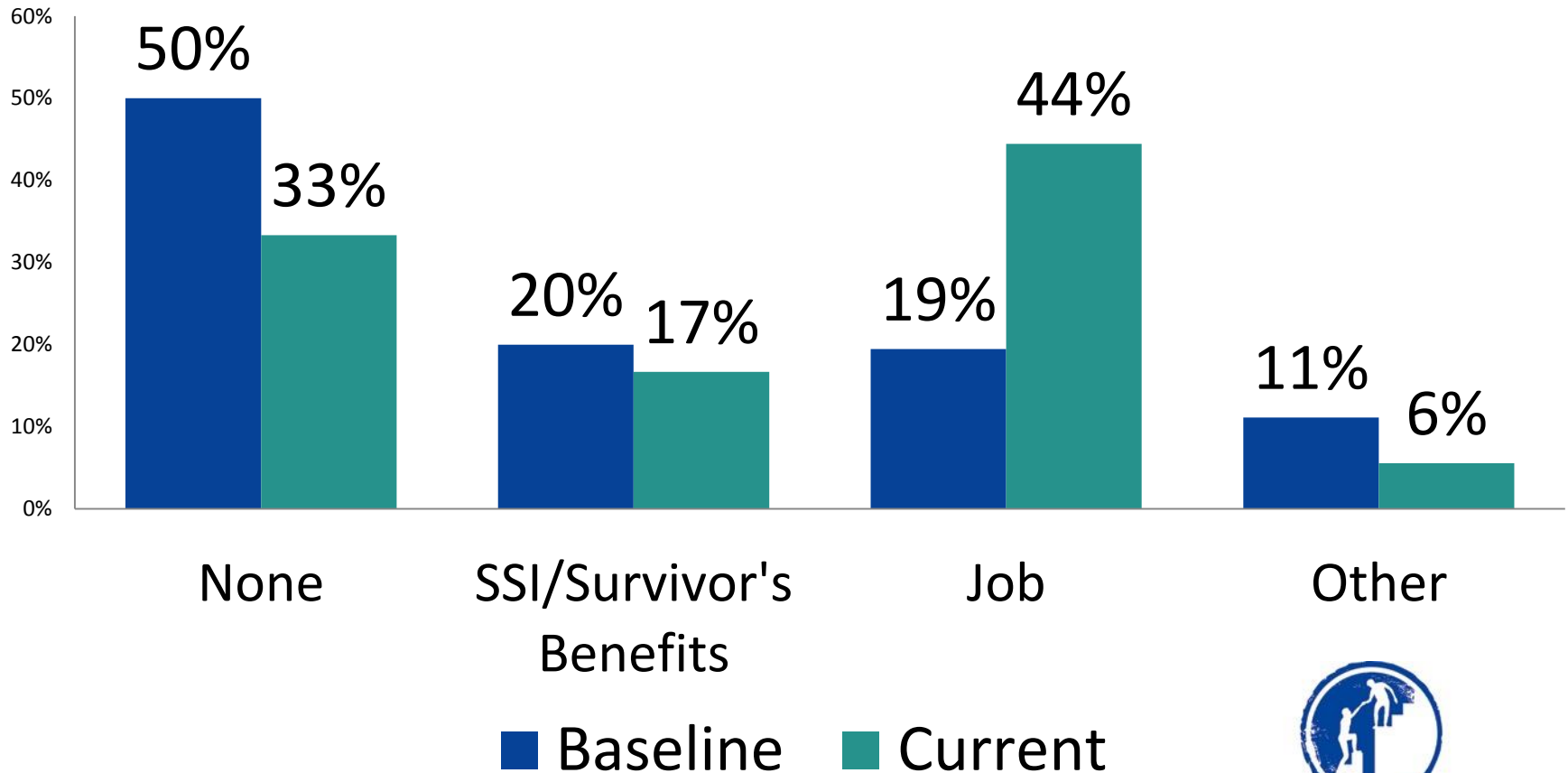
# YouForward Preliminary Outcomes

## Housing and Homelessness

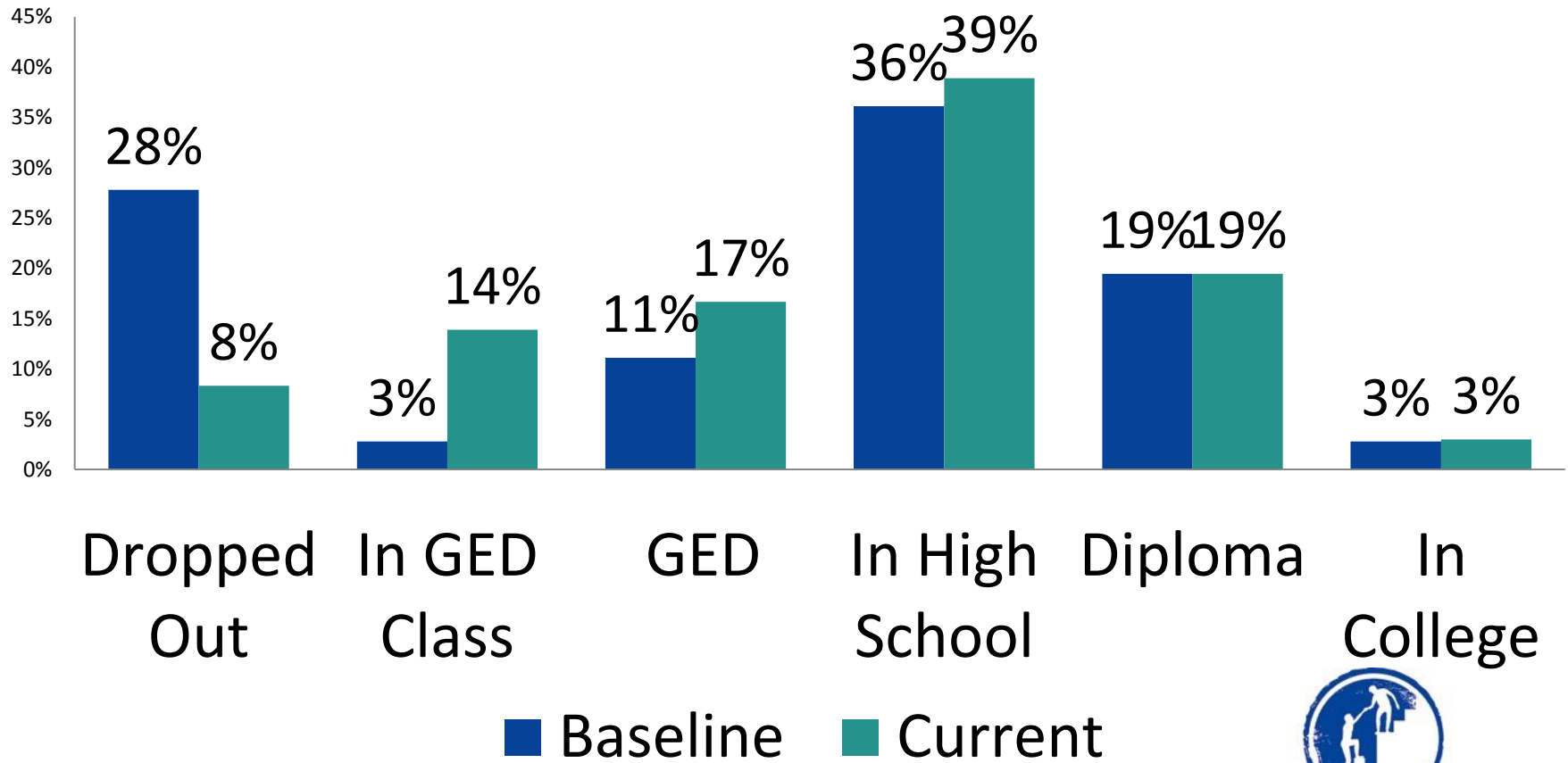




# YouForward Preliminary Outcomes Employment and Income



# YouForward Preliminary Outcomes Education



## Contact

Betsy Edes, YouForward Program Director  
Massachusetts Department of Mental Health

[betsy.edes@state.ma.us](mailto:betsy.edes@state.ma.us)

Cell: (978) 989-2047

