



2nd Annual Transition Age Youth Policy Summit


Post Conference Report

April 30 - May 1, 2024


Hosted by:



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2nd Annual Transition Age Youth (TAY) Policy Summit

April 30 - May 1, 2024

Summit Location:

Utah Department of Health
and Human Services

195 N 1950 W
Salt Lake City, UT 84116

Summit Sponsors:



S.J. QUINNEY COLLEGE OF LAW



Youth Keynotes:

Jully Myrthil
Tyren Boyd
Trace Terrell

Youth Panelists:

Brandon Bond
Cadon Sagendorf
Mohammad Shedeed
Kiera Boxell
Rei Scott

Summit Hosts:

Theo Schwartz
Jessica Makin
Kelcy Brock
Kori Foote,
Nia West-Bey
Kayla Tawa

Participant Overview

SUMMIT ATTENDEES
135

5
TAY
Panelists

14 states
1 tribal community

Experts from: behavioral health | child welfare | education | health and human services | juvenile justice | peer support | youth advocacy | youth homelessness | youth workforce development



Agenda

Day One:

- **Opening Keynote:** Tyren Boyd, "A Seat at the Table"
- **Policy Presentation 1:** "Medicaid and Reimagining the Behavioral Health Workforce: The Los Angeles Certified Peer Demonstration Program"
- **Lunch Keynote:** Jully Myrthil, "Shades of Knowledge: Empowering Youth, Enhancing Literacy"
- **Policy Presentation 2:** "Consent to Shelter: Youth Advocacy to Expand Rights of Minors Experiencing Homelessness in Maryland"
- **Policy Presentation 3:** "SLCo Youth Services: Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness Governance Charter"

Day Two:

- **Policy Presentation 4:** "Reframe the Age: Changing Policy to Enhance Support for Young Adults in Massachusetts Department of Mental Health"
- **Keynote Speaker:** Trace Terrell, "Watch and Follow: Plausible Instances of United States Influence on Canada's 988: Suicide & Crisis Helpline"
- **Policy Presentation 5:** "Building an Income Floor: Investing in and Supporting Young Adults through Guaranteed Income" (Mayors for a Guaranteed Income Program)



Summit Goals

Theme: Investing in Generational Wellness Policies to Support Transition Age Youth (TAY)



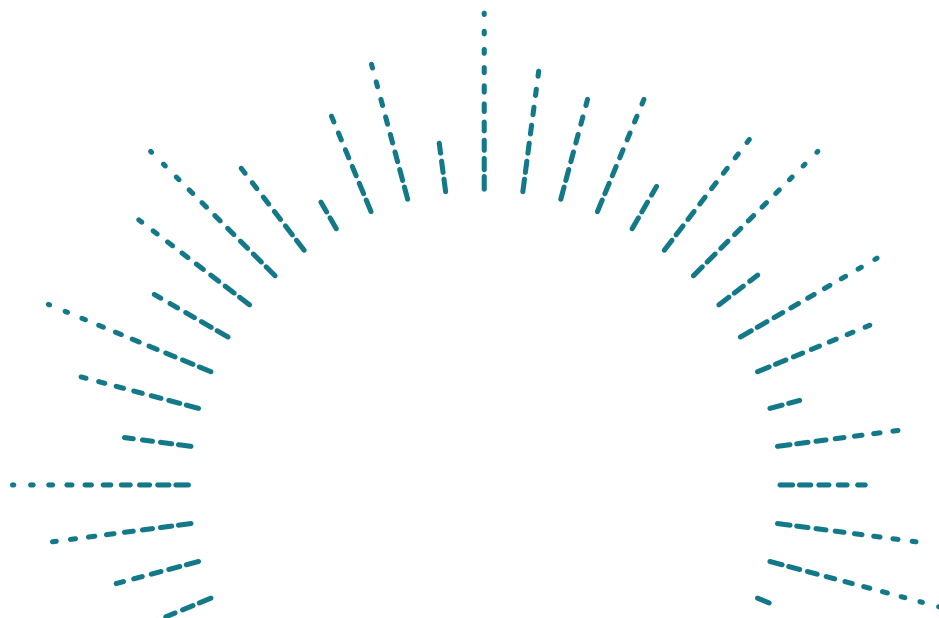
Showcase new policies that are designed to improve services for TAY.



Examine how much young people are involved in creating and carrying out these policies.



Strategize ways to develop TAY policies with youth involvement.



Youth Panelist Bios



**Brandon
Bond
(he/him)**

Brandon is the LSA Mental Health & Well-Being Student Advocate at the University of Michigan. He is focused on driving systemic changes by integrating DEI and public mental health strategies into policies, programs, and structures.



**Cadon
Sagendorf
(he/him)**

Cadon is a lived experience Foster Care & Child Welfare Advocate who currently sits as the president of the Utah Youth Advisory Council working alongside the Department of Child and Family Services assisting transition aged youth and young adults. After aging out of care, Cadon made it his goal to become an advocate to help others through similar backgrounds.



**Keira
Boxell
(she/her)**

Keira is a social justice advocate and Co-founder of Shades of Knowledge, a youth-led non-profit dedicated to improving literacy and comprehension rates for underserved youth. She is dedicated to making change and supporting movements for justice, with a focus on providing her fellow young people with the opportunities they need to thrive.



**Mohammad
Shedeed
(he/him)**

Mohammad is a freshman at the University of Pittsburgh studying neuroscience. He is motivated by his Egyptian background to create educational resources and promote mental health equity, especially among marginalized communities.



**Rei
Scott
(he/xe)**

Rei is President of the Students With Psychosis Executive Board. As someone who is transgender, disabled, and Jewish, he is very passionate about the lived experience perspective and the inclusion of minorities and intersectional identities in mental health research.

Keynote Bios



Tyren Boyd
(he/him)

Tyren is a University of Mississippi student studying Public Policy Leadership and Rhetoric with a minor in Community-Engaged Leadership. He is involved in the Associated Student Body and Black Student Union and founded Change Agency Solutions, a consulting company that helps students transition to higher education. Tyren is passionate about advocating for marginalized groups and creating a more inclusive, equitable society.



July Myrthill
(she/her)

July Myrthill is a dedicated advocate for inclusion and justice. She serves as a Youth Ambassador for the After School Alliance, advocating for access to quality afterschool programs, and the Rhode Island Department of Health, advising on adolescent health policy. July is also the co-founder of Shades of Knowledge, a nonprofit focused on making education and literature accessible to all youth worldwide.



Trace Terrell
(he/him)

Trace is a 20-year-old mental health activist from La Pine, Oregon, and a Kessler Scholar at Johns Hopkins University, studying public health and writing seminars. He aims to pursue a career in mental health policy and management. Trace serves as a NAMI Next Gen Advisor, a member of Active Minds and MTV's A.S.K. Youth Leadership Council, and participates in MHA's Youth Policy Accelerator and the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline's Blogger Council.

Summit Summary



The Setting:

The second annual Transition Age Youth Policy Summit took place on April 30 and May 1, 2024 at the Utah Department of Health and Human Services in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Overview:

Young people, especially transition-age youth (ages 16-25) face myriad issues as they transition to adulthood, including high rates of being uninsured, a shortage of youth-friendly providers, a lack of integrated care, and service cliffs as they transition from the child-serving to the adult-serving system. Policymakers at the national, state, and local levels have proposed policy solutions to improve access to care for transition age youth (TAY); however, many of their policy proposals are missing one key ingredient – youth voice.

Format:

Youth-Led Panels: Many of the policy presentations featured youth speakers, emphasizing that young people should be involved in creating the systems and policies that affect them.

Policy Analysis: Five policy proposals were shared, with a panel of youth experts offering feedback and suggestions to improve these policies.

Summit Hosts



Messages from the Youth

"Young people are taking a stand which should be scary to those in power because when we get mad, when we don't like something, we're going to try and change it."

**M o h a m m a d
S h e d e e d**

"Change starts with lived experts advocating for policy."

Cadon Sagendorf

“
Youth know what the world they want to live in looks like.
”

Keira Boxell

Key Point:



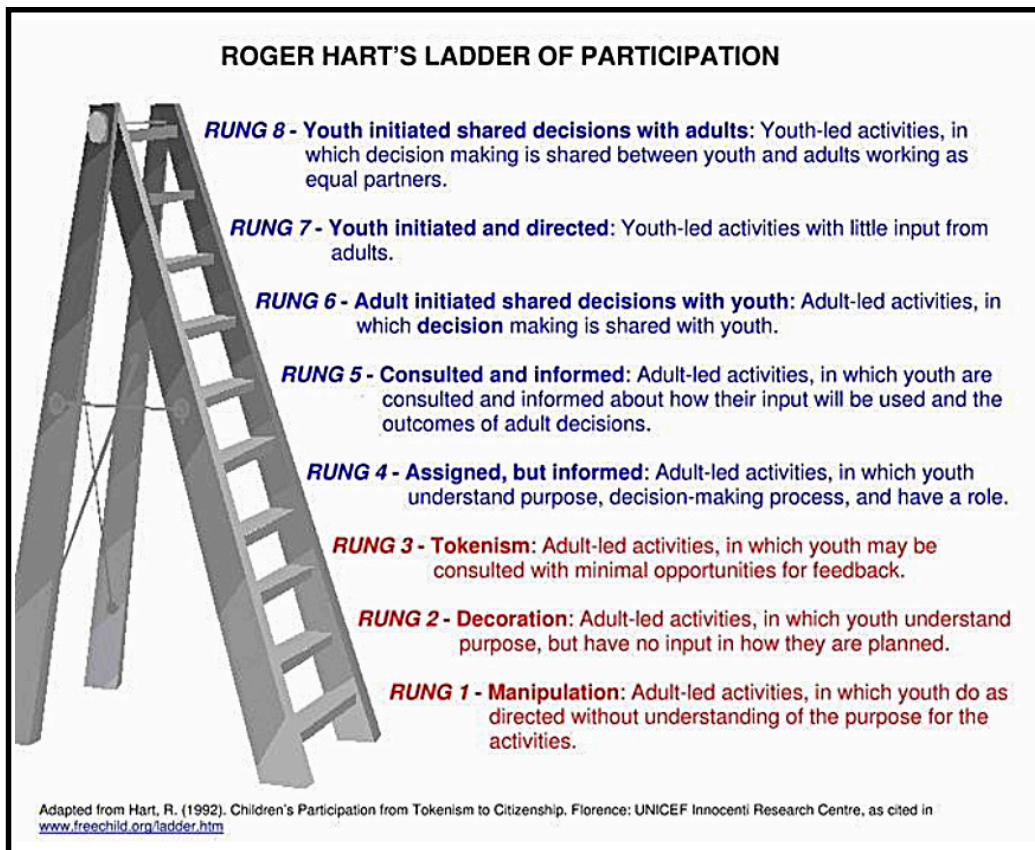
Listening to young people thoughts as they process the world around them can help create long-lasting, positive change in systems that impact them.



Assessing Authentic Youth Engagement

Authentic youth engagement is crucial for both adolescent development and community health. Understanding how young people have been involved in identifying problems, proposing solutions, and influencing policy at every stage is key. Engaging them throughout the policy process aligns with developmental science, improving policymaking effectiveness and reducing unintended consequences often caused by decisions made without input from those directly impacted.

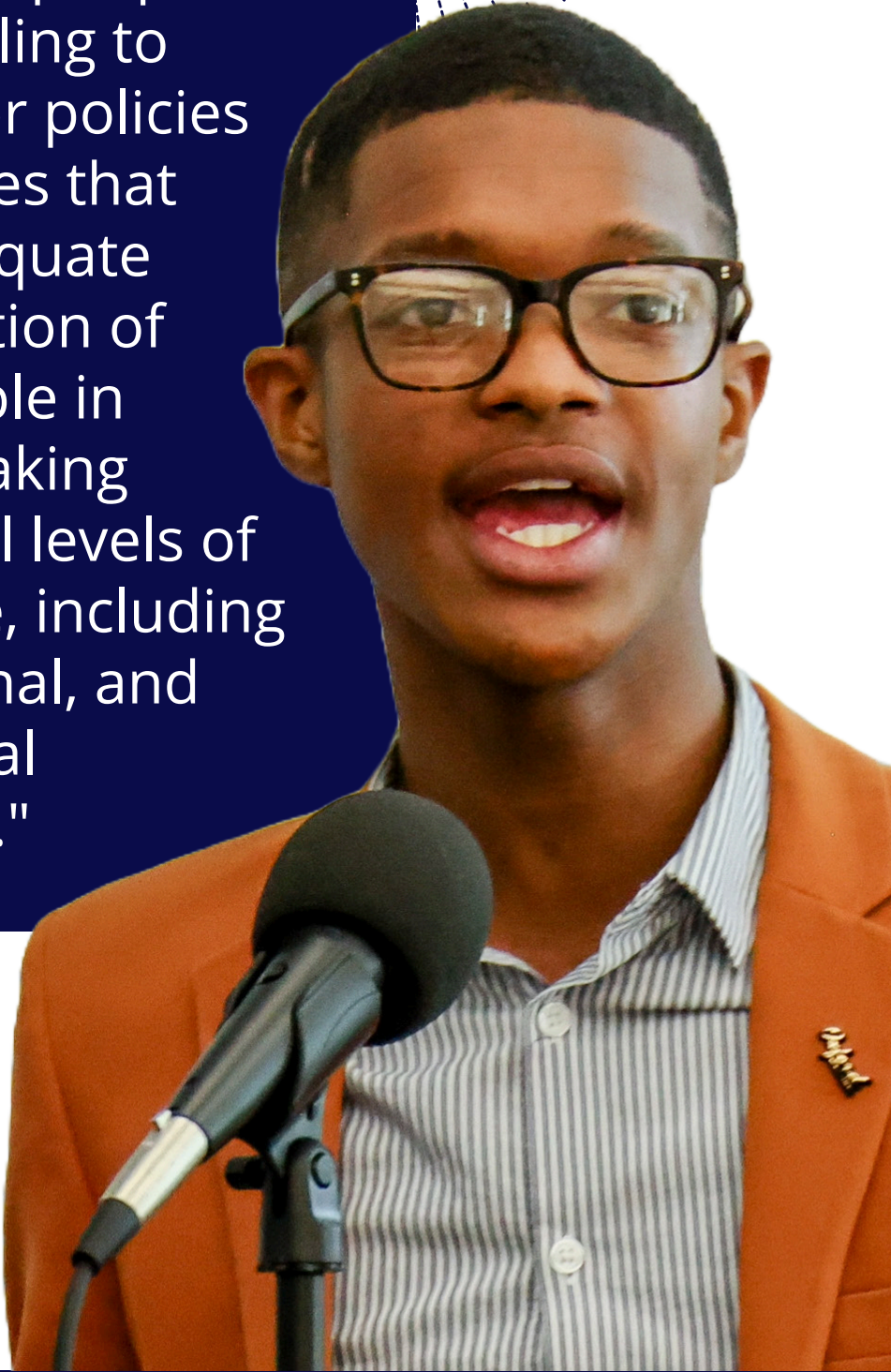
One tool to assess authentic youth engagement is Hart's Ladder of Participation. Roger Hart is a Professor of Psychology and co-director of the Children's Environment's Research Group. He is a child-rights academic and designed the ladder to explain how youth are used in decision-making activities and how to increase engagement towards partnership with adults towards successful outcomes.



The higher the rung level, the increase in youth participation and authentic engagement, leading to positive outcomes and meaningful change

The first three rungs are ineffective for authentic youth engagement.

Key Takeaway: Youth should not just be affected by policies—they should be *actively involved* in making and implementing them. Youth should have opportunities for authentic engagement.

A young man with short dark hair and glasses is speaking into a black microphone. He is wearing a blue and white striped button-down shirt under a brown blazer. The background is white with decorative dashed-line sunburst patterns in the top right and bottom left corners. A dark blue rectangular box on the left contains a quote in white text.

“ We need people who are willing to advocate for policies and practices that ensure adequate representation of young people in decision making bodies at all levels of governance, including local, national, and international institutions.”

Tyren Boyd, Opening Keynote
A Seat at the Table

“

I had never seen anyone look like me be the main character, until I was a freshman in high school. That was the first time I read a book with a Haitian as the main character and that fueled the passion in me. I realized I could be the main character, I realized I could write my own stories. I seen what a transformation in me it was to have representation in literature.”



Jully Myrthil, Keynote Speaker
Shades of Knowledge

Policy Presentation 1: "Medicaid and Reimagining the Behavioral Health Workforce: The Los Angeles Certified Peer Demonstration Program"

The LA Certified Peer Demonstration is a program launched in response to California's SB 803 law, which requires counties to create certification programs for peer support specialists—individuals with lived experience in recovery from mental illness or substance use. LA County's pilot program trains youth aged 18-24 to become peer support providers for others in the same age range, focusing on addressing their concerns about access to mental health services and jobs.

The program trains 70-90 youth participants, providing 80-100 hours of training and 200 hours of peer-to-peer mental health support. They also receive 300 hours of paid work experience in YouthSource Centers, supervised by a clinician. After completing the program, participants can take the certification exam to become Medicaid-reimbursable peer support providers.



Key Strengths:

- Career exploration opportunities for youth interested in the mental health field
- Increased access to mental health services for young people
- Strong youth engagement in program development and consultation
- Collaboration with organizations like El Centro de Ayuda, LA Unified School District, and YouthSource Centers
- Program currently operates in 14 YouthSource Centers

Growth Opportunities:

- Refining curriculum development (state-directed without youth input)
- Assessing the impact of the first cohort

Recommendations for Replication:

- Collaborate with Medicaid for billing, credentialing, and supervision guidelines
- Plan for scaling the program beyond the initial 14 centers
- Include emotional CPR and cultural sensitivity training in certification programs

Policy Presentation 2: “Consent to Shelter: Youth Advocacy to Expand Rights of Minors Experiencing Homelessness in Maryland”

Maryland has passed two key bills addressing the needs of young people experiencing homelessness, with significant input from advocates and youth, especially in Prince George's County.

The Minor Consent law, passed in 2020, allows unaccompanied minors to consent to emergency shelter and services without needing a parent or guardian's approval. This policy aims to provide safe housing for vulnerable youth and reduce exploitation. It came about after advocacy highlighted the lack of shelter options and legal barriers to serving homeless minors.

The Tuition Waiver for Homeless Youth law, initially passed in 2014 and amended in 2021, provides homeless youth with free tuition at public colleges and universities. The amendments broadened eligibility, prioritized housing, and introduced support systems, with youth engagement playing a crucial role in shaping these changes. These policies emphasize the importance of youth involvement in creating effective solutions for homelessness.



Strengths:

- Legal Clarity: Minors can consent to shelter and access safe housing.

- Youth Involvement: Youth-driven advocacy led to successful policy changes.
- Educational Support: Tuition waiver expands college access for homeless youth.
- Collaborative Approach: Diverse workgroup ensured comprehensive policy development.

Opportunities for Growth:

- Youth Exclusion: Initial lack of youth with lived experience in the workgroup.
- Limited Resources: Insufficient shelters and services for unaccompanied minors.
- Child Welfare Gaps: Policy does not fully address needs of LGBTQIA+ and Latinx youth.

Recommendations:

- Expand Resources: Increase shelters and services for unaccompanied minors.
- Involve Youth Early: Engage youth in policy development from the start.
- Provide Training: Train service providers on homeless youth needs.
- Holistic Support: Integrate mental health, education, and housing solutions.
- Preventive Measures: Focus on early intervention to prevent youth homelessness.

Policy Presentation 3: “SLCo Youth Services: Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness Governance Charter”

The Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness (SLVCEH) works to end homelessness in Salt Lake County by identifying system gaps, using data to create effective solutions, collaborating on funding, and educating the public on prevention and solutions.

The Salt Lake County Youth Action Board (YAB) pushed for youth representation in the Salt Lake Valley Coalition to End Homelessness (SLVCEH), resulting in the YAB President becoming a voting member. After Salt Lake County’s initial denial of a Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project (YHDP) grant, the YAB led the 2023 application, ensuring youth involvement. Their efforts secured a \$2.77 million YHDP grant.

As one presenter said, “As soon as you get youth with lived experience to the table, we’re all over the document.” Members of the YAB have since been invited to join other taskforces.



Strengths:

- **Leadership Structure:** Steering Committee includes youth with lived experience.
- **Evolving Mission:** The organization’s mission to address homelessness and foster care has grown since 1989.
- **Clear Governance:** The Governance Charter outlines membership terms, elections, and conflict resolution.

- **Youth Leadership:** The Youth Action Board Vice President led the Youth in Transition Summit application.
- **Funding Success:** SLVCEH, with YAB leadership, secured a \$2.78 million YHDP grant for youth homelessness.

Opportunities for Growth:

- **Sustainable Funding:** Currently reliant on the Emergency Solutions Grant Program.
- **Measuring Impact:** The Steering Committee is new, so it’s too early to assess impact and youth involvement.

Recommendations:

- **Information Sharing:** Share strategies for youth involvement to help other organizations.
- **Documentation:** Release an annual report on progress, lessons, and youth involvement.
- **Holistic Supports:** Expand to address mental health, disabilities, trauma, race, and socioeconomic factors in homelessness.



Policy Presentation 4: “Reframe the Age: Changing Policy to Enhance Support for Young Adults in Massachusetts Department of Mental Health”

In 2018, the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) changed its policy to better support young adults transitioning from youth to adult mental health services. Previously, youth services ended at age 19, leaving many young people without adequate adult services. The policy change allowed individuals to stay in the child system until 22 while also accessing adult services.

DMH formed a workgroup to develop plans for implementation, focusing on service authorization, planning, and completion. Although there was strong input from families and young adults in the regulatory process, youth engagement in the implementation phase was limited.

To address broader needs, DMH created Young Adult Access Centers, which provide services beyond clinical care, such as food resources, harm reduction, peer mentorship, and community activities. These centers prioritize marginalized youth, including BIPOC and LGBTQ+ individuals, and have shown high engagement, with over 13,000 visits in 2023.



Strengths:

- Inclusive, youth-centered environment
- Strong community support through peer mentorship
- High youth engagement

Opportunities for Growth:

- Service gaps, especially for young adults with co-occurring disorders
- Inconsistent implementation across regions due to limited youth input
- Financial challenges from reliance on federal funding
- Continued issues at the age transition to adulthood

Recommendations:

- Secure diverse funding sources for sustainability
- Enhance youth involvement in planning and implementation
- Improve transitions across programs for young adults over 22
- Use innovative outreach strategies to reach youth in their communities



Policy Presentation 5: “Building an Income Floor: Investing in and Supporting Young Adults through Guaranteed Income” (Mayors for a Guaranteed Income Program)

The Mayors for Guaranteed Income (MGI) and Counties for Guaranteed Income (CGI) programs, launched in 2020 and 2023 respectively, have made a significant impact on financial stability for vulnerable groups, particularly former foster youth and young parents. These programs, such as Alameda County’s GIFFY and Santa Fe’s LEAP, provide monthly cash payments to supplement existing safety nets, addressing systemic economic disparities and preventing further oppression.

By targeting these populations, the programs aim to break cycles of poverty and improve access to basic needs like food and housing, laying the foundation for higher-level needs like education and career advancement. The programs have shown positive effects on mental health, well-being, and community engagement.

These initiatives challenge stereotypes by demonstrating the effectiveness of unconditional financial support, which empowers individuals to achieve personal goals and contribute to their communities. The integration of both qualitative stories and quantitative data helps humanize the impact of the programs, strengthening the case for broader expansion.

Strengths

- Improved Well-being: Reduced stress and improved mental health.
- Community & Support: Housing stability and new opportunities like internships.
- Youth Leadership: Designed by those with lived experience.
- Public Funding: Expanded scale and sustainability.

Opportunities for Growth:

- Funding Hesitation: Delayed broader implementation.
- Outreach Challenges: Difficulty reaching a changing population.
- Benefit Coordination: Ensuring no loss of other social benefits.
- Pilot Duration: Participants suggested longer support.

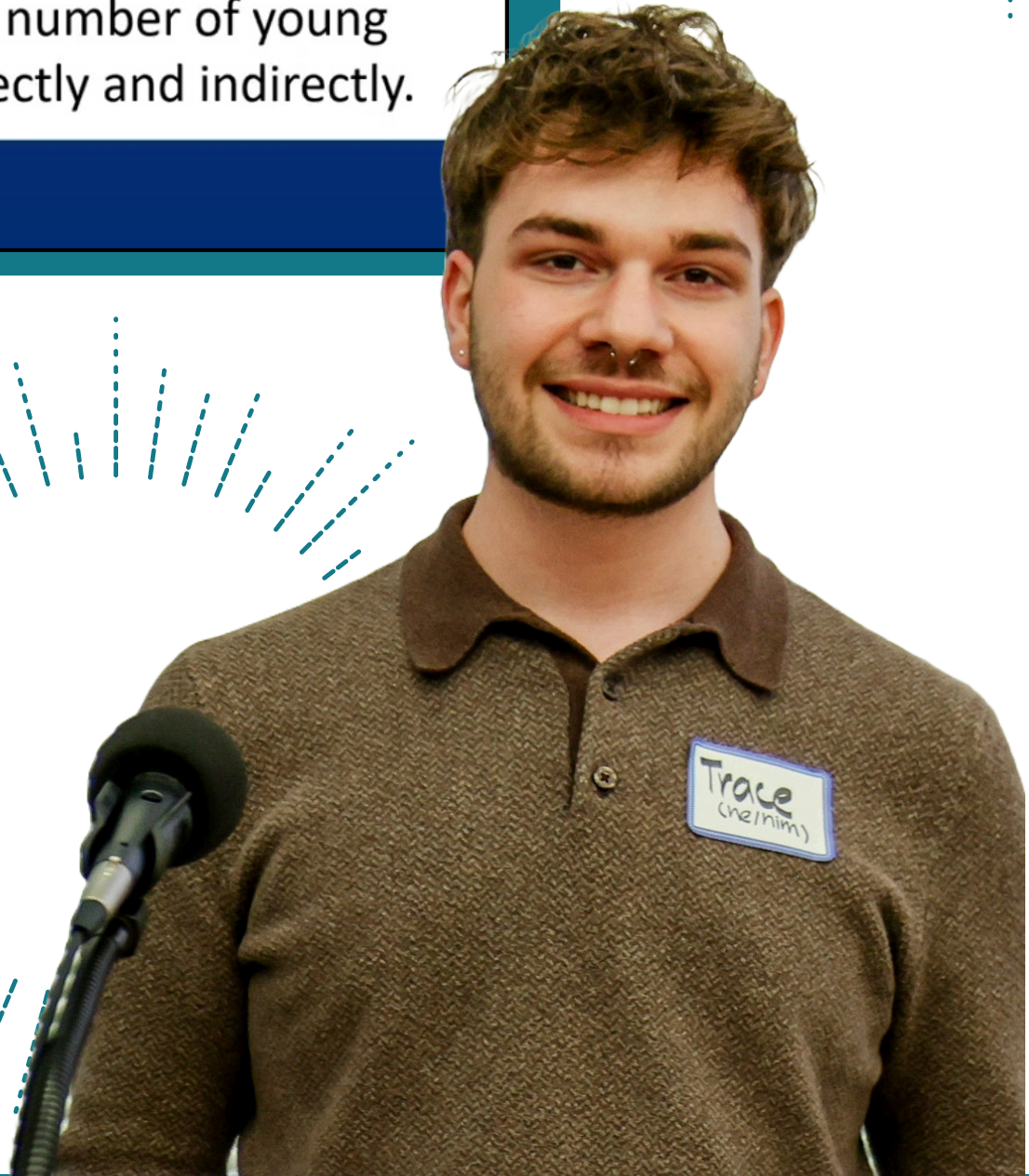
Recommendations:

- Extend Pilot: Provide longer-term support.
- Improve Outreach: Enhance tracking and communication.
- Advocate for Waivers: Push for federal waivers to prevent benefit loss.
- Broaden Funding: Expand public funding and explore new sources.
- Emphasize Storytelling: Combine qualitative and quantitative data.
- Address Marginalization: Promote equity through guaranteed income.



Considerations

It is important for us to realize that state and federal policies can serve as models for other countries. By embedding equity, generalizability, and youth engagement, we can positively impact a greater number of young people, both directly and indirectly.



Trace Terrell, Keynote Speaker

Watch and Follow: Plausible Instances of United States Influence on Canada's 988: Suicide & Crisis Helpline

Resources and Acknowledgements

Resources:

- To view the full report, visit: <https://bit.ly/40txH1m>
- Utah Office of Substance Use and Mental Health website: sumh.utah.gov
- Center for Law and Social Policy website: clasp.org
- National Alliance on Mental Illness- Utah: namiut.org



Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank our hosts, organizers, speakers, presenters, sponsors, and participants.

A special thanks to Rubina Halwani, Instructional Designer for SUMH, who designed this report.