

WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION FOR HOMELESS
AND RUNAWAY SERVICES

THE POWER OF US

Harnessing Community, Collaboration, and Collective Action for Wisconsin Youth

OCTOBER 19–21
2026

STONE HARBOR RESORT
Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin

STATEWIDE CONVENING
Youth, providers, and partners

A conference for coordinated action

Together, youth and young adults with lived expertise, service providers, public agencies, schools, behavioral health, housing, child welfare, law enforcement, victim services, legal services, and community partners will strengthen Wisconsin's response to youth homelessness, abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence.

Agenda subject to change

MONDAY

October 19, 2026

Conference arrival and registration

3:30–5:00
LOBBY

Registration

Welcome to Stone Harbor Resort. Pick up conference materials and connect with WAHRS staff and fellow participants before Tuesday's full program.

TUESDAY

October 20, 2026

Policy, collaboration, prevention, and collective action

8:00
GENERAL

Welcome Breakfast

Begin the conference with breakfast, opening remarks, and an introduction to The Power of Us.

9:00–10:30
BREAKOUT

The Power of Our Voice: Turning Collective Priorities into Policy Action

Review legislative updates, definitions of homelessness, eligibility, and resources. Participants will connect policy priorities to coordinated responses for homelessness, abuse, neglect, trafficking, exploitation, and violence, then identify advocacy opportunities shaped by youth voice and cross-system expertise.

9:00–10:30
(AMERICORPS)

The Power of Service: Building Our AmeriCorps Community with WAHRS

New and returning members will build connections, take the AmeriCorps pledge, and review program expectations, service resources, Core Competency Certificates, timesheets, and the National Runaway Safeline. Returning members will share practical guidance for a strong service year.

10:45– 12:45 BREAKOUT	From Challenge to Collective Action: Building Solutions Through the Power of Us Hosted by the National Network for Youth LCSC Team, this working session brings youth, providers, public agencies, schools, law enforcement, victim services, legal services, and community partners together to address rural access, transportation, referrals, and service gaps. Participants will clarify roles and establish next steps, progress measures, and shared accountability.
10:45– 12:45 BREAKOUT (AMERICORPS)	Stronger Together: Building Relationships, Resolving Conflict, and Engaging Volunteers Julie Bock, UWM Helen Bader School of Social Welfare Julie Bock will lead a two-part workshop on trauma informed conflict resolution and volunteer engagement. Participants will examine power, bias, and unequal system responses while developing practical strategies for communication, supervision, role clarity, and sustained collaboration, including in rural and underserved communities.
12:45–1:45 LUNCH	The Power of Connection: Lunch and Networking Build relationships across Wisconsin’s youth-serving community through informal conversation, shared learning, and new cross-system connections.
2:00–3:30 BREAKOUT	Better Together: Building Interagency Collaboration That Works Liz Croley, City of Appleton, and Katie Van Groll, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Fox Valley Learn how the Fox Cities Interagency Collaboration Group developed sustainable structures for coordination and case consultation. Participants will leave with practical approaches for identifying partners, strengthening trust, improving referrals, and building a multidisciplinary response in their own communities.
2:00–3:30 BREAKOUT (AMERICORPS)	Trust Matters: Confidentiality, Collaboration, and the Power of Us Examine confidentiality laws, ethical responsibilities, and information-sharing decisions involving youth, families, and partner systems. Scenarios will address disparities affecting child victims, bias, and unequal responses across child welfare, law enforcement, schools, health care, victim services, and community organizations.
2:00–3:30 YOUTH YOUNG ADULT	The Power of Youth: Connecting Voices, Building Community, Taking Action In this YYA-only space, participants will reflect on conference priorities, strengthen relationships, and identify opportunities to shape programs, advocacy, and systems change. The session centers youth leadership, choice, and collective voice.
3:45–5:00 BREAKOUT	The Power of Prevention: Moving Upstream Together Nikea Ward, Tricia Redmond, and Pathfinders Youth Action Board members Pathfinders and Youth Action Board members will share Milwaukee’s evolving prevention approach, including YHDP updates, flexible funding, crisis supports, and continuous improvement. The session applies trauma informed care and Positive Youth Development while centering youth leadership in design and evaluation.
6:30 GENERAL	Dinner, Keynote, and Community Gathering Tamaya, Youth Action Board member, Dane County Gather for dinner and a youth-led keynote highlighting lived expertise, leadership, and the collective responsibility to improve systems for Wisconsin youth.

WEDNESDAY

October 21, 2026

Skills, youth insight, outreach, and next steps

7:30–8:30
GENERAL

Breakfast

Breakfast is provided on site.

8:00–8:30
SUPERVISORS

The Power of Support: AmeriCorps Site Supervisor Breakfast Breakout

Site supervisors will review program requirements, reporting, member support, and administration while sharing effective practices and solutions. The session strengthens the network supporting AmeriCorps members across Wisconsin.

8:00–12:30
HALF DAY
(AMERICORPS)

The Power of Connection: Building Trust, Safety, and Belonging Through Youth Outreach

Adrienne Strelcheck and Bennice Greer

This half-day intensive applies culturally responsive, trauma informed, and Positive Youth Development practices to outreach across urban, rural, and diverse communities. Participants will strengthen engagement, boundaries, safety, referrals, and collaboration with schools, housing, behavioral health, child welfare, law enforcement, and victim services.

8:30–10:00
BREAKOUT

The Power of Youth Insight: Turning Lived Experience into Systems Change

Kat Mazang, Gabriela Ocegueda Ruiz, and Bezza LeGreve

Findings from the Tri County Research Systems Evaluation Initiative demonstrate how youth perspectives can identify strengths, gaps, and barriers. Participants will learn trauma informed strategies for shared decision making, compensation, accessible participation, and translating youth recommendations into programs, policies, and community responses.

10:00–
10:30
BREAK

Break and Room Checkout

Please complete hotel checkout before the final breakout sessions.

10:30–
12:00
BREAKOUT

Recognize, Respond, Connect: Supporting Youth at Risk of First Episode Psychosis

Kayla Polson, Brightwater Health

Learn early warning signs, coping strategies, supportive conversations, and crisis de-escalation approaches for shelters, outreach, drop-in, and housing settings. Participants will practice responding within their role while connecting youth and families with behavioral health professionals and community resources.

10:30–
12:00
YOUTH/ YOUNG
ADULT ONLY

The Power We Take With Us: Youth Leadership, Connection, and Next Steps

Youth and young adults will reflect on priorities involving homelessness, abuse, neglect, trafficking, exploitation, violence, rural access, unequal system responses, and resource navigation. Using trauma informed and Positive Youth Development practices, participants will choose next steps for leadership, advocacy, local action, and shared accountability.

Thank you for contributing your voice, expertise, and commitment to Wisconsin youth.