

POINT SOURCE YOUTH PRESENTS:

# YOUTH HOST HOMES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Host homes is a community-based housing intervention that upholds youth choice, voice, agency, and utilizes the strengths of young people and those who open their homes to them. These key factors of host homes are as important now more than ever. Host homes are continuing to work in communities during COVID-19 just as they always have, serving the most marginalized communities and youth who otherwise can fall through the cracks of different systems.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Host homes are mutual aid and are working during COVID-19. We all have something to offer and something to receive. Youth and hosts are transformed by this program, and folks are willing to come together and support one another in these most trying times.



## Q + A

### **How are you navigating relationship building with hosts, youth, and other service providers during this time?**

One thing with HH is trying to do intentional check ins with youth and hosts. Provide support and let them all know that they have access to resources, therapists, and mutual aid needs. There was initially a fear around needs not getting met. Address the fear, ask questions of what they need, and offer it.

### **How are host homes working with indigenous communities during COVID-19?**

One of the first things we do is acknowledge the mutual support of community that our indigenous communities have knowledge of doing already. So draw on that to see how we help the most vulnerable in our community. I encourage you wherever you happen to be in the US – reach out to indigenous communities and ask how they have been caring for elders and young people. These practices can educate us on how to collaborate and do this work better.



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## THE RADICAL IMPORTANCE OF HOST HOMES



Host homes have existed for quite some time in different communities across the globe. Queer and other historically marginalized communities have been creating host homes informally, taking care of others, oftentimes with a shared identity. We collectively know how to do this work, we have just created best practices, structures, and support to replicate the success of this intervention all across the US.

Host Homes are oftentimes lumped in with other housing services, but they are inherently different. Host Homes are a community-based program. This means that community engagement, organizing, and buy-in has to be built up front. Host homes are a radical intervention in that they uphold values of fighting oppression and providing flexible, scalable, and personalized care that creates support for young people whose identities may land them between the margins of various youth-serving systems. Host homes provide agency to young people, affirm their choices, and build support and equity in their lives that otherwise may not have existed. Host home programs aim to fill gaps in service, as well as aspire towards collective liberation of all folks, utilizing the strengths and care of our own communities.

Host homes may take some time to build but they are an essential piece to housing and supporting every young person who may need it. This is especially important during COVID-19, when we all must rely on those in our communities for life-saving support and care, no matter our background.

**CREATE INFOGRAPHICS TO PRINT OUT AND PUT ON THE FRIDGE, BE AVAILABLE TO TALK, CREATE SUPPORT GROUPS. REFRAME AND FOCUS ON WHAT WE HAVE CONTROL OVER AND NOT WHAT WE DON'T – AND THERE'S A LOT WE DON'T HAVE CONTROL OVER.**  
**-RYAN BERG**



### ACTIONS TO TAKE NOW

1. Incorporate COVID-19 education into your program for youth and hosts. This includes training, safety protocols to be utilized by all participants, and creating COVID-19 related language for your paperwork.
2. Build new partnerships. Collaboration has been stronger now to address the needs of youth during the pandemic. Find a seat at new tables, and invite new folks to sit at yours. Expand your networks and the message of your organization.
3. Create virtual recruitment strategies and trainings. Make them available online for interested hosts.



**AS PROVIDERS, IT IS OUR DUTY  
TO LISTEN TO THE COMMUNITY.  
IT'S A DISSERVICE TO NOT TAP  
INTO COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE.  
-ANDREW GUTIERREZ III**

## RESOURCES & LINKS

- [CDC Coronavirus Print Resources](#)
- [Point Source Youth: Host Homes](#)
- [Avenues for Youth](#)
- [Choosing Our Roots - Safely Housing Queer Youth](#)
- [Safe Place for Youth - Host Home Program](#)