

For over 40 years, the **Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA)** has provided the foundation for community responses to prevent and respond to youth and young adult homelessness. Through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, these key pillars of community-based interventions that help youth and young adults experiencing or at risk of running away, homelessness, exploitation and/or trafficking include:

- **Street Outreach:** outreach, education, personal connection, treatment, counseling and referrals to vital services
- **Basic Center:** short-term temporary housing with counseling, therapeutic family intervention, reunification and aftercare services
- **Transitional Living:** longer-term housing with supportive services, including *Maternity Group Homes for pregnant and parenting young people*

1 in 10

young adults ages 18-25 experienced a form of homelessness over a 12-month period.

That's 3.5 million young adults. About half of them involved explicitly reported homelessness while the other half involved couch surfing only

1 in 30

youth ages 13-17 experienced a form of homelessness over a 12-month period.

That's about 700,000 youth. About three-quarters of them involved explicitly reported homelessness (including running away or being kicked out) and one-quarter involved couch surfing only.

NEW RESEARCH SHOWS SIGNIFANCT HOMELESSNESS AMONG YOUTH

The 2008 reauthorization of RHYA required a study on the incidence and prevalence of youth and young adult homelessness -- the results were published in the fall of 2017 as *Missed Opportunities: Youth Homelessness in America*. This first-of-its-kind study includes all forms of homelessness experienced by young people, as well as their backgrounds and experiences while homeless. *Missed Opportunities* found that in the 12 months prior to the survey, approximately:

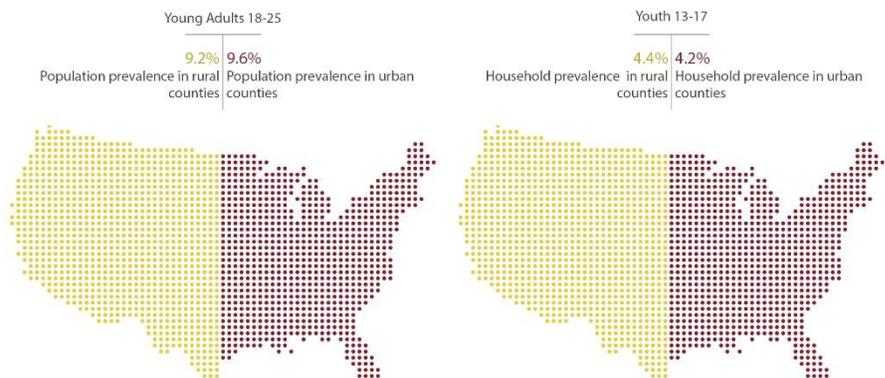
- 3.5 million young adults (aged 18-25) experienced homelessness
- 700,000 adolescent youth (aged 13-17) experienced homelessness on their own

Missed Opportunities showed for the first time that homelessness is **just as prevalent in rural communities as it is in urban:**

- 9.4% rural compared to 9.6% urban young adults aged 18-25
- 4.4% rural compared to 4.2% urban youth adolescents aged 13-17

HOMELESS YOUTH ARE TRAFFICKED AT HIGH RATES

Homeless young people are more likely to fall victim to sex trafficking – according to a 2016 report from the Family & Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), 24% of youth living on the streets exchanged sex for money and 27.5% did so for a place to stay. Covenant House International, an international network of service providers focused on homeless youth, found that nearly **one in five youth had been a victim of human trafficking** – inclusive of sex and labor trafficking or both.



The **Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act (RHYTPA)**, will reauthorize RHYA, which expired in 2013. RHYTPA will:

- Continue to provide funding for rural, suburban and urban communities to prevent and respond to youth and young adult homelessness
- Strengthen prevention efforts offered through the Street Outreach and Basic Center programs
- Enable Basic Center programs to serve youth for 30 days, and Transitional Living Programs to serve youth through age 24
- Ensure trafficking is prevented and victims are served through outreach, identification, prevention, referrals and reporting

RHYTPA will also help community-based programs around the nation address several of the key findings from the RHYA study, *Missed Opportunities*:

- Young people **lacking a high school diploma or GED were 3.5 times more likely** to experience homelessness than peers who completed high school. – RHYA programs provide support for education continuation and completion, and RHYTPA strengthens the support that programs provide in helping young people transition to college.
- **Young parents, especially those unmarried, were three times more likely** to experience homelessness than non-parenting peers. – RHYA’s Maternity Group Homes provide support for pregnant and parenting young mothers and their children.
- Ensure access to services for **lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth, who were twice as likely** as their peers to experience homelessness.

More than **one in three** homeless young women are pregnant or have children.



RHYTPA also provides for key national programs that support these efforts:

- National Runaway Safeline (1-800-RUNAWAY) – A national phone and online communications system that connects youth and families in crisis with prevention services, and reunifies families through their messaging service and Home Free program.
- The Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center – A national program that provides training and technical assistance to all RHYA grantees through in-person and online training, one-on-one consultation and various materials.
- Ensures continued studies on the incidence and prevalence of youth and young adult homelessness. *Missed Opportunities*, the study called for in the 2008 reauthorization, provides the first-of-its-kind look at youth homelessness – but further studies are necessary to continue to understand the challenge, assess current and emerging approaches as well as to measure our progress over time as a nation in addressing youth and young adult homelessness.

RHYTPA is supported by more than 350 national, state and local organizations; including 56 national organizations. To learn more: visit www.nn4youth.org/engage/nchy or contact Eric Masten, Director of Public Policy at eric.masten@nn4youth.org.

To cosponsor: contact Katie Brown (Katie.Brown@collins.senate.gov) with Senator Collins or Kelsey Kobelt (Kelsey.Kobelt@leahy.senate.gov) with Senator Leahy in the Senate, or contact Katy Rowley (Katy.Rowley@mail.house.gov) with Representative Yarmuth or Isaac Tobis (Isaac.Tobis@mail.house.gov) with Representative Reichert in the House.