

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) provides foundational support to address youth and young adult homelessness across the country. These grants, administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), began providing resources in 1974 and allowed local systems of care to be developed and shaped by the unique needs of each region, their available resources, and their local policy priorities. Remarkably similar systems of care emerged in local communities all over the U.S., including: street outreach, emergency shelter, aftercare, education and employment, health care, behavioral health, transitional housing, family intervention, and independent housing options. This continuum of care helps fully prepare youth to achieve successful outcomes: safe exit from homelessness, family reunification, establishment of permanent connection(s), employment, and sustainable independent living.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA), funds **three key pillars of intervention to help homeless youth:**

- **Street Outreach:** provides education, treatment, counseling and referrals to vital services
- **Basic Center:** provides temporary shelter, counseling, family reunification services and aftercare services
- **Transitional Living:** provides longer-term housing with supportive services, including Maternal Group Homes

RHYA is up for reauthorization every five years and will expire September 30, 2013.

#### AVAILABLE RESOURCES ARE NOT MEETING THE NEED

- The actual number of homeless and unaccompanied youth is difficult to gather. **The National Alliance to End Homeless (NAEH) estimates that 550,000 youth experience more than a week of homelessness each year.** RHYA calls for a study of the prevalence, needs and characteristics of homeless youth, which has never been conducted.
- RHYA has been flat funded at \$115M since 2009, **in spite of service providers turning away a rising number of youth in these challenging economic times.**
- Trafficked, exploited and LGBT homeless youth subpopulations require specialized services. RHY providers have cared for these particular young people **with limited specialized support**, which would include training, funding and other assistance.

#### WHY ARE YOUTH HOMELESS?

- Economic hardship due to the depressed economic climate forces some youth from their homes
- Severe family conflict, including abuse and abandonment
- 42-74% experienced physical or sexual abuse and many young people are exploited after becoming homeless
- Up to one-third “age out” of foster care with nowhere else to go
- Families force them to leave due to pregnancy, substance abuse, or non-acceptance of sexual orientation
- Nearly 100,000 exit the juvenile justice system yearly with little to no financial and housing resources

#### RHYA PROGRAMS PROVIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES

- RHYA programs are the most cost-effective alternatives to foster care and juvenile justice involvement.
- **As of 1974, RHYA is the sole federal law targeted at unaccompanied youth**, ensuring the basic level of support regardless of their state, origin or residence. Very few states have funding exclusive to this population.
- **RHYA programs use federal funds to leverage community resources** and succeed due to partnerships created among families, schools, community-based organizations, faith communities, law enforcement, businesses and volunteers.
- **RHYA programs raise the achievement level of homeless and exploited youth** and produce positive outcomes for youth in: family strengthening, education, employment, and sustainable independence.
- **These programs offer prevention** from trafficking, commercial exploitation, chronic homelessness, criminal justice involvement and lifelong dependence on government assistance.

## Appropriations Snapshot: FY 2014

<i>Program Activity</i>	<i>President's Proposed FY 14 Budget</i>	<i>NN4Y Proposed FY 14 Budget</i>
Runaway and homeless Youth (Basic Centers)	\$53 M	\$55 M
Transitional Living Programs (TLP)	\$44 M	\$46 M
Prevalence, Needs and Characteristics of Homeless Youth (Research)	\$3 M	\$3 M
Education grants to reduce sexual abuse of runaway youth (Street Outreach)	\$18 M	\$19 M
Exploited and trafficked youth- training providers and services to victims	—————	\$5M
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$118 Million</b>	<b>\$128 Million</b>

## Appropriations FY 2007 – FY 2013: By Program Activity

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	Runaway and Homeless Youth (Basic Centers)	Transitional Living Programs (TLP)	Prevalence, Needs and Characteristics of Homeless Youth (Research)	Education grants to reduce sexual abuse of runaway youth (Street Outreach)	Total (in millions)
<i>2013<sup>1</sup></i>	\$51,057	\$41,791	0	\$17,072	\$109,920
<i>2012</i>	\$53,744	\$43,990	0	\$17,971	\$115,705
<i>2011</i>	\$53,744	\$43,990	0	\$17,971	\$115,705
<i>2010</i>	\$53,744	\$43,990	0	\$17,971	\$115,705
<i>2009</i>	\$53,469	\$43,765	0	\$17,221	\$114,955
<i>2008</i>	\$52,860	\$43,268	0	\$17,221	\$113,349
<i>2007</i>	\$48,298	\$39,539	0	\$15,027	\$102,864

### IN THE WORDS OF A PREVIOUSLY HOMELESS YOUTH

“Where I stand today is a very important position because it shows how far I have come with the struggles that have occurred in my life. **Without the Transitional Living Program, I’d be homeless.** This program has given me the first pillow in almost two years to lay my head on and give us young people a second opportunity in life.”

<sup>1</sup> Reflects 5% across the board cuts to discretionary programs