

Prior to the COVID pandemic, our nation faced an acute crisis of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness, at imminent risk of homelessness, or who had been forced to flee unsafe or unwelcoming home environments. The exploding opioid crisis, unequal economic recovery, the growth of domestic human trafficking, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and its disproportionate impact on BIPOC communities and individuals has only exacerbated the runaway and homeless youth crisis.

The **Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY)** programs at the **Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB)** provide street outreach, emergency shelters, and longer-term transitional living and maternity group homes to vulnerable young people experiencing homelessness. Unfortunately, current federal funding for RHY cannot meet the escalating national need.

Homeless Youth Prevalence and Outcomes

- A groundbreaking 2018 study by Chapin Hall revealed the most accurate assessment to date on the prevalence of youth homelessness in the United States:
 - **1 in 10 young adults ages 18 to 25** (approximately 3.5 million individuals) will endure some form of homelessness in a year.
 - **1 in 30 adolescent minors ages 13 to 17** (approximately 700,000 children) will experience unaccompanied homelessness in a year.
 - Youth homelessness is a pervasive issue in all communities:
 - Nearly identical rates of adolescent homelessness in rural and nonrural communities (4.4% and 4.2% respectively), and higher but similar rates for young adults (9.2% and 9.6%).
- A 2017 study by Covenant Houses found nearly one in five (19.4%) homeless youth were victims of human trafficking:
 - of which 15% were trafficked for sex, 7.4% were trafficked for labor, and 3% of youth were trafficked for both.

Programmatic Request

Federal funding for Runaway and Homeless Youth services is broken into two line-items: '**Consolidated Runaway and Homeless Youth programs**' and '**Service Connection for youth on the Streets**'. The former provides emergency shelters, transitional living, and maternity group homes to vulnerable young people experiencing homelessness, and the latter supports outreach programs to find youth on the streets and move them into stable housing.

Both line items are essential to local communities and underfunded to meet the national need. On behalf of the more than 200 organizations and 13,000 youth development professionals that comprise Youth Collaboratory, **we respectfully request at least \$300 million in aggregate for Runaway and Homeless Youth programs in Fiscal Year 2023.**

	FY 2022 Final	FY23 POTUS	FY 2023 Request
Consolidated Runaway and Homeless Youth	\$120,283,000	\$129,000,000	\$260,000,000
Service Connection for Youth on the Streets	\$20,000,000	\$21,000,000	\$40,000,000
Total RHY Funding	\$140,283,000	\$150,000,000	\$300,000,000

Report Language Request

Many RHY grantees have received confusing messaging from the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) regarding the eligibility of prevention services for youth not yet enrolled in residential housing. In many cases, RHY grantees are being told that they can only provide services such as home counseling or case management *after* a youth has been first placed in a shelter.

To improve FYSB grantees’ ability to provide prevention services when necessary, and to ensure equitable access to services for all young people, Youth Collaboratory respectfully requests inclusion of the following report language in FY2023 House and Senate reports:

“The Committee supports the ability of grantees to provide prevention services regardless of enrollment in residential services, and urges the program to remind grantees that they are not required to enroll a young person in shelter or residential services, nor require the young person to physically travel to the grantee’s location, in order for the young person who is deemed at risk of running away or becoming homeless to be eligible to receive prevention and supportive services, including counseling and case management.”

The program is encouraged to notify applicants if grant applications were successful at least 30 days before the grant is to begin, or no less than 30 days before an existing grant is set to end.

The Committee strongly urges the program to ensure that service delivery and staff training comprehensively address the individual strengths and needs of youth, as well as be language appropriate, gender appropriate (interventions that are sensitive to the diverse experiences of male, female, and transgender youth and consistent with the gender identity of participating youth), and culturally sensitive and respectful of the complex social identities of youth (i.e., race, ethnicity, nationality, age, religion/spirituality, gender identity/ expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, physical or cognitive ability, language, beliefs, values, behavior patterns, or customs). The Committee strongly believes that no runaway youth or homeless youth should be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under, any program or activity funded in whole or in part under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, based on any of the conditions outlined in this paragraph.”