

Affirming Care in a Shifting Landscape: Serving LGBTQ+ Youth Experiencing Homelessness

April 1, 2026 | 2:00 - 3:00 PM Eastern
1:00 PM Central • 12:00 PM Mountain • 11:00 AM Pacific



Welcome!

Webinar Overview

- Introduce yourself in chat: Name, pronouns, organization, location, and an emoji of how your day is going so far. 😊 😄 😞 😲 😡 🙏
- Ask questions in the Q&A throughout the presentation.
- The webinar slides and a recording will be available on our website.
- Please [complete this survey](#) following the webinar so we can improve for next time.



Our Speakers

Overview



Galloway (they/them)

Advocacy Manager
Ali Forney Center



Trinady Maddock

Senior Policy Associate
National Network for Youth



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Agenda

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Introductions

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Challenges Faced by LGBTQ+ Youth

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About National Network for Youth

**NN4Y is on a mission to
transform systems so that no
young person in America
experiences homelessness.**



collaborate • advocate • transform

Join our newsletter: nn4youth.org/subscribe

NN4Y works with youth who have experienced homelessness and youth service providers from across the country to prevent and end youth, young adult, and young parent family homelessness and human trafficking. Together, we envision a future in which all young people have a safe place to call home, with endless opportunities to achieve their fullest potential.

Our Programs

- ★ Federal Policy Advocacy
- ★ Youth + Youth Adult Partnerships
- ★ Community-Based Solutions

About Ali Forney Center

The Ali Forney Center works to protect and empower LGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness through housing, care, and advocacy.



Learn more about us: www.aliforneycenter.org

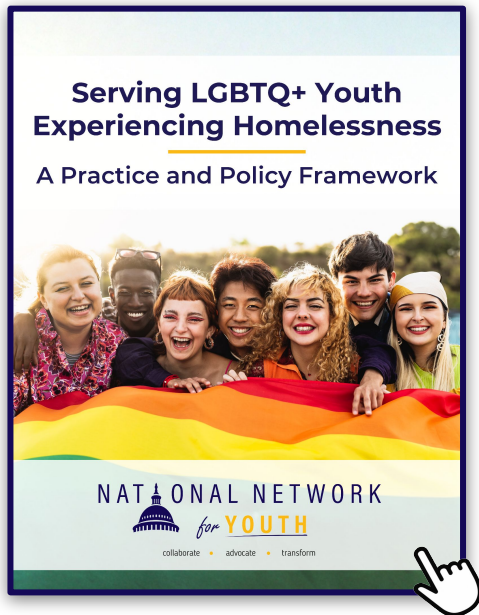
AFC is committed to protecting and uplifting LGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness by providing safe housing, affirming care, and life saving support, while fighting for the systems and policies that ensure every young person has a place to call home.

Our Programs

- ★ Safe Housing for LGBTQ+ Youth
- ★ Holistic Care + Supportive Services
- ★ Advocacy for Housing + Youth Rights

Policy Brief Release!

Overview



LGBTQ+ youth experience homelessness at disproportionately high rates compared to their non-LGBTQ+ peers.

Despite heightened vulnerabilities, LGBTQ+ youth are less likely to access available services and too often encounter programs that are not designed to meet their specific needs. This mismatch between risk and response underscores a critical gap in our national homelessness strategy.

This policy brief:

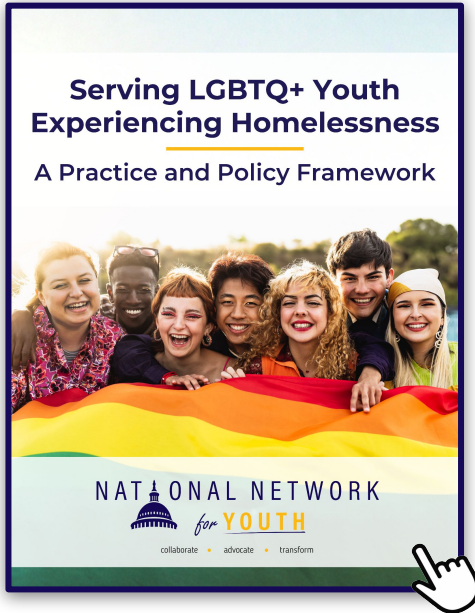
- ★ Summarizes the latest research on LGBTQ+ youth experiencing homelessness.
- ★ Highlights the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ youth.
- ★ Offers concrete recommendations for public policy and affirming direct services.



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The Urgency of the Issue

Overview



- ★ LGBTQ+ youth are **120 percent** more likely to experience homelessness than their non-LGBTQ+ peers.
- ★ Of all youth ages 18 to 25 who have experienced homelessness, between **20 to 40 percent** identify as LGBTQ+.
- ★ Transgender or nonbinary young people experience homelessness at a rate **73 percent** greater than cisgender LGB young people.
- ★ LGBTQ+ youth of color face high rates of homelessness—**47 percent** of LGBTQ+ youth living in shelters or in other homelessness services identify as a racial or ethnic minority.





**Policy Brief Overview:
Serving LGBTQ+ Youth
Experiencing
Homelessness: A
Practice and Policy
Framework**

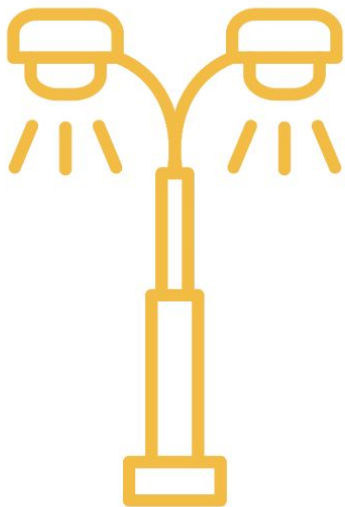


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LGBTQ+ Homelessness

Unique Challenges



LGBTQ+ youth are at increased risk of experiencing street homelessness and violence.

- ★ Comparing the homelessness experiences of cisgender and sexual minority youth found that **13 percent** of the cisgender youth experienced street homelessness, compared to **34 percent** of the sexual minority youth.
- ★ LGBTQ+ youth experience trafficking and sexual exploitation as a result of their homelessness at a rate **double** that of their non-LGBTQ+ peers.



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LGBTQ+ Homelessness

Unique Challenges



Despite being overrepresented in the homeless population, LGBTQ+ youth are less likely to stay in a shelter or seek homelessness services.

- ★ Many youth report being reluctant to utilize shelter services due to **discriminatory experiences** outside of shelter settings, inside of shelter settings, or both. This is particularly prevalent among LGBTQ+ youth of color.
- ★ LGBTQ+ youth identified **positive relationships** with program staff and peers as the primary reason for their feeling safe and welcome in homelessness services.



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LGBTQ+ Homelessness

Unique Challenges



LGBTQ+ youth face higher rates of justice involvement and incarceration than their straight, cisgender peers.

- ★ LGBTQ+ youth comprise about **13 to 15 percent** of youth involved in the juvenile justice system, even though LGBTQ+ youth are only **5 to 7 percent** of the total U.S. population, typically disproportionately for reasons related to homelessness, including survival sex, trafficking, or substance use disorder.
- ★ Following ***Grants Pass vs. Johnson***, more communities are increasing punitive responses towards individuals sleeping outside. As such, it is imperative to ensure that LGBTQ+ youth have access to affirming homelessness services.



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LGBTQ+ Homelessness

Unique Challenges

LGBTQ+ youth face higher rates of foster care placement and unstable foster placements.



- ★ LGBTQ+ youth in foster care experience higher rates of placement instability, higher number of placements, and are more likely to be placed in group homes, shelters, or restrictive residential programs due to the lack of affirming and accepting foster homes. **Unstable or unsuitable placements can lead to homelessness.**
- ★ The **rejection and discrimination** LGBTQ+ youth may experience from their biological families too often continues with social workers, resource caregivers, or case managers.



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Federal Policy Recommendations

Unique Challenges



- ★ **Pass the Equality Act.** LGBTQ+ individuals lack basic nationwide legal protections, highlighting the need for comprehensive and inclusive legislation to safeguard the rights of every LGBTQ+ person in America.
- ★ **Pass the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act.** For over 50 years, RHYA has funded community-based programs that serve young people without safe living arrangements.
- ★ **Increase access to youth-specific housing programs.** Rapid rehousing and Housing Choice Vouchers are important programs to support LGBTQ+ youth.



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Program Improvements: Providing Welcoming and Affirming Services



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Program Improvements

Program Improvements



- Expand access to safe, affirming shelter options.
- Mandate culturally competent, LGBTQ+-affirming training for all staff.
- Create identity-affirming placement policies.
- Invest in relationship-centered care models for LGBTQ+ youth and staff.
- Develop targeted outreach and low-barrier entry points for trans & queer youth.
- Increase specialized services for LGBTQ+ youth of color.
- Increase access to long-term housing solutions through supportive and voucher advocacy.
- Center youth voice and lived experience in program design.
- Ensure cross-system coordination (RHY, foster care, justice, housing).



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Questions?



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Stay Connected to AFC

The Ali Forney Center



- **For Advocacy:** galloway@aliforneycenter.org
 - Support with state advocacy
 - Coalition-building
- **For Global Programs:** nswanson@aliforneycenter.org
 - Support with LGBTQ+ staff training
 - Expand programs to support LGBTQ+ youth
 - Open up a LGBTQ+ affirming shelter
 - **All Global Programs services are offered for free!**

THE FIGHT TO **END YOUTH** **HOMELESSNESS** TAKES ALL OF US.

Become a member of the National Network for Youth and join the nation's foremost coalition on this issue.

Connect with peers, gain expert guidance, and stay updated on funding and policies affecting **youth homelessness**.

nn4youth.org/membership

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- **Meet with Your Member of Congress:** [Policy & Advocacy](#)
- **Vital Document Legal Hotline for Youth:** [Join Our Referral Network](#)

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Listserv!



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I AM HERE: Vital Document Legal Hotline for Youth

A free, dedicated state-specific legal assistance hotline for **youth experiencing homelessness** to help obtain:

State ID cards and licenses

Social Security Cards

Birth certificates

Documents needed to obtain an ID and license

**Text or
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1-888-870-DOCS

*Voicemails and texts are welcome and will be returned.

Every Wednesday

12 to 8 PM Eastern | 11 AM to 7 PM Central

10 AM to 6 PM Mountain | 9 AM to 5 PM Pacific

**Baker
McKenzie.**

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**Together, we
can end youth
homelessness.**

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