



Youth Homelessness Data & Trends: Insights from the National Runaway Safeline

May 13, 2026 | 1:00 - 2:00 PM Eastern

12:00 PM Central • 11:00 AM Mountain • 10:00 AM Pacific

NATIONAL

NETWORK
for **YOUTH**


**National
Runaway
Safeline**

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 the survey following the webinar so we can improve for next time.

Our Speakers

Webinar Overview



Darla Bardine

Executive Director
National Network for Youth



Brad Potts

*Resource Coordinator / Crisis
Services Supervisor*
National Runaway Safeline



Amanda Whitlock, LCSW,

Chief Executive Officer
National Runaway Safeline

Agenda

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Who is National Network for 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.

What We Do

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

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





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
Call!**

1-888-870-DOCS

*Voicemails and texts are welcome and will be returned.

Wednesday Hours (Starting May 6, 2026)

9 AM - 5 PM Eastern • 8 AM - 4 PM Central
7 AM - 3 PM Mountain • 6 AM - 2 PM Pacific

**Baker
McKenzie.**

NATIONAL

NETWORK
for **YOUTH**



Youth Homelessness Data and Trends

May 13, 2026



NRS Overview and Purpose

The mission of the **National Runaway Safeline (NRS)** is to keep America's runaway, homeless and at-risk youth safe and off the streets.

- Crisis Intervention
- Information and Referral Lines
- Connection to Service Providers
- Messaging Service
- Home Free Program
- Prevention and Educational Materials
- Training Opportunities
- Youth Advisory Board

www.nationalrunawaysafeline.org

*Scan to
Follow Us Online*



Crisis Intervention

NRS operates 3 crisis services lines:

- 1800RUNAWAY.org:
1-800-RUNAWAY (786-2929)
- Illinois Comprehensive Community Based Youth Services (CCBYS):
1-877-870-2663
- MOCA, National Mental Health Information and Referral Safeline
1-888-504-MOCA (6622)



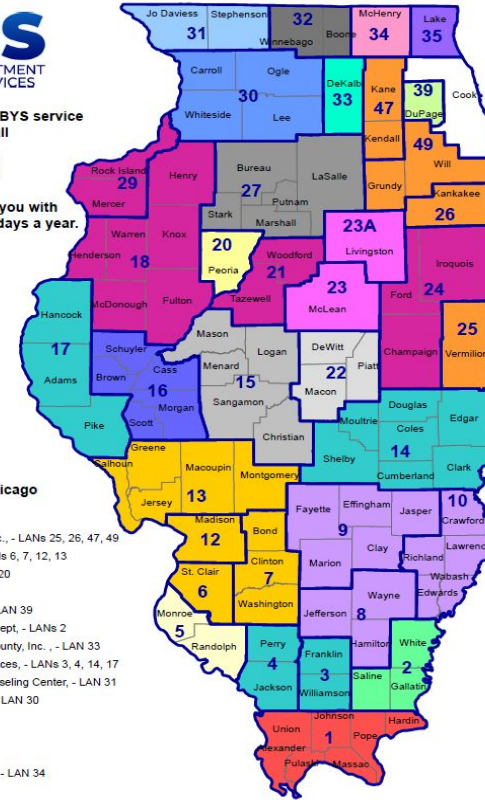
Statewide CCBYS System of Care



For assistance contacting a CCBYS service provider in your area, please call

(877) 870-2663

The IRL is available to connect you with CCBYS crisis services 24/7, 365 days a year.



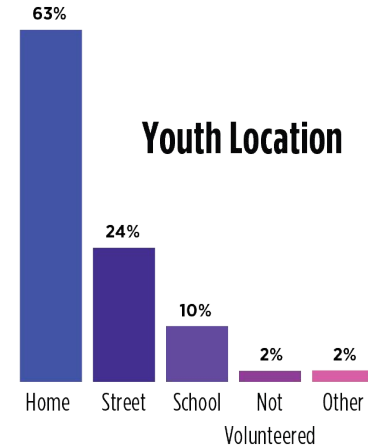
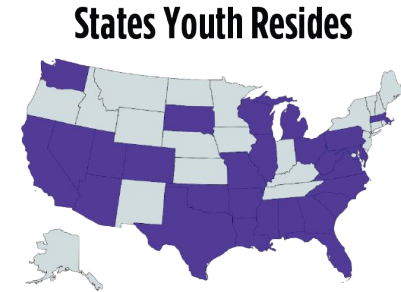
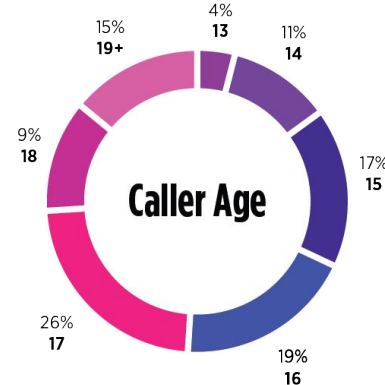
CCBYS Statewide Agencies Excluding Cook County and Chicago

- Arrowleaf, - LAN 1
- Aunt Martha's Health & Wellness, Inc., - LANs 25, 26, 47, 49
- Bright Point (Formerly CHASI), - LANs 6, 7, 12, 13
- Children's Home Association, - LAN 20
- Comwell, - LAN 5
- DuPage Youth Services Coalition, - LAN 39
- Egyptian Public and Mental Health Dept., - LANs 2
- Family Service Agency of DeKalb County, Inc., - LAN 33
- Illinois Coalition for Community Services, - LANs 3, 4, 14, 17
- Jane Addams dba FHN Family Counseling Center, - LAN 31
- Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, - LAN 30
- Midwest Youth Services, - LAN 16
- OMNI Youth Services, - LAN 35
- One Hope United, - LANs 8, 9, 10
- Pioneer Center for Human Services, - LAN 34
- Project OZ, - LANs 23, 23A
- The Center for Youth & Family Solutions, - LANs 18, 21, 24, 29
- Webster Cantrell Youth Advocacy, - LAN 22
- Youth Service Bureau, - LAN 15
- Youth Services Bureau of Illinois Valley, - LAN 27
- Youth Services Network, - LAN 32

MOCA



MOCA
Teen Mental Health & Referral Safeline
 Supporting youth and young adults to Mentally Overcome Challenges and Adversity.
1-888-504-MOCA (6622)
MOCALISTENS.ORG

All data collected by National Runaway Safeline (NRS) from Jan 1st, 2025-April 30th, 2026



**National Runaway &
Homeless Youth
Communication
System –**

1800RUNAWAY



About 4.2 million young people ages 13 to 25
experience homelessness every year

National Stats:



1 in 10 young people ages 18 to 25 and 1 in 30 youth ages 13 to 17 will experience homelessness in a given year.



150,000 youth experienced homelessness on a single night in January 2024



10% increase in unaccompanied youth from 2023 to 2024



24% / 27% youth exchanged sex for money / place to stay

What is the Federal Response?

Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act



1-800-RUNAWAY

Available 24/7

www.1800runaway.org



CALL 1-800-RUNAWAY
CHAT
EMAIL
FORUM
TEXT
EXIT

1-800-RUNAWAY

YOUTH CRISIS SUPPORT AND CONNECTION



- AVAILABLE 24/7
- CONFIDENTIAL
- NON JUDGMENTAL
- SUPPORT IN ACCESSING RESOURCES

HERE TO LISTEN. HERE TO HELP.

Connect with Crisis Support Specialist who can listen, help you explore options, and support you in staying safe. Search our Youth Resource Database anytime.


CALL


CHAT


TEXT


EMAIL


FORUM


RESOURCES

How Youth Hear About NRS	
Internet	75%
Word of Mouth	10%
Previous Caller	8%
Social Service Agency	3%
School	1%

Newest Option: NRS Public Facing Database



Youth Resource Database

Find help near you — quick, confidential, and free

This directory is designed to help youth, caregivers, and providers find safe, local, and national resources — like housing, counseling, legal aid, and youth services.

NATIONALRUNAWAYSAFELINE.ORG/DATABASE



FIND HELP NEAR YOU

QUICK, CONFIDENTIAL, AND FREE

This directory is designed to help youth, caregivers, and providers find safe, local, and national resources — like housing, counseling, legal aid, and youth services. This database is not a complete list of every resource available, but it's a good place to start.

SEARCH YOUTH RESOURCE DATABASE



Home Free

***Home Free helps over
500 youth each year stay
off the streets and return
to family and safety.***



NEED A SAFE WAY HOME?

A RIDE TO SAFETY AND SUPPORT

The Home Free program helps young people ages 12–21 return safely to a confirmed known adult or available safe place – at no cost to youth.

CALL TO GET STARTED

[Learn More About Home Free](#)

Printed 1-800-RUNAWAY Outreach Material

Contact resources@1800runaway.org to order.

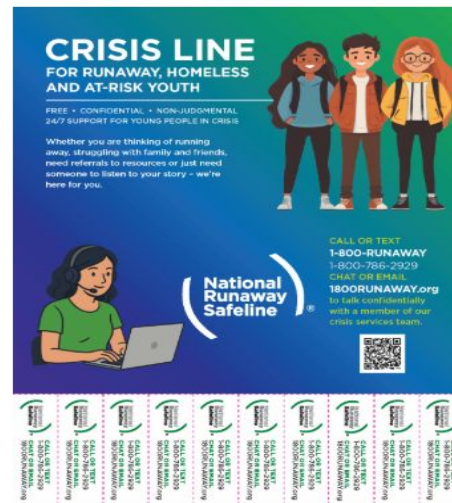


Street Outreach Card



NRS General Brochure

Descargar Folleto En Español

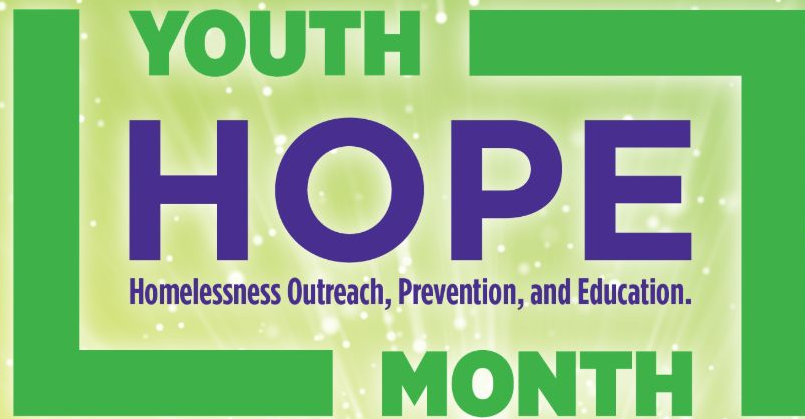


NRS Pull Tab Flyer

Descargar Volantes En Español

Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum





Let's shine a light on youth homelessness
and show young people that help and
hope are within reach.



For more information visit,
1800RUNAWAY.org/HOPE



1800RUNAWAY

**2025 Data Trends
and State
Snapshots**

2025 Data and Demographic Report

19,911 Youth Crisis Contacts of 24,830 Total Crisis Contacts	
Chat/Text	49%
Hotline	43%
Forum Post	4%
Emails	5%

Relationship (N = 18,312)	
Youth under 22	80%
Parent	8%
Adult	5%
Relative	3%
Friend	1%

Age	
Under 12	1%
12 to 14	12%
15 to 17	36%
18-21	32%
22+	19%

Status	(N = 18,221)	
In Crisis	47%	8,490
Contemplating Running	20%	3,642
Homeless	16%	2,888
Runaway	13%	2,429
Kicked Out	4%	78

Location	(N = 12,362)	
Home	44%	5,440
Street	13%	1,645
Friend	11%	1,419
Relative	6%	741
Shelter	3%	376



2025 Data and Demographic Report

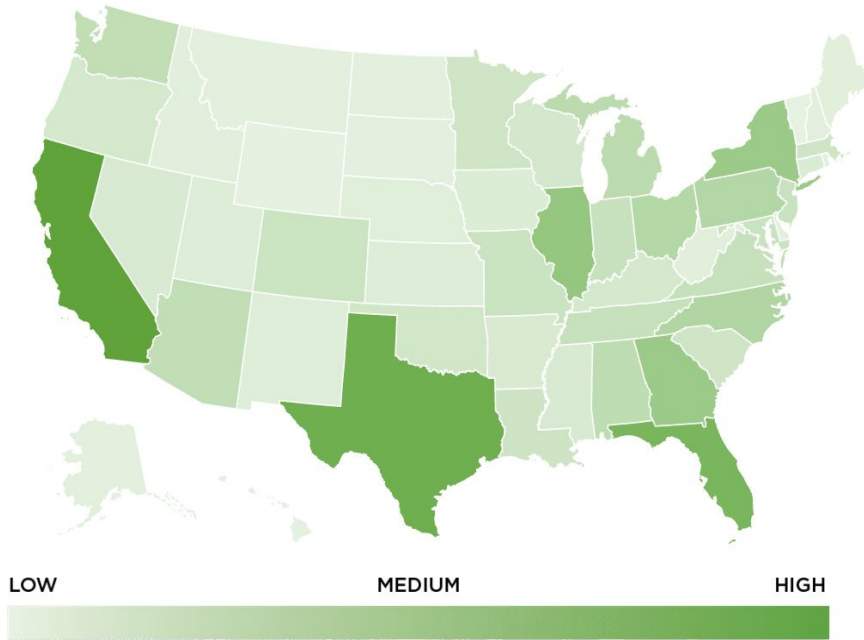
Presenting Problem (N = 17,915)		
Family Dynamics:	72%	12,913
Economics	31%	5,577
Mental Health	25%	4,501
Transportation	24%	4,381
Emotional Abuse	22%	3,895
Service Provider	20%	3,526
Physical Abuse	12%	2,115
Peer/Social Issues	7%	1,321
Neglect	8%	1,402
Housing	7%	1,259

Options Discussed	
Natural Supports	9,716
Community Supports	16,098

Housing Resources (N=4,106)	
Emergency Shelter	2,581
Transitional Housing	950
Mother and Infant Care	293
Street Outreach	90
Drop In Center	98
Housing Assistance	94

1-800-RUNAWAY is 24/7 and Nationwide

2025 SNAPSHOT





Data Trends

2023 to 2025

2023 to 2025 - 3 Year Trends

Every year since 2023 NRS has seen an 11% increase in youth crisis contacts

2025 was the first-year chat/texts were the most popular form of contact

The number of contacts ages 18-21 has increased from 25% in 2023 to 32% in 2025

The number of contacts reporting youth homelessness has grown from 13% of contacts to 16%

2025 3 Year Trends

The number of contacts reporting an issue with economics rose from 26% in 2023 to 31% in 2025; the number reporting concerns with mental health rose from 23% to 25%.

Contacts reporting issues with social services providers doubled in percentage (10% to 20%) from 2023 to 2024

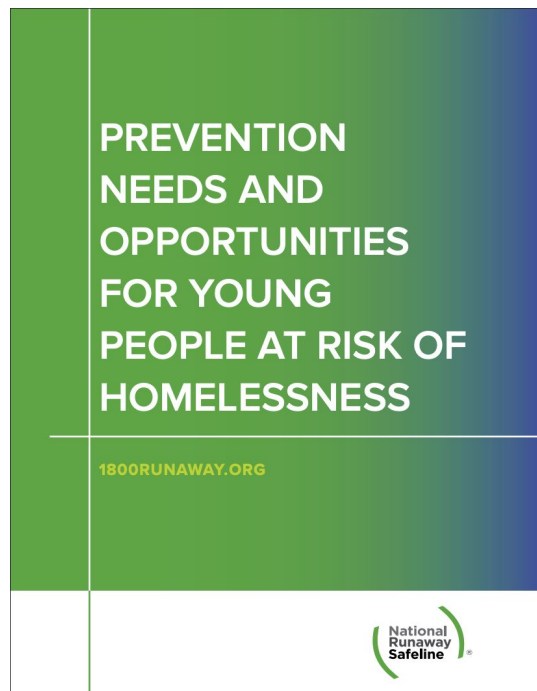
Contacts that discussed natural supports fell from 58% to 51% between 2023 and 2025

Housing, a community support, increased as an option discussed from 36% in 2023 to 45% in 2025



Prevention Needs and Opportunities for Young People at Risk of Homelessness

Prevention Report



Prevention Needs and Opportunities for Young People at Risk of Homelessness

- **National Runaway Safeline (NRS)** partnered with the **American Institutes for Research** to conduct a study analyzing data from over 100,000 people who interacted with NRS' crisis services staff from 2019 to 2023.
- Research questions addressed the:
 - **Characteristics, experiences, and challenges of young people who access NRS's crisis intervention services**
 - **Homelessness risk status of young people who access NRS's crisis intervention services**
 - **Options for referrals and supports that NRS discusses with young people**
- We also looked for patterns within groups by examining how characteristics, experiences, challenges, and options varied across homelessness risk status
- Used descriptive and inferential analysis to answer research questions.

What are the takeaways from this research?

PREVENTION
NEEDS AND
OPPORTUNITIES
FOR YOUNG
PEOPLE AT RISK OF
HOMELESSNESS

1800RUNAWAY.ORG



NRS' interactions with young people present important opportunities for prevention

- Most young people are **still at home** when they reach out to NRS
- Those who were **not yet homeless** were more likely to be
 - Younger and female
 - Experiencing human trafficking, mental health issues, child maltreatment, family conflict, juvenile crime, and peer issues
- Those at **imminent risk of homelessness**
 - Reported higher levels of Emotional Abuse and Family Dynamics
 - Compared to youth that were homeless, were more likely to discuss connections with family, friends, and other adults to solve the identified issues
- These findings are in line with the literature on the predictors of youth homelessness
- **Solutions to challenges in young people's family and social environments could help to resolve issues** that could imminently lead to homelessness

WHAT ARE THE PRACTICE AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS?

PREVENTION
NEEDS AND
OPPORTUNITIES
FOR YOUNG
PEOPLE AT RISK OF
HOMELESSNESS

1800RUNAWAY.ORG



OPPORTUNITIES FOR POLICYMAKERS TO PREVENT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

WHAT CAN SYSTEM ADMINISTRATORS DO TO PREVENT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS?

- Support local cross-sector partnerships
- Develop local system or asset maps
- Ensure that local youth homelessness systems are adequately resourced

WHAT CAN STATE AND FEDERAL POLICY MAKERS DO TO PREVENT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS?

- Support the development of a public awareness campaign to increase awareness of state and federal services and resources
- Destigmatize seeking help.
- Permit the expansion of existing policy solutions, such as the Family First Prevention Services Act



OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH-SERVING PROFESSIONALS TO PREVENT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

WHAT CAN YOUTH SERVICE PROVIDERS DO TO PREVENT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS?

- Ensure that young people and their families can access prevention and early intervention services
- Understand the local landscape of resources and make strategic warm hand-offs
- Ensure that programs serving young people incorporate youth-centered policies in supportive services



WHAT DO THESE FINDINGS MEAN FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS WHO ARE EXPERIENCING OR AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS?

WHEN INTERACTING WITH COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS, YOUNG PEOPLE CAN:

- Reach out to NRS or a local service provider for housing supports
- Be clear with service providers about their specific needs
- Join a local youth advisory board or council

WHEN LOOKING TO IMPROVE THEIR STATE AND LOCAL YOUTH HOMELESSNESS SYSTEMS, YOUNG PEOPLE CAN:

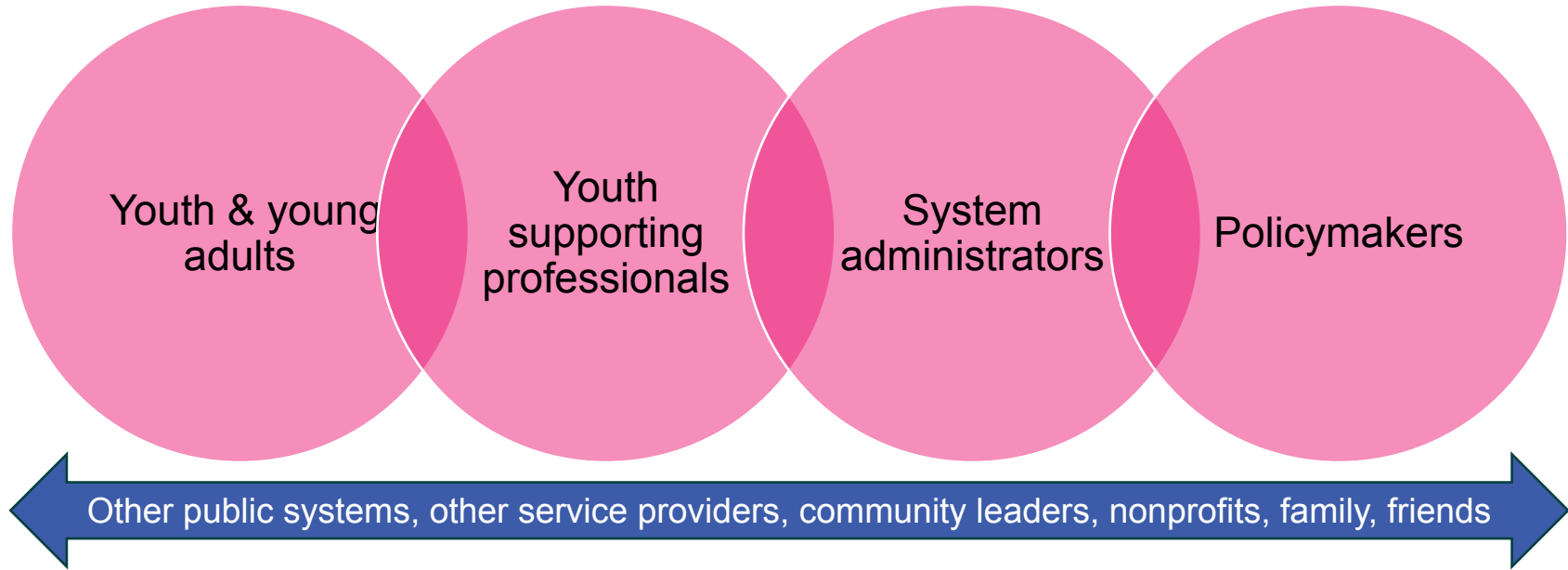
- Share community-based resources with friends
- Join technical assistance calls hosted by nonprofit organizations
- Network with peers and colleagues on these calls, at community events, or through advocacy spaces
- Remember that experiences of homelessness can be different for everyone

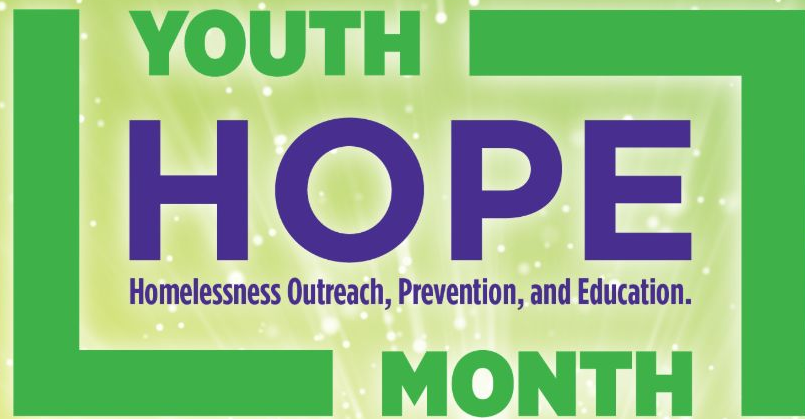




Discussion

We all have a role to play in preventing youth homelessness.





Let's shine a light on youth homelessness
and show young people that help and
hope are within reach.



For more information visit,
1800RUNAWAY.org/HOPE

Contact Information



Amanda Whitlock, LCSW

CEO National Runaway Safeline

awhitlock@nationalrunawaysafeline.org

Brad Potts

Resource Coordinator and

Crisis Services Supervisor

resources@1800runaway.org

Get Connected to NN4Y



- **Join Our Network:** [Become a Member](#)
- **Mobilize Your Community:** [Training & Consulting Services](#)
- **Meet with Your Member of Congress:** [Policy & Advocacy](#)
- **Vital Document Legal Hotline for Youth:** [Join Our Referral Network](#)

Sign Up for Our
Listserv!



NATIONAL NETWORK
 for YOUTH

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

Contact Us:

darla.bardine@nn4youth.org

awhitlock@nationalrunawaysafeline.org

bpotts@1800runaway.org

Visit Our Websites:

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1800runaway.org