

Know Your Rights Webinar: Immigrant Youth Experiencing Homelessness

August 25, 2026 | 3:00 - 4:00 PM Eastern

2:00 PM Central • 1:00 PM Mountain • 12:00 PM Pacific

NATIONAL NETWORK for YOUTH

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Webinar Overview

Welcome!

- 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 at https://nn4youth.org/learn/know-your-rights/.
- Please complete the survey following the webinar so we can improve for next time.

Webinar Overview

Our Speakers



Marcellus Seals
(they/them)
Youth Advisory Council Member
Community Outreach Volunteer at Oklahoma Resource Access Network



Tori Ikeda
(she/her)
Youth Advisory Council Member



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(he/him)
Youth Advisory Council Member
Founder & Executive Director of Break The System Project

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Webinar Overview

Agenda

1. Know Your Rights - What Immigrant Youth Need To Know
2. Possible Scenarios
3. Taking Charge of Your Safety
4. Community Resources
5. Q&A + Odds and Ends

NATIONAL NETWORK for YOUTH

Webinar Overview

National Network for Youth

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

NN4Y works with young leaders 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.

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Visit our website: nn4youth.org

Join our newsletter: nn4youth.org/subscribe

Webinar Overview

Before We Get Started

This webinar will cover important and sometimes difficult topics, including navigating services when you feel unsafe and walking through scenarios that involve ICE, police, and Border Patrol. Some of the scenarios and information may be distressing.

If at any time you feel the need to step away or leave the webinar, please don't hesitate to do so. The recording, slides, and an external links document with all resources listed will be available to registrants and attendees afterward.

Please note that NN4Y is not a legal entity, and this webinar does not provide legal advice. Instead, we are centering how youth experiencing homelessness navigate their rights and advocate for themselves.

In this webinar, we provide a variety of free legal help options that can address any specific legal questions you have.

Webinar Overview

Regardless of immigration status, the Constitution applies to every person in this country. It is critical that you know your rights as a person in the United States of America



Knowing Your Rights: What Immigrant Youth Experiencing Homelessness Need to Know

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Access to Shelter and Housing

Know Your Rights



There are some restrictions on access to government-funded shelters or housing programs for those with undocumented status. It depends on what kind of funding that program has, which determines what rules they have to follow.

You have the right to:

- Be free from discrimination on the basis of race, ethnic group identification, ancestry, national origin, color, religion, sex, mental or physical disability, or HIV status.
- Be protected against unlawful searches of your home without permission or a valid warrant.
- Live in a safe, healthy home and be provided with basic needs (meals, clothing, and medical care).
- Be free from physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect of your basic needs.

Marcellus

Access to Shelter and Housing Options

Know Your Rights

Always Call to Check Requirements Before You Seek out a Program

- Most **short-term** homeless shelters and domestic violence shelters accept everyone regardless of immigration status.
- **Longer-term** housing programs, like rental assistance vouchers, may have eligibility restrictions if they receive federal funding. Always call to check requirements before you seek out a program.
- There are emergency Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) shelters that can help minors experiencing homelessness on their own, including immigrant youth. Search here and click your state → Runaway and Homeless Youth → look for a Basic Center Program
- You can call, chat, text, or email the National Runaway Safeline for help finding shelter and housing options regardless of immigration status.

Access to Health Care

Know Your Rights



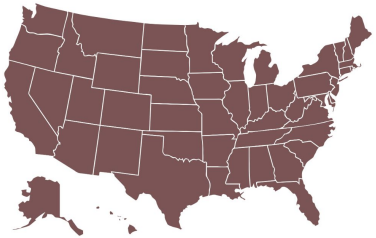
Sadly, people with undocumented status do not qualify for most federal health care benefits, like Medicaid, Medicare, or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In fact, there are new, stricter restrictions on federal health care benefit eligibility even for those with legal immigration status.

You have the right to:

- Be free from discrimination on the basis of race, ethnic group identification, ancestry, national origin, color, religion, sex, mental or physical disability, or HIV status.
- Be free from physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect of your basic needs.
- Emergency medical care.

Access to Health Care: Options

Know Your Rights



Some states have special laws to use state money to give health care benefits to pregnant youth with undocumented status. You can see if your state might offer those benefits here.

Some other health care options for those with undocumented status include:

- **Emergency Care** : Emergency rooms must help everyone, regardless of immigration status.
- **Community Health Clinics** : These clinics may have no restrictions or fewer restrictions depending on what kind of funding they have.
- **State-Specific Programs** : Some states use state funding to provide healthcare to those with undocumented status.

Access to Employment

Know Your Rights



Undocumented workers have almost all of the same rights as workers who are citizens. Your employer cannot deny you your guaranteed rights because of your undocumented status. If your rights are violated, you may still be able to report the problem or get legal help, no matter what your immigration status is.

You have the right to:

- Be in a fair, protected workplace, including to receive minimum wage, safe working conditions, and protection from some forms of labor exploitation.
- Be free from discrimination on the basis of race, ethnic group identification, ancestry, national origin, color, religion, sex, mental or physical disability, or HIV status.
- If applicable, protections under the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Access to Public Education

Know Your Rights



K-12 students with undocumented status have the same rights to a free public education as students who are citizens. Federal law also states that schools aren't allowed to share information about students' immigration status with authorities without parent consent.

You have the right to:

- Enroll in public K-12 school if you're experiencing homelessness. The school can't deny you enrollment, even if you don't have a parent or guardian to help you. Every public K-12 school district has a homeless liaison to help you. Find your liaison here.
- Be provided with transportation, free meals, and other support you might need to stay in school, like supplies or tutoring.
- Participate in school activities, extracurriculars, and social activities. You can ask your school to waive any fees that might come with these.

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Walking Through Possible Scenarios

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Being Stopped by Police or ICE

Scenarios

What To Do

- In some states, individuals may be required to provide their name and identification if they're stopped
- They're not required to answer other questions.
- At international borders, different rules apply regarding immigration questions and documents.

Stay Safe

- Stay calm and keep their hands visible
- Do not run, argue, resist, or provide false information or documents
- Have an emergency plan themselves and family (memorize important phone numbers, child care arrangements, medications, copies of identification)
- If required to carry immigration documents, individuals should keep them with them.

Know Your Rights

- Individuals have the right to remain silent
    - Individuals **do not** have to answer questions about where they're were born, whether they are a U.S. citizen, or how they entered the country
- Individuals can refuse consent to searches of themselves or their belongings unless there is legal justification
- Individuals over 18 who are required to carry immigration documents should keep them with them
- If arrested by police, individuals have the right to a court-appointed attorney.
- If detained by ICE, individuals have the right to consult an attorney (the government doesn't provide an attorney).

Being Stopped by Police or ICE

Scenarios

If Arrested or Detained

- Clearly state that they wish to **remain silent** and want a lawyer.
- Individuals have a right to **refuse to sign**
    - **Do not sign documents or answer questions** without legal advice.
    - Individuals may ask for an interpreter if they do not understand any documents.
- If arrested by police, individuals have the right to a court-appointed attorney.
- If detained by ICE, individuals have the right to consult an attorney (though one is not provided by the government).
- Individuals may keep a copy of their immigration documents with someone they trust.

If an Individual is a Non-Citizen:

- Ask their lawyer about the effect of a criminal conviction or plea on your immigration status.
- Avoid discussing immigration status with anyone but their lawyer.
- While an individual is in jail, an immigration agent may visit them
    - Do not answer questions or sign anything before talking to a lawyer.
- Read all papers fully. If they do not understand or cannot read the papers, they can tell the officer they need an interpreter.

Obtaining Vital Documents

Scenarios

Vital documents are birth certificates, state-issued identification, and Social Security cards. Many youth experiencing homelessness don't even have one vital document, which can be a major challenge to getting help.

I Have Documents but Unable to Access Them

- **Birth Certificate**: You can only get a copy from the state you were born in. See the instructions by state here, or Google "your state + copy of birth certificate."
- **State-Issued ID**: Usually, you will need a copy of your birth certificate or another official form of identification to get an ID. See your state's requirements here.
- **Social Security Card**: The process is the same no matter where you live. If you need additional help because you don't have identification or you don't have a permanent address, you may need to go in person to a local Social Security office. Start the process here.

I Can't Afford the Fee to Access My Documents

Sometimes you have to pay a fee to get a copy of your vital documents. Some states have laws that can waive the fee for youth experiencing homelessness. See if your state waives the fee for youth experiencing homelessness here.

Don't Know Where to Start? Call the Vital Document Legal Hotline for Youth!

This is a **free, dedicated legal hotline for youth experiencing homelessness** to help obtain essential identification and vital documents.

1-888-870-DOCS (1-888-870-3627)

Being Stopped by Police, ICE, or Border Patrol While in Transit

Scenarios



Stay Safe

- Stay calm and do not resist, keep hands raised/visible
- **If in a car**: Pull over to a safe place and turn off the car.
    - Open the window part way and place your hands on the wheel.
    - Upon request, show police documents like driver's license, registration, and proof of insurance.
- Show immigration papers if requested
    - If an individual is over 18, they should carry their immigration documents with them at all times.
    - If an individual does not have immigration papers, they should state that they wish to remain silent.

Being Stopped by Police, ICE, or Border Patrol While in Transit

Scenarios



In a Car

- Drivers and passengers have the right to remain silent
    - If the individual is a passenger, they can ask if they are free to leave
- Individuals can refuse to consent to the search of their car **unless** police generally suspect it contains evidence of a crime

Border Patrol conduct "roving patrols" around the interior of the U.S., pulling over motorists.

- Border Patrol must have reasonable suspicion that the driver or passengers in the car committed an immigration violation or a federal crime.
- Any arrest or prolonged stop by Border Patrol requires probable cause.
- Individuals may ask the agents about the basis for probable cause, and they should tell you

Being Stopped by Police, ICE, or Border Patrol While in Transit

Scenarios



On a Bus or Train

- Border Patrol may ask questions about immigration status within the 100-mile border zone.
- Individuals have the right to remain silent and are not required to answer questions.



On an Airplane

- A pilot may refuse to fly a passenger if he or she reasonably believes that the passenger is a threat to flight safety.
- A pilot can't question you or refuse to allow you on a flight because of bias based on an individual's religion, race, national origin, gender, ethnicity, or political beliefs.

Scenarios

Police or ICE are at My Home

Stay Safe

- Stay calm and keep the door closed.
- Speaking through the door is safer than opening it.
- Opening the door doesn't give them permission to come inside



Know Your Rights

- Individuals have the right to **remain** silent even if there's a warrant
- Individuals do not have to let officers into their home unless they have a valid judicial warrant.
- An ICE deportation/removal warrant (Form I-205) alone **does not** authorize entry into a home.
- If police have an arrest warrant, they are legally allowed to enter the home of the person on the warrant if they believe that person is inside.

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Scenarios

Police or ICE are at My Home

What to Do

- Ask officers to identify themselves and their purpose
- Ask to see their badge or identification through the window or peephole
- Ask them to slide the warrant under the door or hold it up to a window for review.
- If officers enter by force, do not resist.
- If an individual wishes to exercise their rights, they can state: “I do not consent to your entry or to your search of these premises. I am exercising my right to remain silent. I wish to speak with a lawyer as soon as possible.”

Not All Warrants Allow Law Enforcement in Your Home

Judicial or Court Warrant

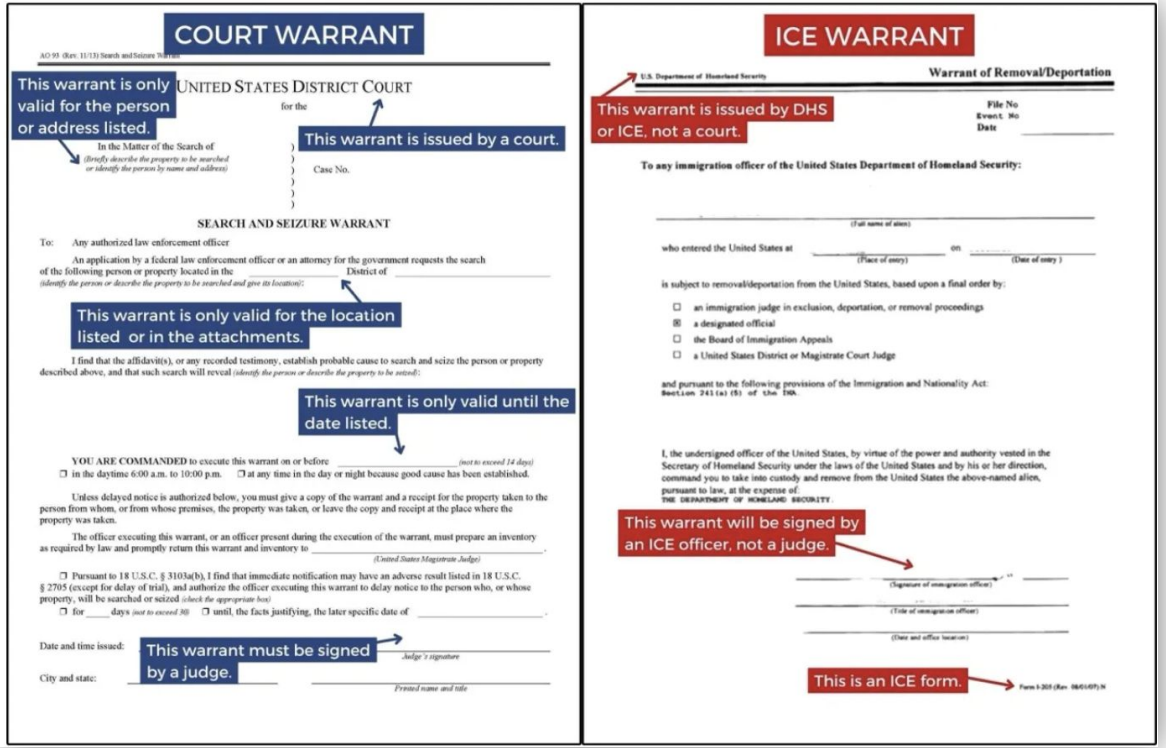
- Signed by a U.S. Magistrate or Judge.
- The name, date, and address are correct.
- Only the person named on the warrant should leave.

Administrative or ICE Warrant

- Usually signed by an ICE agent, not a judge. It could say something like, “Authorized Immigration Officer” or “U.S. Department of Homeland Security.”
- Might say something like, “Warrant for Arrest” or “Warrant for Removal” instead of a U.S. District Court’s name.
- You do not have to come out or let them in your home.

Police or ICE are at My Home

Scenarios



More resources about understanding the different types of resources are available at the [National Immigration Law Center here](#).

Taking Charge of Your Safety

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Taking Charge of Your Safety Checklist

Take Charge

Shelter and Housing

- Before going to a shelter or housing program, call anonymously to see if people with undocumented status can qualify. Also ask if the program collects data on immigration status, and if so, who they share that data with.

Health Care

- Look for local clinics that offer services regardless of immigration status, using community resources, like school nurses or local health organizations, for help finding care.
- Before going, ask what kind of personal information they collect and how that information is used.

Education

- Gather any documents you have (previous school records, ID, etc) and contact your school's homeless liaison (find here) or a trusted adult to ask about transportation options, tutoring or counseling, and free meal programs.

Employment

- Keep records of your work hours, pay, and schedules. Learn about your workplace rights so you can recognize unfair treatment.

Learn more and download the checklist in the Know Your Rights for Youth Experiencing Homelessness Toolkit.

Community Resources

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Know Your Rights Toolkit for Youth Experiencing Homelessness

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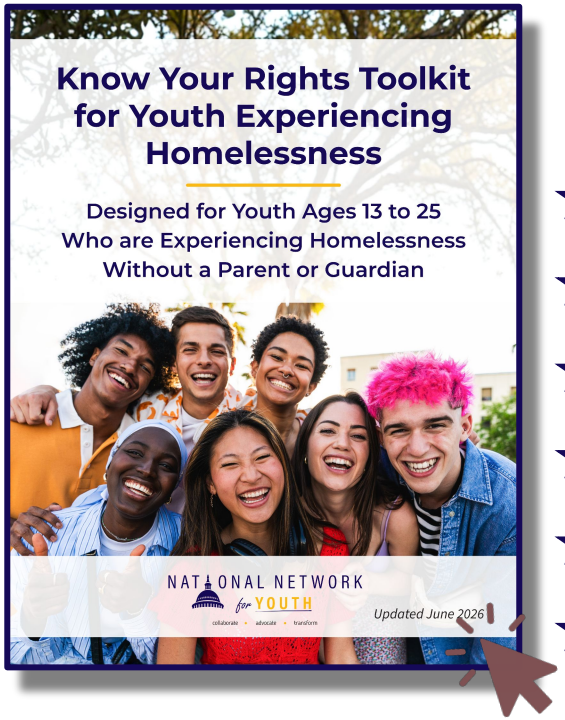

This 43-page toolkit was developed by and for youth ages 13-25 who are experiencing homelessness without a parent or guardian.

- ★ **Introduction to Your Legal Rights**
- ★ **Quick Free Help**
- ★ **Police Encounters**
- ★ **Shelter & Housing**
- ★ **Vital Documents**
- ★ **Food & Health Care**
- ★ **2SLGBTQIA+ Youth**
- ★ **Public Education**
- ★ **Youth with Disabilities**
- ★ **Antidiscrimination Laws**
- ★ **Immigrant Youth**

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Get Free Legal Help

Resources

- Legal Aid: Legal aid providers near you.
- Law Help: Variety of legal services near you.
- US Codes and Statutes by State: Laws in your state.
- Homeless Youth Legal Network Directory: Homelessness legal services map.
- National Immigration Legal Services Directory: State-specific resources near you.
- Homeless Youth Legal Network Immigration Resources: Resources available to noncitizen young people (including minors) and families.
- Vital Document Hotline: Call or text to talk with lawyers to help accessing your birth certificate, ID, Social Security card, or other identifying documents.

Free Hotlines and Emergency Contacts

- National Immigration Detention Hotline at **9233#**: Help if detained by ICE.
- National Runaway Safeline at **1-800-786-2929**: Help for homeless and runaway youth to find shelter, mental health services, food pantries, or just a someone to talk to.
- Vital Document Hotline at **1-888-870-3627**: Help for youth experiencing homelessness obtaining vital documents.
- National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1-800-799-7233**: Help leaving an unsafe relationship.

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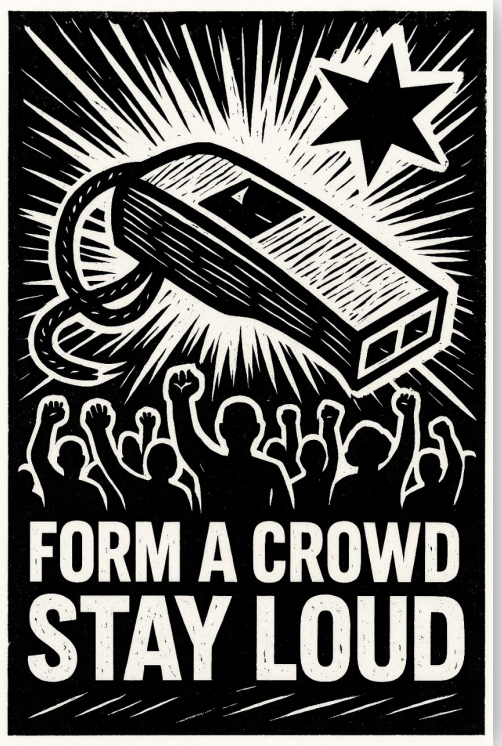
Resource Spotlight: Whistle Kits

Resources



Whistles are simple tool for fast alerts. They are loud, recognizable, and impossible to ignore.

Communities across the country are using a whistle protocol protect neighbors against ICE by alerting people when they are in the area. Different whistle sounds (short bursts or one long blast) could mean ICE are in the area or that ICE are detaining someone.

Different cities have different protocols, and many have free ways to access whistles and flyers.

A special shoutout to Pilsne Arts & Community House in Chicago for sharing their work. They have created and distributed free whistles, zines, and supplies across the country.

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Additional Resources

Resources



- Homeless Youth Legal Network Immigration Resources: Commission on Homelessness and Poverty
  - Lists of immigration legal resources available to noncitizen young people (including minors) and families.
- Resources to Protect Homeless Neighbors Against ICE: Housing Not Handcuffs.
- Preparation Checklist for Youth Homelessness Providers: National Network for Youth
- Resources to Support Immigrant and Migrant Students Experiencing Homelessness: SchoolHouse Education
- Solidarity Guide for Defending Immigrant Communities: National Immigration Law Center



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

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.

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Questions?

NN4Y Odds + Ends

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TAKE FLIGHT RAFFLE

NATIONAL NETWORK for YOUTH

Ending August 31!



Win two roundtrip tickets with Alaska Airlines worth up to $1,250!

Every ticket purchased isn't just a chance to win, but an investment in our collective fight to **prevent and end youth homelessness**.

Proceeds go directly towards **National Network for Youth's work protecting core programs** that support youth experiencing homelessness.

NN4Y

NEW Job Opening: Vital Doc Hotline

Vital Document Counsel & Pro Bono Coordinator

- Lead the day-to-day coordination and strategic growth of I AM HERE: Vital Document Legal Hotline for Youth including attorney scheduling, call routing, chat platform administration, case tracking, follow-up, and documentation.
- Recruit, onboard, orient, train, schedule, and support pro bono attorneys and legal partners
- Develop and maintain systems for complex-case identification, escalation, and referral, coordinating with legal partners to strengthen the national referral network.
- Maintain and regularly update NN4Y's state-by-state vital document database and related resources.
- Coordinate follow-up surveys, interviews, and other feedback mechanisms with young people and service providers.

Deadline to Apply: September 18, 2026

View Job Posting



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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!

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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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Together, we can end youth homelessness.

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nn4youth@nn4youth.org

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