



2021 - 2022 Impact Report

ABOUT US

MILLIONS OF YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS IN AMERICA.

National Network for Youth (NN4Y) is on a mission to transform systems so that no young person in America experiences homelessness. Every year, over four million young people experience homelessness in America. We seek to prevent and end youth homelessness through our three interconnected and intersectional programs: Youth and Young Adult Partnerships, Federal Policy Advocacy, and Community-based Solutions. Each program is vital to achieve systemic change by transforming systems, especially historically and structurally inequitable systems.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We believe in elevating the expertise of youth, starting within our own organization.

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The Night Ministry

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Youth in Need

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Family and Youth Services Bureau

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Free Your Wings, Inc.

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Sparky Harlan
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Volunteers of America Northern New England

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Alison Kear
Covenant House Alaska

Jaclyn Pampel
Baker McKenzie

Ben Saldana *
Greater Bridgeport Area Prevention Program

Deborah Shore
Sasha Bruce Youthwork

*Former NYAC Members

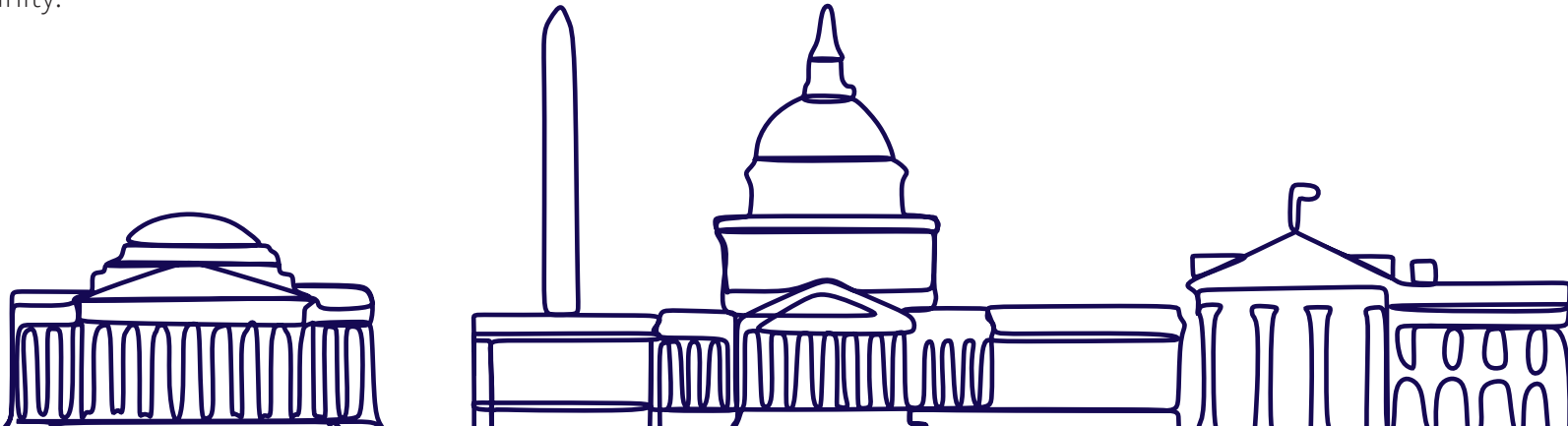
NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

With your support, the National Network for Youth has continued to make progress in ensuring that all youth and young adults at-risk or experiencing homelessness have what they need to survive, stabilize, and thrive. Our work and approach is defined by authentic partnerships with youth with lived expertise and community-based youth service providers.

We spent the last year expanding our work to better address prevention with a focus on youth who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Two-Spirit (LGBTQ2S+) and Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). We focused on strategies targeted at system-involved youth; preventing sexual abuse and exploitation of youth; identified policy and program opportunities at the community, state, and national levels; and increased the capacity of youth leaders, service providers, members, and communities to more broadly prevent and end youth experiences of homelessness.

To our partners, members, youth leaders, donors, and allies in this work: thank you. Because of the shared strength of our network, we continue to make significant progress towards our goal to end and prevent youth homelessness.

As we look towards 2023, know that we stand united with you in our commitment to continue to transform systems until every young person in America has a safe place to call home. We look forward to your continued partnership to create a more just and equitable future for all youth. A future where LGBTQ2S+ and BIPOC youth have equitable access to housing, health care, education, employment, and opportunity.



THE ISSUE

Homelessness among youth is complex with various underlying economic and social factors such as systematic racism and inequities, poverty, family conflict and rejection, sexual abuse, child welfare system involvement, and legal system involvement, extreme disconnection, a lack of affordable housing, and lack of living wage employment options for youth.

Research has found that homelessness among young people is a fluid experience. From couch surfing to sleeping on the streets or in a shelter, the vast majority of youth do not become homeless by choice. And like other forms of social and economic disadvantage, homelessness is not equally distributed among youth. Black youth face an 83% increased risk than their white peers, and hispanic youth face a 33% increased risk. LGBTQ2S+ youth were more than twice as likely to have experienced homelessness, and youth with experiences of foster care, juvenile detention, jail, or prison are at higher risk.

Only if we remove the conditions in our society that make young people vulnerable to homelessness, listen to those with lived expertise, and center racial equity, can our nation be a leader on the world stage in solving youth and young adult homelessness.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Our theory of change aims to create and implement long-term solutions to prevent and ultimately end youth homelessness and is propelled forward by our values.

- **Respect** – we value the expertise of young people with lived experiences of homelessness
- **Equity** – we are driven to advance equitable systems and opportunities for young people
- **Collaboration** – we partner with a diverse group of stakeholders
- **Solutions** – we promote practical policy and community solutions
- **Change** – we seek to change mindsets, policies, and practices to transform systems at every level



OUR PROGRAMS

YOUTH + YOUNG ADULT PARTNERSHIPS

We invest in young leaders through our National Youth Advisory Council to educate policymakers, service providers, and community officials throughout the country about youth and young adult homelessness, and advocate for solutions so that no young person in America has to experience even one day of homelessness. We train partners and service providers on best practices for building authentic youth and young adult partnerships to impact who is at the decision-making table to impact change.

FEDERAL POLICY ADVOCACY

With our network of young leaders and service providers, we work to expand public resources targeted to youth and implement systemic solutions via policy change that prevents and ends youth and young adult homelessness. We engage policymakers and enlist their support in the creation of a comprehensive, collaborative, system-based approach to addressing youth homelessness that is youth-centric and flexible to communities’ unique and diverse needs.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

We provide on-the-ground support in local communities to address the root causes of homelessness among young people by helping communities establish a Youth Action Board, identify gaps in services and support, and build strong collaborative relationships among youth-serving agencies, leading to improved youth outcomes and system functioning. We support these community partners in advocating for policy changes at local, state, and national levels that remove barriers to housing, education, employment, and services for youth.

OUR APPROACH



Build authentic partnerships with youth with lived experience of homelessness to change systems to prevent youth and young adult homelessness and ensure youth in crisis can access what they need.



Serve as a national resource to educate and engage the public and policymakers to advance policies to prevent and respond to youth and young adult homelessness.



Engage and train youth service organizations to equip communities with the capacity to transform systems, center youth, and decrease the number of youth experiencing any form of homelessness.



CENTERING YOUNG EXPERTS

NYAC LEADERS IN ACTION

- NN4Y expanded its national youth leadership initiative, the National Youth Advisory Council (NYAC), to invest directly in five additional leaders with lived experience of homelessness and childhood sexual abuse and/or exploitation.
- Developed a trauma-informed online toolkit and webinar to introduce youth-serving community-based organizations to Trauma Informed Care (TIC) to better serve youth with lived experience of homelessness.
- Co-developed a strategic initiative with youth leaders with lived experience to address the prevention of childhood sexual abuse through targeted program and policy recommendations including:
 - Increased funding for outreach/drop-in centers to better serve the basic and higher needs of youth experiencing homelessness;
 - Improved sexual abuse prevention and sexual education programs;
 - Investment in trauma informed services and counseling;
 - Accessible, affordable housing and support services for children, youth, and families in vulnerable situations; and
 - Increased access to affordable and safe early care.
- Held a two-day virtual retreat for NYAC members to learn how to be effective advocates by providing training in strategic storytelling, process, and effective advocacy strategies.
- Hired a fellow to evaluate and redesign our NYAC program with broad input from youth with lived expertise. These changes will be implemented starting in the Fall of 2022.
- Provided technical assistance and coaching to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and University of Maryland about how best to partner with youth with lived expertise to improve policies and programs.
- Served as experts at conferences, round tables, and meetings with federal policymakers to advance systemic policy change and increase the capacity of communities to partner with youth with lived expertise.



FEDERAL POLICY ADVOCACY

ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS

- Targeted advocacy to address challenges faced by service providers seeking to provide welcoming and affirming care to LGBTQ2S+ youth who were told to be in violation of the Fair Housing Act. Clarifying guidance is expected to be released that will resolve these issues.
- Led trainings & produced fact sheets to assist communities, service providers, and schools in accessing new federal “earmarks” or “Congressionally Directed Spending/Community Project Funding.” This led to increased access to \$1.4 trillion in FY 2022 funds, with more than \$15 million in new funding to youth homelessness providers across the country.
- Addressed federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) 20-bed limitation issue leading to Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) not cutting beds and providers able to retain federal funding. NN4Y has included a permanent fix to this issue via law through the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act of 2022.
- Increased Fiscal Year 2022 federal funding targeted to prevent and end youth homelessness by \$11 million.
- Expanded access to the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) for youth experiencing homelessness and foster youth without children by advocating for eligibility for the EITC starting at the age of 18. A checkbox was added to the 2021 1040 tax return per our request to the IRS to note this benefit.
- Supported the development of a new credit repair process for survivors of trafficking by working with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB)
- Advocated for the introduction of landmark legislation to expand and improve the existing Runaway and Homeless Youth Act program, the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act (S.4916/H.R.8498).

COMMUNITY-BASED SOLUTIONS

Through our Local Cross-System Collaboratives to Prevent and End Youth Homelessness, NN4Y supported the capacity-building efforts of communities to advocate for impactful policy and practice changes that address the needs of youth experiencing homelessness in communities across the US. In 2021-2022, we began to expand our support to a regional approach to support the cross-sector needs of urban and rural areas in our focus communities.

WHERE WE WORKED IN 2021 + 2022

- Philadelphia County, PA
- Montgomery County, PA
- Western PA (regional)
- Clark County, NV
- Chicago, IL
- Naperville, IL
- New Hampshire (regional)

NATIONAL IMPACT

- NN4Y helped Local Cross System Collaborative communities access the newly available federal “earmark” funding, with communities receiving \$1,646,000 in federal funds to advance their local work to prevent and end youth homelessness.
- NN4Y supported providers in New York, Virginia, Missouri, Indiana, and South Dakota in navigating significant Fair Housing law issues when working to prioritize and provide specialized services to LGBTQ+ youth at-risk or experiencing homelessness by leading federal advocacy efforts to address potential conflicts in Fair Housing laws.
- In 2021-2022 we invested in a total of 89 Youth Action Board Members. NN4Y’s community-based programming has the dual benefit of impacting young people serving on Youth Action Boards and staff from youth service agencies by providing specialized training and technical assistance to increase leadership capacity, build facilitation skills, and provide a deeper understanding of how youth-serving systems and policies work.

‘This project [NN4Y LCSC] significantly changed [community stakeholders] attitudes towards serving youth as part of their programs. Now partners are actively working towards a solution.’

-Ciarra Johnson (she/her)
CoC Employee for the Western PA CoC

PENNSLYVANIA IMPACT

- Hosted a 2-day legal forum in Western PA to improve state level service and policy provisions, in partnership with the American Bar Association, to train 45 youth service agencies from Westmoreland County, PA. As a result, stakeholders formed a legislative committee that meets monthly to work for ongoing state policy change.
- Trained 25 members of the Philly Coalition for Homeless Youth on strategic storytelling and provided support for a Take Action campaign to assist leaders in advocating to Philadelphia City Council for targeted programming and support services for youth experiencing homelessness, resulting in 459 messages sent to Philadelphia City Council members.

ILLINOIS IMPACT

- NN4Y provided training and technical assistance to 360 Youth Services in Naperville, IL to provide staff with the tools needed to elevate the role young people play within the organization, address racial inequity, and strengthen their Youth Action Board leading to the development of Overcoming Racial Bias in Prevention guidelines.
- Provided RHYTPA statewide advocacy training with The Night Ministry for 12 Illinois providers and cross-system stakeholders outlining the history of RHYA, proposed updates, and strategy to support its passage. This training prepped all providers to actively be involved in calling on Senator Durbin (IL) to push for RHYTPA to move through the Senate.

NEVADA IMPACT

- Supported collaboration between Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth, NN4Y’s lead Nevada LCSC agency, SchoolHouse connection, and youth leadership groups to advocate for and ultimately pass AB 197, a 2021 Nevada state law that strengthened unaccompanied minors’ right to access critical healthcare services.
- Provided training and technical assistance to Nevada and Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth staff to support the development of a shared vision and action plan for strengthening youth voice and partnerships in Clark County, NV.

NEW HAMPSHIRE IMPACT

- Conducted a pilot youth count with New Hampshire’s three Continuums of Care to create a descriptive count of community resources that support youth experiencing homelessness and the number of providers that were informed on their availability/ accessibility.
- NN4Y led training for service providers and youth advisory members in New Hampshire on how to use the youth count data in storytelling and meet with policymakers. The training included 12 young people and 20 providers, including people from the state, schools, and RHY providers. The goal of this training was to educate lawmakers on the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act and use Youth Count results to create a community plan.



COMMUNITY IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

300

Organizations that we supported to provide prevention and response services to youth and young adults at risk of and experiencing homelessness.

200+ Hrs

Amount of time spent working with federal policymakers to ensure youth and young adults experiencing homelessness are at the forefront of our nation's efforts to end all forms of homelessness in America.

89

Youth Advisory Board members engaged through our community-based programs across the United States

19

Youth with expertise of homelessness served as empowered as members of the NYAC to educate policymakers, service providers, and community providers throughout the country and advocate for solutions to end youth homelessness.

86

Calls received through our NEW Vital Docs Hotline, a national initiative to increase access to valid government identification and vital documents for youth experiencing homelessness.

5

Survivor leaders with lived expertise of homelessness and sexual abuse and/or exploitation were added to our NYAC to help co-develop policy and program recommendations to end and prevent sexual abuse and/or exploitation.

20

Federal bills advocated for to advance efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness.

2021 - 2022 SPOTLIGHTS

Thank you for joining us in this work. None of it happens without the generous support of our young leaders, donors, funders, members, volunteers, and community advocates.

National Network for Youth envisions a world where all young people have a safe place to call home with endless opportunities to reach their full potential.

