2025 Impact Report

National Network for Youth



NATIONAL NETWORK for YOUTH

About Us

The National Network for Youth (NN4Y) is on a mission to transform systems so that no young person in America experiences homelessness. Every year, millions of youth, young adults, and young parent families, disproportionately youth of color and LGBTQ+ youth, experience homelessness in communities across the country.

Family crisis, systemic barriers, poverty, and discrimination drive young people into homelessness. Systems routinely overlook youth, exclude them from national conversations about homelessness, and deny them services simply because they don't fit narrow definitions or political priorities.

As the foremost coalition on preventing and ending youth homelessness, our network is comprised of organizations and individuals on the frontlines of ending youth homelessness: youth with lived experience, youth-serving providers, advocates, and policymakers.

For over 50 years, we have advanced a national agenda rooted in the understanding that youth homelessness does not exist in a vacuum. Ending it requires us to strengthen family well-being, expand housing and workforce supports, increase prevention-centered approaches, and prioritize positive youth development through better policies and stronger partnerships.

In 2025, we expanded our focus to address the unique needs of *young parent families* and the growing crisis of *affordable housing*, publishing new policy briefs on each topic and hosting national webinars that equipped communities with actionable strategies.

To advance solutions, we mobilize our network to elevate lived expertise. Federal policymakers rely on us to provide these insights, and our collaborative model centers these authentic partnerships. Without NN4Y, community-based youth providers would lack critical support, youth would be excluded from shaping solutions, and policymakers would fail to realize the severity of challenges facing young people and would not know the solutions that are needed.

Youth homelessness is not a lesser form of homelessness. It is real, urgent, and solvable. We will continue to support local service providers, partner with young people, and advance targeted campaigns to achieve systemic change until every young person has a safe place to call home with endless possibilities to thrive.

NN4Y is Grateful for the Service of All of Our Board of Directors

Brennon Graham, Chair (Alexander Youth Network)
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Sparky Harlan (Retired CEO of Bill Wilson Center)
Richard Hooks Wayman (Volunteers of America New England)
Alison Kear (Covenant House Alaska)
Jaclyn Pampel (Baker McKenzie)
Deborah Shore (Sasha Bruce Youthwork)
**Alumni of NN4Y's National Youth Advisory Council*

Note from Our Executive Director

In 2025, the federal policy landscape shifted dramatically, threatening to unravel the hard-won progress made in recent years. The National Network for Youth had to shift our work to protect the progress and programs that young people and providers rely on to ensure young people and young parent families experiencing homelessness can survive, stabilize, and thrive.

Federal progress remained difficult. Political turbulence, threats to safety-net programs, and stalled legislation meant that major reforms did not advance. Instead, we worked fiercely to defend the core programs youth rely on every day — advocacy we will continue in 2026.

Even in this landscape, our commitment to build change from the ground up not only continues to work, but has proved essential. Through our Local Cross-System Collaboratives, communities strengthened coordination across housing, education, child welfare, and workforce systems. Youth Action Boards, providers, and agencies came together to break down silos and create solutions.

Young people remained central partners in our work. Our National Youth Advisory Council shaped federal policy recommendations, advocated to policymakers, and grew their leadership skills.

The impact of this work is clear in the small but powerful wins that lay the foundation for long-term transformation that we will build on in 2026.

- **Shifted policy advocacy efforts** to protect core programs, including defending the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act grant program and securing an application extension for service providers.
- **Started the I AM HERE: Vital Document Legal Hotline (1-888-870-DOCS)** with Baker McKenzie, helping young people secure IDs and records needed for housing, employment, and stability.
- **Broadened our work to focus on young parent family homelessness and affordable housing for young people** by publishing new policy briefs and trainings.
- **Launched the Youth Action Leadership Certificate**, equipping young leaders with the tools, skills, and networks to advocate and influence change.
- **Expanded our work to include Rapid Response support**, helping community-based youth providers navigate the rapidly shifting federal policies —in response to a 500% increase in demand.

Looking ahead, we remain steadfast in our commitment to advancing federal reforms rooted in the realities young people face while supporting the local providers and youth who drive innovation every day.

As the nation's foremost coalition dedicated to preventing and ending youth homelessness, we know that small victories accumulate into lasting change. Strengthened partnerships, more coordinated community responses, expanded youth leadership, and improved access to services form the backbone of a future where every young person has a safe place to call home and opportunity to reach their fullest potential.



In partnership,

Darla Bardine

Darla Bardine (she/her) | Executive Director

Theory of Change

A world where all young people have a safe place to call home with endless opportunities to reach their full potential.

IMPACTS

- Instances of homelessness are prevented for youth*
- Episodes of homelessness for youth are rare, brief, and one-time
- Every American community has an appropriate, youth-centric system response scaled to prevent and exit youth from homelessness

OUTCOMES

- Policy solutions are adopted and implemented
- The necessary amount of government funding is allocated and sustained to prevent and end youth homelessness
- A uniform appropriate definition of homelessness governs federal policy and community work
- A majority of communities implementing systems change has a decrease in the number of youth experiencing homelessness

OUTPUTS

- A collective policy agenda with broad support
- A well attended annual conference that increases community progress and builds our national community
- Youth and providers have the skill to advocate and lead systems transformation
- Increase in number of American communities who are implementing collective impact approaches to end youth homelessness

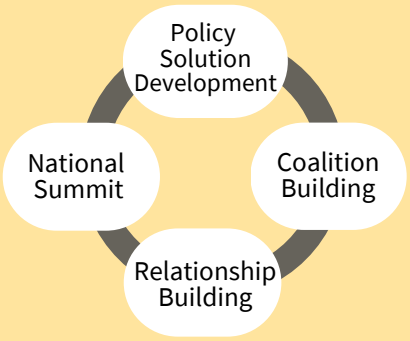
SO THAT

- An environment where young leaders can thrive, educate, and be changemakers
- Policy change is driven by youth with lived expertise, community-based service providers, and data
- Communities accelerate progress in ending youth homelessness

PROGRAMS



Youth Leadership & Partnership



Policy Advocacy



Supporting Communities

WITH

- Youth Who Have Experienced Homelessness
- Community Based Youth Service Providers
- Policymakers
- Youth-Serving Systems

JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, & INCLUSION

*youth includes minor-aged youth (13 to 17 years), young adults (18 to 25 years), and young parent families

Our Programs

2025 By the Numbers



250+ Hours Spent
engaging federal policymakers.

60+ Additional Legislative Meetings Held
to advance NN4Y's federal policy priorities.

$499 Million Secured
in federal funding for youth homelessness programs.

10 Federal Bills Advocated
to advance our national agenda to prevent and end youth homelessness.

2,686 Direct Actions Taken
through Federal Legislation Campaigns to educate policymakers about our advocacy agenda.

300+ Organizations Supported
to provide prevention and response services to young people experiencing homelessness.

6 Local Communities Supported
in developing and implementing local cross-system solutions to youth homelessness.



100+ Congressional Meetings Held
during our annual Hill Day.

80 Youth Advisory Board Members Supported
through our local collaboratives across the United States.



2 New Policy Briefs Published
on young parent family homelessness and affordable housing access—equipping providers, advocates, and policymakers with actionable strategies to support young parent families and address barriers to affordable housing.



10 Youth with Lived Experience Engaged as Leaders
in the National Youth Advisory Council.

2025 By the Numbers

386 Summit Attendees

at our 2025 National Summit on Youth Homelessness + Hill Day.












Federal Policy Updates

Young Parent Family Homelessness

Vital Document Hotline

Affordable Housing

Youth Compensation

Criminalization of Homelessness

Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act

7,000+ Webinar Attendees Joined

NN4Y national webinars addressing issues impacting children and youth homelessness.



1,000+ Providers Relied on NN4Y to Serve Youth Against 2025's Challenges

for our members only Executive Support webinars for real-time guidance to navigate fast-moving federal policy and funding changes. Topics included new Executive Orders, federal grant applications, emerging Anti-DEI, Anti-LGBTQ+, and anti-immigrant policies, and threats to youth data privacy and protection.

Youth Leadership & Partnership

10 National Youth Advisory Council (NYAC) leaders strengthened advocacy, public speaking, and policymaking skills through trainings focused on leadership development, effective advocacy strategies, and storytelling for change.

NYAC members co-developed 2025 federal policy priorities and **contributed to new NN4Y national publications** advancing access to affordable housing, prevention, vital documents access, decriminalization of homelessness, and support for young parent families.

10 Youth leaders spoke at a congressional briefing and met with their federal representatives to advocate for their policy agenda.

- Change HUD's definition of homelessness by pushing for passage of the Homeless Children and Youth Act (S.1667).
- Improve and expand access to prevention services for youth by reauthorizing the Runaway and Homeless Youth program through the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act of 2025 (S.2012/H.R.3856).
- Fix the Low Income Housing Tax Credit student rule issue through pushing to pass the Housing for Homeless Students Act.
- Expand federal investment in preventing and responding to youth, young adult, and young parent family homelessness.

8 youth leaders attended our leadership retreat in New York City and received training on advocacy and strategic storytelling. All participants reported increased knowledge of strategic storytelling to advocate for policy change.













Policy Advocacy

Unlocked nearly $55 million in critical Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) funding by successfully advocating for the release of the long-delayed RHYA grant applications through targeted congressional outreach and media engagement. When the federal timeline was out of compliance, NN4Y secured an **additional five days** for applicants to complete submissions—directly supporting service providers' ability to compete.

Secured bipartisan, bicameral reintroduction of the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act of 2025 (S.2012/H.R.3856)—a major achievement in a polarized climate. NN4Y built a coalition of 300+ national, state, and local endorsers, significantly increasing the bill's viability for movement.

Drove bipartisan introduction of the Homeless Children and Youth Act (S.1667) by engaging two key committee Senators and organizing a Maryland site visit for Senate staff. The bill now has the backing of 50+ national organizations and hundreds of state and local partners, strengthening momentum for modernizing federal definitions of homelessness.

Advanced Fiscal Year 2026 appropriations priorities through coordinated Hill meetings and a DC site visit with House and Senate appropriations staff to Sasha Bruce Youthworks youth shelter leading to:

- The Senate appropriations bill reflected 100% of NN4Y's requests, including restoring $22 million in funding for RHYA's Street Outreach Program.
- The House Dear Colleague Letter secured 121 bipartisan signers, and the Senate Letter secured 33 bipartisan signers—these letters that are written and signed by members of congress direct to the appropriations committees in the House and Senate requesting robust funding for two vital federal programs, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and Education for Homeless Children and Youth.

Led more than 60 legislative meetings (outside of Hill Day), with over 60% including a youth leader or service provider partner, to ensure that the priorities of youth and frontline programs directly shaped policy and funding decisions.

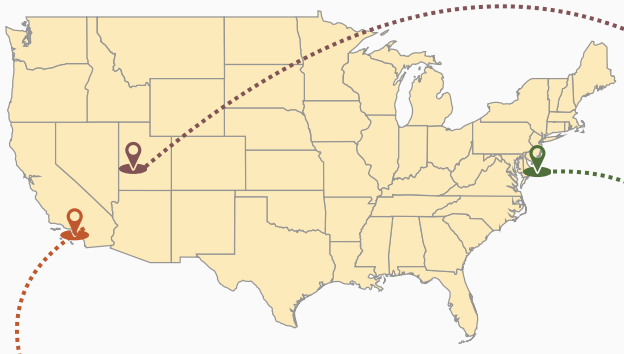


Supporting Communities

NN4Y works in focus communities across the country to support implementation of proven strategies that improve coordination and collaboration among programs to reduce youth homelessness. In these communities, NN4Y leads system mapping efforts to identify needs, brings together federal grantees and additional partners to facilitate collaboration and fill gaps to better serve youth at-risk or experiencing homelessness, and center youth with lived expertise as system transformation leaders.

- **Expanded Local Cross-System Collaboratives on Youth Homelessness to Missouri, Utah, and New Jersey**—bringing the total to nine collaboratives across three regions to accelerate their progress in reducing youth homelessness.
- **Piloted, launched, and scaled the Youth Action Leadership Certificate** to equip young leaders with the skills to be leaders in their communities, advocate, and influence change.
- **Strengthened a national peer learning network** through "Let's GAB About Your YAB" and regional coaching, where youth and adult allies co-design solutions, share tools, and mentor emerging Youth Action Boards on fundraising, sustainability planning, and day-to-day collaborative operations.
- **Advanced equitable youth compensation** by helping develop the Youth Compensation Legal Guide and hosting a national webinar that equipped youth and providers to navigate labor law, contracting, taxes, and public benefits while maintaining safe, compliant, youth-centered engagement.

A Snapshot of Outcomes



Utah: Equipped the Utah Youth Action Board with leadership and storytelling skills to drive a statewide campaign changing the age youth can legally consent to shelter.

Delaware: Prepared Delaware's youth leaders to inform statewide networks, leading to formal youth roles in the Continuum of Care and the new Delaware Interagency Collaborative to End Homelessness—with commitments from the CoC and Governor's Office to sustain this participation and funding.

Orange County, California: Supported the creation of the county's first Director of Youth Homelessness by providing the coaching, planning, and systems-alignment needed to launch a coordinated countywide youth homelessness strategy.

Building Change from the Ground Up—And Forward

In 2025, NN4Y doubled down on what works: empowering local communities, elevating youth leadership, and defending the small but mighty programs that keep young people safe. As federal progress stalled and critical funding faced growing threats, we focused on safeguarding programs helping young people while still working to advance system change.

Through our Local Cross-System Collaboratives, we helped communities break down silos and expand access to housing and services. At the national level, our service provider network and National Youth Advisory Council guided our advocacy to protect essential youth programs that safeguard the stability of young people and young parent families.

Looking Ahead to 2026

As we step into 2026, NN4Y is poised to expand this momentum and meet emerging challenges with bold, actionable solutions. In the year ahead, we will:

- **Continue defending federal youth homelessness programs** that remain chronically underfunded but essential to the safety of youth and young families.
- **Advance solutions for young parent families,** a population that hasn't received strategic focus despite being one of the fastest-growing groups experiencing homelessness, building on NN4Y's newly published policy brief and national webinar.
- **Elevate youth access to affordable housing as a national priority**, expanding on NN4Y's new policy brief and federal recommendations to address structural barriers that keep young people—and young families—locked out of stable housing.
- **Deepen our investment in youth leadership**, ensuring young people have the skills, support, and opportunities to co-design policy and program solutions.
- **Push forward our national plan to prevent and end youth homelessness**, equipping communities and policymakers with a clear, actionable roadmap.
- **Expand support for frontline service providers**, strengthening their capacity to meet rising needs in a challenging policy environment.

This next chapter of our work requires stability, partnership, and the ability to plan for the long term. We cannot do it alone. It will take partnerships across the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors to meet the growing need to ensure that every young person has a safe place to call home.

Together, we can make 2026 a year of transformative progress—driven by young people, powered by communities, and strengthened by partners like you.

Thank You to Our Partners

Our work is only possible because of you. Your partnership fuels youth leadership, strengthens communities, and drives forward a future where every young person—and every young family—has a safe, stable place to call home. Together, we are transforming small wins into lasting, systemic change.

Our Funders

We are deeply grateful to the funders whose commitment makes this work possible. Their investment powers our progress and sustains the work to prevent and end youth homelessness.

Below are the funders who made this year's impact possible.

Baker McKenzie.

THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

GRANTMAKERS FOR GIRLS OF COLOR

CAMPION FOUNDATION

Fund for Housing and Opportunity

HERBLOCK The Herb Block Foundation

RF Raikes Foundation

LANCASTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Our Members

Ending youth homelessness takes all of us. We are profoundly thankful to our members, the youth advocates, service providers, and change-makers whose dedication drives this work.

National Network for Youth membership is more than just resources. We provide a trusted space for our network to learn, collaborate, and advocate for a future where all youth, young adults, and young parent families have a safe and stable place to call home.

In 2025, we expanded our support to members to meet their growing needs.

- Hosting a **new support webinar series** on urgent issues, including sudden federal funding and directives affecting youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ+ and immigrant youth.
- Launching ***On the Frontlines***, a monthly members only newsletter with technical policy updates.
- Establishing a **Peer-to-Peer Support** system connecting members with experienced peers for guidance in areas like grants management, leadership, and organizational restructuring.
- Introducing a **Members Only Portal** to make it easier than ever for members to access NN4Y resources and services.

Our members' leadership and commitment make our work possible. It is an honor to support and stand with them in the fight to prevent and end youth homelessness.