



## FACT SHEET

### **RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH + TRAFFICKING PREVENTION ACT OF 2023**

For over 45 years, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) has provided the foundation for American communities' responses to youth and young adult homelessness. RHYA hasn't been comprehensively updated in over a decade. The Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act (RHYTPA) would enact critical updates to RHYA to ensure every young person in the United States has a safe place to call home, along with access to the resources they need to thrive.

There are currently five vital programs serving youth and young adults under the RHYA.

- **Street outreach**- provides education, treatment, counseling, and referrals to vital services to prevent sexual abuse and human trafficking and intervene early in a homelessness experience
- **Basic Center (BCP)**- temporary shelter, counseling, therapeutic family reunification services, supportive services, and aftercare services
- **Transitional Living (TLP)**- longer-term housing with supportive services, including Maternity Group Homes
- **National Communications System**- 24/7 national phone, text, and online communications systems, which connects youth and families in crisis with prevention services and reunifies
- **National technical Assistance center**- Provides training and technical assistance to all RHYA

RHYTPA would maintain the key components of this program and make the following critical updates:

- Add a new Prevention Services Program to more intensively focus on providing prevention services to young people at risk of experiencing any form of homelessness
- Increase authorized appropriations levels to \$319.5 million annually
- Extend the allowable length of stays in Basic Center Programs from 21 to 30 days (or longer as state law allows)
- Extend services provided by Transitional Living Programs to survivors of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, and trafficking
- Increase eligible age for services up to 25 years in Transitional Living Programs
- Clarify that providers can serve more than 20 youth per program and have more than 20 beds in a building
- Assist youth in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Require comprehensive nondiscriminatory practices across all RHYA funded programs
- Require staff training on human trafficking, trauma, sexual abuse, and assault by programs and services
- Outreach to survivors of sexual abuse, exploitation, or trafficking persons to connect them to services

## **RHYTPA WOULD PREVENT HUMAN TRAFFICKING + SERVE SURVIVORS**

Annually, 4.2 million young people experience homelessness in America. Youth experiencing homelessness are trafficked at high rates – unsheltered youth are more likely to fall victim to sex trafficking. According to a 2016 report from the Family & Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), 24% of youth living on the streets exchanged sex for money, and 27.5% did so for a place to stay. Covenant House International found that nearly one-in-five youth had been a victim of human trafficking – inclusive of sex and labor trafficking or both.

Youth victims of abuse are more likely to exchange sex for the necessities they lack (e.g., shelter or food) – FYSB’s 2016 report noted that 23.5% of respondents had been abused before leaving home. A Las Vegas youth shelter found that 71% of minor sex trafficking survivors had been sexually abused.

Providing housing, basic life needs, and services prevents our young people from being exploited and/or trafficked for sex and/or labor. RHYA providers have been at the forefront of this work in American communities for over four decades. RHYTPA will strengthen their ability to prevent human trafficking and serve survivors.

## **SERVING YOUNG PEOPLE PREVENTS CHRONIC ADULT HOMELESSNESS**

Research has found that homelessness among young people is a fluid experience. Many young people experience different types of homelessness, from couch-surfing to sleeping on the streets or in a shelter. American youth experiencing homelessness are a shifting population of young people who use temporary situations to get by when they cannot stay in a home of their own. Investing in a young person’s life will enable them to avoid chronic homelessness, intergenerational cycles of poverty, and pervasive instances of trauma.

Additional research from cities has shown that a high proportion of their chronically homeless adult population first experienced homelessness as a young person under 25. The City of Seattle found 43% of their unsheltered homeless population first experienced homelessness as a minor (18%) or as a young adult between 18 and 24 (25%). The new Prevention Services Program (PSP) funding created under this bill would be available to those who have successfully secured funding for one of the other project grants (BCP, TLP, or MGH).

## **COSPONSOR THE RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH AND TRAFFICKING PREVENTION ACT OF 2023**

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Learn more: [nn4youth.org/take-action-center/rhytpa-take-action](https://nn4youth.org/take-action-center/rhytpa-take-action)

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