

## Two Critical Policy Issues Need Fixed to Prevent and End Youth and Young Adult Homelessness

Every year, 4.2 million youth and young adults (YYA) experience homelessness on their own.<sup>1</sup> Most YYA experiencing homelessness are not in shelters or on the streets due to fear of policing and the child welfare system, as well as ineligibility for mainstream housing resources. These hidden homeless situations leave youth disconnected from networks of support and put youth's health at risk. YYA need access to affordable housing, education, and mainstream homelessness housing and service options.

### Increase Access to Affordable Housing for Youth

Too often, youth and young adults who have experienced homelessness must choose between stable housing and full-time education. Due to a limitation in the eligibility criteria for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) affordable housing, individuals who are experiencing or have experienced homelessness who would otherwise qualify to live in LIHTC units are not eligible if they attend school full-time. This issue is known as the "student rule" issue.

**Fixing the "student rule" is critical to preventing and ending youth homelessness and human trafficking, because it would ensure** that YYA who have experienced homelessness can access affordable housing while simultaneously pursuing education. Access to safe and stable housing prevents exploitation, trafficking, and chronic homelessness.

**Congress must fix this issue by introducing and passing such as the *Housing for Homeless Students Act* or *Affordable Housing and Credit Improvement Act*.**

Learn more: <https://n4youth.org/affordable-housing-credit-improvement-act>

### Pass The Homeless Children and Youth Act to Align Federal Definitions of Homelessness

Youth experiencing homelessness stay wherever they can, frequently moving between living situations. Research has found that homelessness among young people is a fluid experience – they may be sleeping in a car one night, at a shelter the next, and on an acquaintance's floor the following week. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) current prioritized definition of chronic adult homelessness reflects the ways adults – not youth – experience homelessness. **The same young person may be considered "homeless" and eligible to access services under other definitions and set of programs, but not HUD.**

Congress should reintroduce and pass the Homeless Children and Youth Act to break generational cycles of homelessness, restore local decision-making, and meet the unique developmental needs of YYA.

Learn more: <https://nn4youth.org/policy/federal-policy-on-youth-homelessness/hcya>