

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.¹ Most YYA experiencing homelessness are not in shelters or on the streets due to fear of policing and the child welfare system, along with being ineligible for mainstream housing resources. These hidden homeless scenarios isolate youth from networks of support and put their health at risk. To address this, YYA need access to affordable housing, education, and mainstream homelessness housing and service options.

Pass the Housing for Homeless Students Act (H.R.7278) to Increase Access to Affordable Housing for Young Adults

Too often, YYA who have experienced homelessness must choose between stable housing or obtaining a full-time education. Due to a limitation in the eligibility criteria for the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) affordable housing, individuals experiencing or have experienced homelessness who would otherwise qualify to live in LIHTC units are not eligible if they attend school full-time. This 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. No one should have to choose between housing and education. Access to safe and stable housing prevents exploitation, trafficking, and chronic homelessness.

Ask: U.S. Representatives should cosponsor the H.R.7278. U.S. Senators should reintroduce a bipartisan Housing for Homeless Students Act. U.S. Congress should pass the Housing for Homeless Students Act, so youth don’t have to choose between an education and accessing affordable housing.

Learn more: <https://nn4youth.org/housing-for-homeless-students-act>

Pass the Homeless Children and Youth Act (H.R.5221) 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. **Whereas a young person may meet the criteria for homelessness under certain federal definitions and programs, but not qualify for HUD services.**

Ask: U.S. Representatives should cosponsor the Homeless Children and Youth Act (H.R.5221). U.S. Senators should reintroduce a bipartisan Homeless Children and Youth Act. U.S. Congress should pass the Homeless Children and Youth Act to align conflicting federal definitions and help youth experiencing homelessness.

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