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Section-by-Section:

Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act of 2025

([S.2012/H.R.3856](#))

The Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act (RHYTPA) reauthorizes and updates the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) program. This bipartisan, bicameral legislation is critical to ensuring that youth, young adults, and young parent families have access to housing with supportive services that are necessary to exit homelessness and human trafficking.

Findings

- Youth who experience homelessness disproportionately experience trauma, substance use disorders, and serious health, behavioral, social, and emotional challenges because they lack sufficient resources.
- Young people experiencing homelessness are in urgent need of temporary shelter and services that are socially, developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate.
- Research has shown that youth typically experience different types of homelessness, including couch surfing, staying in emergency shelters, and sleeping on the streets.
- Research has shown that historically marginalized and underserved communities are the most likely to experience unaccompanied homelessness, including youth of color; LGBTQIA+ youth; youth who do not complete high school or achieve an equivalency; systems-involved youth; and pregnant and parenting youth.
- Services provided to these young people should promote positive youth development to ensure a sense of safety, belonging, self-worth, independence, close interpersonal relationships, and more.
- Because youth homelessness is an interstate issue, it is the federal government's responsibility to develop a national reporting system on youth homelessness and to develop a cross-system, collaborative standard of care for youth experiencing homelessness.
- To successfully transition to adulthood, youth experiencing homelessness need a safe, stable place to live, connections to caring adults, and opportunities for upward mobility.
- Coordination and collaboration at the federal level is needed to develop a long-term strategy for serving youth experiencing homelessness.
- Youth experiencing homelessness are at a high risk of developing substance use disorders and of experiencing sexual exploitation and/or trafficking.
- Programs that serve youth experiencing homelessness are an integral service within every community, since the prevalence of youth homelessness is similar in rural and urban communities.

- Programs that serve youth experiencing homelessness, including those funded by RHYA, are experts at serving adolescents, integral community partners of child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and work to reunify youth with their families when safe and appropriate.
- The Secretary of Health and Human Services will be referred to as the “Secretary.”

Basic Center Program

Basic Center Programs (BCP) provide short-term crisis housing, food, clothing, and counseling services for minors. They reunite youth with their families when safe and appropriate, or transition youth to stable housing. In FY 2022, BCPs served over 25,000 youth, with 87 percent exiting to an immediate living situation that was both safe and appropriate.

- The Secretary shall award five-year grants to public and private nonprofit organizations to provide trauma-informed shelter and services for youth experiencing homelessness and, if appropriate, services for the youth’s family and other individuals identified by the youth as family.
- The Secretary shall award the grant not later than 90 days before the start date of the grant.
- The Secretary shall establish an appeals process for grantees.
- Services shall be provided to youth experiencing homelessness, youth who have run away, or youth who are at risk of being separated from their family.
- Services shall include safe and appropriate shelter for up to 30 days, or longer if state law allows; individual, family, or group counseling services that are socially, developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate; and suicide prevention services.
- Services may include street-based services; home-based services for youth at risk of being separated from their families; prevention services; substance use disorder education and prevention services; STI testing, if requested by the youth; trauma-informed services, including for youth who have experienced trafficking; and an assessment of family engagement, reunification, interventions, or other services for the family and other individuals identified by the youth as family.
- If the provider is part of a mixed project, they may house up to 20 youth per project, or more if state or local law or regulation allows.
- Providers must develop a plan to outreach youth in need, including those who are members of underserved populations. This plan may include the use of online resources.
- Demographic information collected by providers must include the number of youth who experienced trafficking, are pregnant or parenting, have been systems-involved, and more.
- Providers must develop a preparedness plan for natural disasters, inclement weather, and public health emergencies.
- Services must be culturally and linguistically appropriate, to the extent practicable.
- Providers must inform youth of their status as independent students, provide verification of this status for the FAFSA, and assist youth in completing the FAFSA, if they request it.

Transitional Living Program

Transitional Living Programs (TLP) provide long-term housing for youth ages 16 to 22, coupled with supportive services to promote independence, including employment, education, life skills, and healthcare. **Maternity Group Homes (MGH)** serve pregnant and parenting youth experiencing homelessness.

- The Secretary shall award five-year grants to public and private nonprofit organizations, shall award the grant not later than 90 days before the start date of the grant, and shall establish an appeals process for grantees.
- Providers must offer counseling to youth experiencing homelessness and youth who have run away, and can include counseling for parents, legal guardians, or individuals identified by the youth as family. Providers must offer aftercare services for youth who have left their care.
- If the provider is part of a mixed project, they may house up to 20 youth per project, or more if state or local law or regulation allows.
- Services must be culturally and linguistically appropriate, to the extent practicable.
- Outreach plans to engage youth in need may include the use of online resources and social media.
- Demographic information collected by the provider must include the prevalence of trafficking among youth served by the program.
- Services must be culturally and linguistically appropriate, to the extent practicable.
- Providers must inform youth of their status as independent students, provide verification of this status for the FAFSA, and assist youth in completing the FAFSA, if they request it.
- Providers may serve youth 15 to 26 years of age, but must prioritize service to youth less than 22 years of age.

National Communications System

*This section includes the **National Communications System (NCS)**, also known as the National Runaway Safeline, which is a 24/7 phone, text, and online crisis intervention hotline for youth and families. Facilitates over 125,000 contacts annually, providing lifesaving assistance. It also includes the **Runaway and Homeless Youth Training, Technical Assistance, and Capacity Building Center (RHYTTAC)**, which is the training and technical assistance (TTA) provider for all runaway and homeless youth grantees.*

- TTA grants will be five-year grants, can include online trainings, and must help providers implement trauma-informed services
- Grants for research, evaluation, demonstration, and service projects will be prioritized for projects related to staff training in identifying and responding to abuse, sexual assault, and trafficking; staff training in developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate services; staff training in FAFSA completion; examining the intersectionality of youth experiencing homelessness, including their experiences of trafficking, child welfare and/or juvenile justice; and more.
- Demonstration project grants for rural services may be up to \$200,000.
- HHS shall publish a report on the prevalence of youth homelessness, that will also include demographic information, incidences of trafficking and/or sexual exploitation, involvement in other systems, number of youth who are pregnant and/or parenting, and more.

Sexual Abuse Prevention Program

Street Outreach Program (SOP): *Connects outreach workers with young people through street outreach and drop-in centers to refer young people to housing and essential services that prevent and end sexual abuse and/or trafficking. This program provides an essential pathway for young people to get off the streets. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, 71 percent of youth contacted by SOPs engaged in a deliberate case plan or client assessment, a 3 percent increase over the previous year.*

- The Secretary shall award five-year grants to public and private nonprofit organizations, shall award the grant not later than 90 days before the start date of the grant, and shall establish an appeals process for grantees.
- Grantees must show that they have expertise in serving runaway, homeless, and street youth, and can provide developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate services.

Prevention Services Program

*Creates a new **Prevention Services Program (PSP)** to prevent youth from running away and/or experiencing homelessness or trafficking.*

- The Secretary can award five-year PSP grants to entities that have been awarded a BCP, TLP, or MGH grant to provide preventative services.
- Funding is up to \$75,000 per year, in addition to the funding received for the base grant.
- Priority will be given to organizations with experience in providing services to runaway and homeless youth, street youth, and youth at risk of separation from their family.
- Services must be developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate.

General Provisions

Administration and enforcement

- The Secretary of HHS can waive, for no more than three years, RHYA grantee program requirements in extraordinary circumstances, such as natural disasters, public health emergencies, or financial crises.

Nondiscrimination

- No young person can be turned away from receiving services based on actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity (as defined in section 249(c) of title 18, United States Code), sexual orientation, or disability.
- Exceptions can be made if sex-specific programming is necessary to the essential operations of a program.

Definitions

The following definitions were added or substantially modified.

- **Culturally and linguistically appropriate:** Refers to services as listed in the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care issued in 2013 by the Office of Minority Health and Human Services.
- **Homeless youth:** For TLP programs, individuals aged 15 to 26.
- **Mixed projects:** A building, structure, or campus that may house multiple programs serving youth under the age of 26.
- **Prevention services:** Services to prevent youth from becoming runaway, homeless, or street youth, including counseling, connection to services, education, and employment, health and substance use treatment, and more.
- **Trafficking:** Refers to “severe forms of trafficking in persons” and “sex trafficking” in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).
- **Trauma-informed:** Refers to the meaning given the term in section 103 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (34 U.S.C. 11103).

- **Youth at risk of separation from the family:** Now includes a youth who is involved in the child welfare system, juvenile justice system, or criminal justice system, but is not being housed by that system.

Authorization of appropriations

- \$200 million for BCP grants, TLP and MGH grants, NCS, and Coordinating, Training, Research, and Other Activities. Of this, \$2 million shall be used for the periodic estimate of youth homelessness. Current authorization is \$127,421,000.
- \$50 million for SOP grants. Current authorization is \$25 million.
- \$67.5 million for Prevention Services. This will replace the current Prevention Demonstration Program (RHY-PDP).

Approval of applications

Grant award amounts will be based on that fiscal year's appropriations level.

- If RHYA is appropriated at greater than \$200 million, grant award amounts will be not less than \$225,000 and not more than \$275,000.
- If RHYA is appropriated at less than \$200 million, grant award amounts will be not less than \$200,000 and not more than \$250,000.