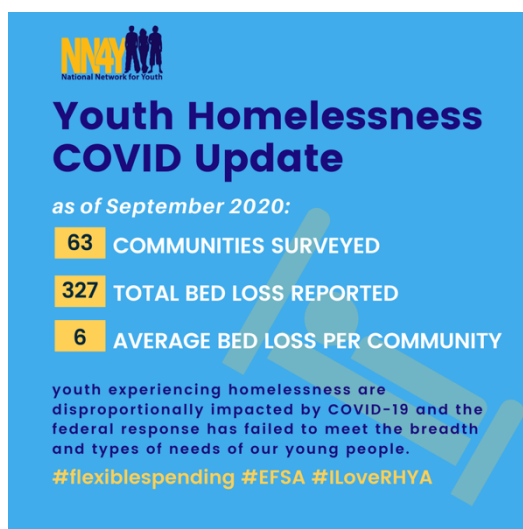




## There Are Less Beds for Youth and Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness as a Result of COVID

The National Network for Youth administered a survey to learn more about the impact COVID has had on youth young adults (YYA) experiencing homelessness, the needs of community-based youth homelessness service providers, and how programs and services have had to change in order to comply with CDC guidelines. The two major findings of the survey are:

- Many communities have less beds for youth experiencing homelessness due to decreasing the number of beds in order to comply with distance and other COVID requirements from the CDC. Specifically, **we recorded a loss of 327 beds across only 63 communities. Additional resources are urgently needed so that communities are able to get these beds back.**
- **Community based providers urgently need flexible funding from the federal government** and added flexibility in age and length of stay program requirements so they can most effectively respond and adapt to the needs of youth.



### COVID AND YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Youth and young adults (YYA) experiencing homelessness are at high-risk of infectious diseases<sup>1</sup>, and their mobility places them at a higher risk for both contracting and spreading COVID. This population is also not able to self-isolate or self-quarantine in their tenuous, transient, crowded, and unstable situations. Due to increasing unemployment and the difficulty youth experiencing homelessness face in accessing housing and public or tax benefits, significant funding and targeted policy changes are needed.

### SURVEY FINDINGS

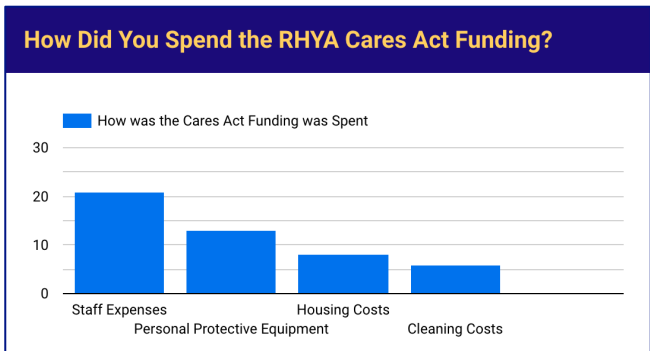
63 communities completed NN4Y's survey over a two-week period. The findings are as follows:

- Of the 63 communities who responded to the survey, a minimum total bed loss was 327, which is an average loss of 5 -6 beds per community. In some communities, they recorded a 50% reduction of beds for youth and others indicated a 25% reduction.

<sup>1</sup> Rice, E., Stein, J. A., & Milburn, N. (2008). Countervailing social network influences on problem behaviors among homeless youth. *Journal of Adolescence*, 31(5), 625-639. Talks about HIV; Beech, B.M., Myers, L., & Beech, D.J. (2002). Hepatitis B and C infections among homeless adolescents. *Family & Community Health*, 25(2), 28-36. Kulik, D.M., Gaetz, S., Crowe, C., & Ford-Jones, E. (2011). Homeless youth's overwhelming health burden: A review of the literature. *Pediatrics & child health*, 16(6), e43-e47.

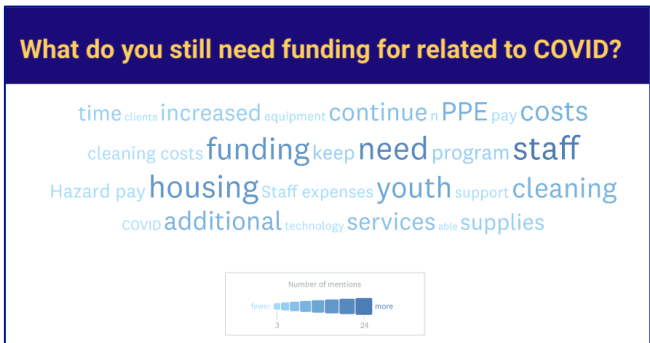
- All Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) grantees that responded are on track to have spent all of their CARES Act RHYA funding by December 2020.

- RHYA CARES Act funding was primarily spent on staff expenses, personal protective equipment, housing costs and cleaning costs. The survey had an error as it only allowed respondents to select one option and we received 10 comments from providers who said they spent RHYA CARES Act funding in all four buckets. Respondents also indicated spending the money on client therapy, technology, education supports, and acrylic barriers.



- The following needs were identified by RHYA service providers:
  - Housing costs. Youth need more of their rent covered and are not able to move out as quickly as prior to the pandemic.

- General operating/ administration; additional winter shelter beds, hotel stays, or housing funds.
- Unrestricted funding to pay for vital operations and program administration. We had to cancel all of our fundraising events this year, which usually cover these vital expenses.

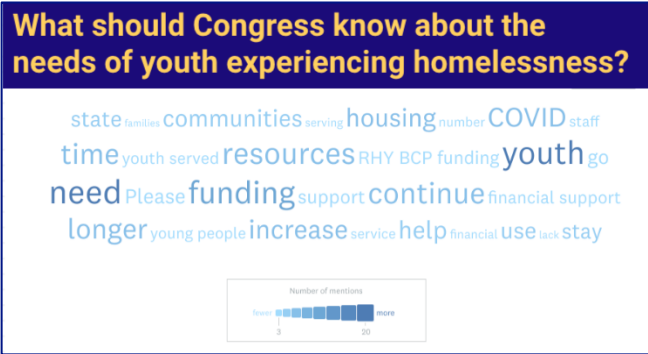


- Flexibility in dollars for staffing (coverage is very challenging), supplies (difficult to predict LT need of PPP), and resources for youth (housing, supplies, education). These three important components are so fluid that we need flexibility to best accommodate changing day to day reality of service delivery.
- We continue to get a significant number of youth - beyond our traditional daily numbers - who need support. Many of these youth have lost their low paying jobs and still need assistance or have lost housing that they had been provided. Our shelter is at 100% capacity daily.
- Housing for youth and salary for surge staff. Rent assistance for families for homeless prevention.
- Transportation: our parenting youth do not feel safe getting on public transportation, and Uber/Lyft are considering shutting down to help stop the spread of COVID-19.
- Additional TLP beds, additional staff, and rental assistance for youth.

**QUOTES FROM COMMUNITY-BASED YOUTH PROVIDERS**

“We have found that lack of flexibility with the RHY/BCP funding limited to 21 days and under the age of 18 has created difficulty in continuing to provide the much-needed ongoing housing stability for these youth. Especially due to the lack of other resources serving youth in Western PA. The average length of stay to safely exit one of our youth served between the ages of 15-21 years is 7 months. With only being able to use the RHY/BCP funding for the first 21 days it leaves the program in a challenging financial state to have other funding sources in place. These youth are staying with the same Host for the average length of 7 months, building life skills, developing relationships in the communities where they want to be instead of moving after 21 days to other resources that oftentimes are not available in the community. This program empowers youth choice and voice. We have seen successes with the current ability to provide more time in the same housing. With RHY/BCP funding flexibility to increase length of time with a Host would increase the number of youth served and the quality of service stability.”

“Youth and Young Adults have specific needs and are often missed in community efforts to support people. The system has cracks. The cracks greatly impact youth no longer living with their parents and young adults who don't have an understanding about the complexity of the systems and how they operate. At the very least, youth providers, and the governments and institutions that fund them, need to recognize the complexity of serving young people and that it takes more time and effort to work with young people than adults.”



“And increase in funds should be made as flexible as possible and over a longer period of time as COVID is not going away.”

“Youth need rent assistance and intensive case management for at least 12 months.”

“We need more money. Our average daily census, since November, has grown from 162 to 222. We expect that number to continue to climb -- 250 by this November. We also need more funds to house and assist severely mental ill youth.”

“Please let them know all the hoops these youth have to jump through in order for the government to be willing to help them. Being homeless, they do not have any form of identification and can't receive an ID until they have a SS card and birth Certificate which they also do not have and cannot obtain the documents themselves because they are not of legal age. What are they supposed to do? Also, it takes months, longer now because of COVID, just to receive one of those identifications from the government, this needs to be addressed!”

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