YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS LACK SHELTER, ACCESS TO BASIC NEEDS & THE ABILITY TO SHELTER-IN-PLACE

- YYA experiencing homelessness are not able to self-isolate or self-quarantine in their tenuous, transient, crowded, and unstable situations. The stress of staying in confined spaces and the stigma associated with homelessness pose additional mental health problems and added trauma.
- Without access to Wi-Fi, electronic devices or an ability to charge devices, they can lack access to the information they need to protect themselves and others.
- YYA experiencing homelessness lack a stable environment, access to hygiene products, and an ability to implement good hygiene practices that would otherwise protect their health in such conditions.
- YYA experiencing homelessness face many of the same adversities as adults experiencing homelessness, but they are still developing physically, cognitively, psychologically, and emotionally, and the trauma they experience has long-lasting effects.
- YYA facing homelessness lack parental or other supportive adults who can help them navigate emergencies or emergency response systems. Their mobility coupled with their distrust and fear of adult-centric systems - and the level of trauma and vulnerability they experience when not faced with a pandemic means that traditional means for delivering all services (homeless assistance, food, counseling, housing, and supplies) do not reach them unless policies explicitly include and target them.
- YYA experiencing homelessness sleep where they are able to - on the streets, on someone’s couch, a motel, in cars, in abandoned buildings, by participating in a youth program, or in crowded adult shelters. This mobility has left youth vulnerable to infectious diseases, like flu and hepatitis and to conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and respiratory illnesses, including asthma and pneumonia, which require regular, uninterrupted treatment. Without health insurance, these problems go unchecked, medication is beyond their reach, and even a minor untreated infection can morph into a major health emergency with long-lasting impact.
- YYA experiencing homelessness also face several key challenges in accessing certain benefits because they often lack a government ID, parental signature, knowledge of their social security number, a bank account, stable address and help with navigating the paperwork and filing requirements of public and tax benefits.

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