



**NATIONAL  
RUNAWAY  
PREVENTION  
MONTH**



# 2021 PARTNER TOOLKIT

[1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM](https://1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM)



**FYSB** Family & Youth  
Services Bureau

# 2021 PARTNER TOOLKIT

Research shows 4.2 million young people, ages 13 to 25, experience some form of homelessness each year in the United States. Think about it this way: in a classroom of 30 students, at least one of them will experience some form of homelessness this year. Without a safe living environment to call home, these young people may be forced to couch surf, bounce among relatives and friends, live in shelters, or stay on the streets.

November is National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM), a public awareness campaign designed to “shine a light” on the experiences of runaway and homeless youth that too often remain invisible. It is also an opportunity to spotlight the resources available to support youth in crisis throughout the nation. This campaign empowers individuals, organizations and communities to take action and help prevent youth homelessness.

This toolkit is designed for community-based organizations, advocacy groups, runaway and homeless youth (RHY) service providers, schools and others committed to supporting vulnerable youth. It contains resources to help you successfully engage with stakeholders to build awareness of the issues runaway and homeless youth face.



## BECOME AN NRPM PARTNER

National Runaway Prevention Month is successful due to the incredible community of partner organizations who support the campaign every year. If you have not already, please become an NRPM partner by filling out our partnership form at [1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM](https://1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM).

National Runaway Prevention Month partners receive:

- NRPM updates and useful information/resources;
- Direct, timely support from NRS staff;
- Opportunities to spotlight your organization on the NRPM page and on social media; and
- Invitations to partner calls where we collaborate and discuss ways to engage your communities.

Please reach out to [klebell@1800RUNAWAY.org](mailto:klebell@1800RUNAWAY.org) with any questions.

# GOALS & HISTORY

## NRPM GOALS

To raise awareness of the runaway and homeless youth crisis and the issues that young people face.

To educate the public about solutions and the role they can play in runaway prevention and ending youth homelessness.

## NRPM HISTORY

In October 2001, national leaders met at the White House Conference on Exploited and Runaway Children to raise public awareness of the steps that parents, law enforcement, and communities could take to make America's children safer. The conference culminated in the launch of National Runaway Prevention Week, which has since expanded into a month-long awareness campaign.

Over the years, it has been an honor to receive support for NRPM from members of Congress. For example, U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Dan Sullivan (R-AK), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Tim Scott (R-SC), and others, passed the bipartisan Senate Resolution 442, which designated November 2019 as National Runaway Prevention Month.

NRPM is spearheaded by the National Runaway Safeline (NRS), with the support of the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) and other national and local partners.



## ABOUT THE NATIONAL RUNAWAY SAFELINE

Through our 24/7 crisis services, an extensive database of over 6,500 local resources across the country, unique partnerships and programs, and valuable prevention and education tools, the National Runaway Safeline works to keep America's youth safe and off the streets. Serving as the national crisis and communication system for runaway, homeless and at-risk youth, NRS responds to youth and families in crisis through our hotline (1-800-RUNAWAY) and online services ([1800RUNAWAY.org](https://1800RUNAWAY.org)), including chat, email and forum services.

Founded in 1971, NRS is proud to **celebrate its 50th year** supporting youth and families in need across the country. Each year, we connect over 125,000 people to help and hope through our free, confidential services.

For more information, visit [1800RUNAWAY.org](https://1800RUNAWAY.org) and connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.



# WHO SHOULD USE THIS TOOLKIT?

## THIS TOOLKIT IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR A VARIETY OF PARTNERS

- **Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) organizations, including street outreach,** emergency shelters and long-term transitional living, child welfare organizations, maternity group home programs and national partners who work directly with youth are encouraged to participate in NRPM. Individuals within these organizations see firsthand the magnitude of this issue and can help bring awareness and highlight the support and resources available for those who are struggling.
- **Schools and after school programs** often serve as a community hub of resources and connections, and therefore are in a unique position to implement early intervention and prevention tools, bring awareness to the issue and link young people to information and available services.
- **Local leaders, organizations and anyone committed to supporting youth and families** can bring awareness to the issues faced by runaway and homeless youth and engage the community to take action. This includes city governments, county leadership, spiritual organizations, service organizations and more.

## ENGAGING YOUTH IN NRPM: YOUTH AMBASSADORS

Youth involvement is key to the success of NRPM. Through their voices and actions, young people can energize their peers and communities to help bring awareness to the needs of runaway and homeless youth. We encourage you to involve youth in your NRPM activities wherever possible.

Our youth toolkit, designed specifically to support young partners, can be found on our [website](#). Encourage young people to become NRPM Youth Ambassadors. Their support is critical to ensure that NRPM continues to be impactful and relevant to the young people we aim to support.





# EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

National Runaway Prevention Month partners host creative events to engage communities, raise awareness and build support for available services.

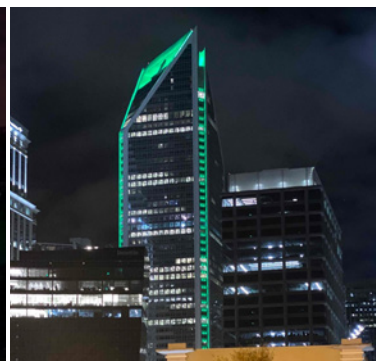
These events are an effective way to spotlight resources for youth and inform community members how they can get involved with organizations and efforts to end youth homelessness.

## THE GREEN LIGHT PROJECT

Honoring green as the official color of NRPM, we created The Green Light Project, a coordinated effort to shine green lights across the country as symbols of support and beacons of hope. This has included everything from lighting entire buildings and spaces green to replacing individual light bulbs with green bulbs. You can support The Green Light Project by:

- Secure a landmark or well-known building in your community to be lit green in November. While there are usually no fees associated with this activity, requests to turn a public space or building a specific color often need to be made months in advance. Do an online search to determine who you should approach and what the process is locally. We have provided a sample, downloadable email to send to building representatives at [1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM](https://1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM).
- Create green awareness ribbons and distribute them to local government officials, businesses, colleagues, friends and others. Encourage people to wear the ribbons throughout November
- Host a ceremony or candlelight vigil during the lighting and use this opportunity to bring people together and educate them about the realities that youth experiencing crises, homelessness, and other challenges face. Whether in-person or virtual, you can help tell the story of what the green lights represent and why NRPM is so important.

Let us know about what you plan to do! NRS may promote your Green Light Project on social media to inspire our followers and other partners. Email [klebell@1800RUNAWAY.org](mailto:klebell@1800RUNAWAY.org) with the details.



# EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

CONTINUED

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Invite local government representatives (mayor, city councilperson, county official, congressman, etc.) to attend your event or to sign a proclamation declaring November as National Runaway Prevention Month in your city. Having a notable person in attendance or issuing a proclamation adds credibility and potentially brings press coverage to an event.

Visit [1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM](https://1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM) for a sample proclamation.

If you secure a proclamation for National Runaway Prevention Month, please let us know by emailing [prevention@1800RUNAWAY.org](mailto:prevention@1800RUNAWAY.org). We'll highlight your proclamation on our social media platforms.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECTS

Community engagement projects are most effective where members of a community come together, decide on a way to make their neighborhood more welcoming for all its residents, and take action. This can include, but is not limited to, painting murals, building community gardens, and installing miniature libraries. These projects help youth feel more connected to their community and feel a sense of support.



## COMMUNITY VISIBILITY

Develop a display that highlights important statistics and local resources. Consider incorporating educational and [outreach materials](#) (i.e., bookmarks and brochures) for people to take and share. You might approach your local library, school, workplace or businesses, requesting they place your display in a visible location. The National Runaway Safeline has FREE educational materials available for your use at [1800RUNAWAY.org/free-promotional-materials](https://1800RUNAWAY.org/free-promotional-materials).

Additional ways to raise awareness within your community include:

- Encourage a local business to set up a green window display for NRPM
- Post flyers in your local park or on community bulletin boards
- Reach out to your local school district about distributing materials and using their social media platforms to support NRPM and encourage their student body to take action
- If you are involved with youth in your community, help them take action by sponsoring or guiding them through one of the community engagement projects listed above



## FUNDRAISERS

Whether you are affiliated with an organization or supporting NRPM individually, organize an in-person or virtual fundraiser. The funds collected can be donated to a local or national organization dedicated to helping runaway and homeless youth.



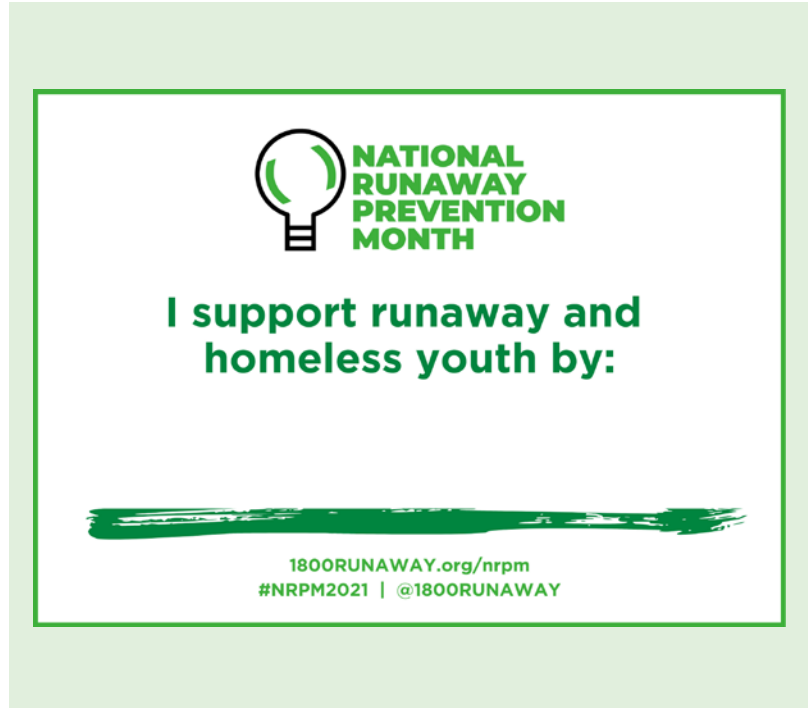
Alternatively, consider hosting a supply drive for a local organization or program supporting young people. Reach out to the organization in advance to find out what they need and then share the information across your networks. Use language from this toolkit to motivate people and encourage them to think about the issue.



## COMMITMENT WALL

Share your commitment to end youth homelessness by completing a commitment card and posting a photo of it on social media for all to see. Include a message that lets friends and followers know how you plan to support runaway and homeless youth and using the hashtag #NRPM2021.

Consider creating a commitment wall with these cards at your school, community or workplace. Ask people to complete commitment cards and hang them in a high-traffic location (i.e. building entryway or on a window facing the street). Commitment wall photos are great content on social media. If you tag NRS@1800RUNAWAY, we may share your posts!



## PARTNER CALLS

NRPM partners receive guidance and share ideas during regular calls leading up to NRPM. As a group, we discuss strategies and tips to engage communities in the issues of NRPM. This year, five partner calls are scheduled between August and October. Register as a partner to receive the links and participate in as many as you are able. Partner call topics include:

- Spreading the Message of NRPM Through Social Media (October 7)
- Breaking News: Securing Media Placements in Your Community (October 14)
- It's a Virtual World: Hosting Virtual, Hybrid and In-Person Events (October 21)

It's always inspiring to hear from others who have executed successful NRPM programs. If you're proud of past NRPM successes and want to share with other partners, we'd love to include you as a guest speaker during a partner call. Email Kathryn LeBell at [klebell@1800RUNAWAY.org](mailto:klebell@1800RUNAWAY.org) with details.



# TIPS FOR HOSTING EVENTS

## COLLABORATE

Connect with local RHY providers and other youth-serving organizations to see if they already have something planned that you can support or create a new event together.

## MAKE IT TANGIBLE

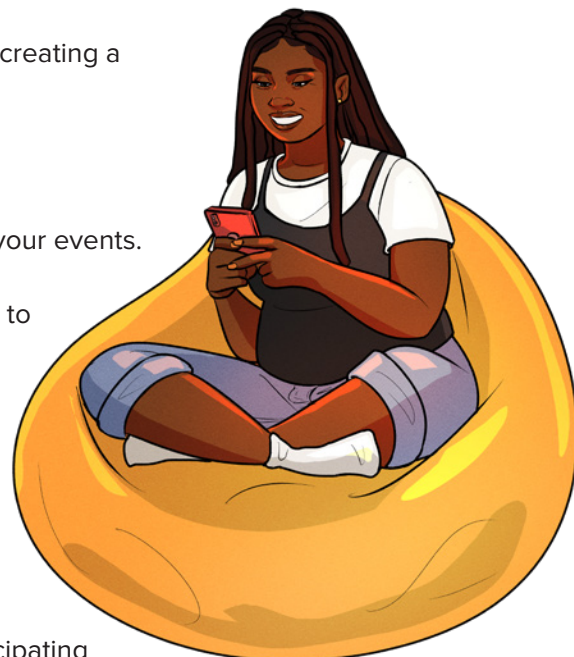
Focus your event on a specific call-to-action, such as raising funds or creating a community taskforce.

## USE SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a fun, easy way to spread the word about NRPM and your events. Use your preferred platform for a virtual event, i.e., Facebook Live or Twitter Chat, and use it to promote your plans. Engage your networks to bring the experiences of runaway and homeless youth to light.

## TIE THE EVENT TO THE ISSUE

The ultimate goal of NRPM events is to draw people in while educating them about the issues impacting youth experiencing homelessness or other crises. Combining fun, challenging and educational elements will entice people to participate. If you are a service provider, include quotes or a story from youth who have participated in your programs. Consider using available statistics and research findings to engage people. See the Messaging Guide section (Page 17) for updated statistics and information.



## INVOLVE YOUTH

Incorporate youth voices and leadership in your efforts. Youth are experts of their own experiences and will know best how your campaign and/or event can most effectively resonate with young people. [Click here](#) to download the NRPM Youth Toolkit, which includes concrete ways that young people can participate and take action.

## CONSIDER HYBRID EVENTS

While more and more in-person events are taking place across the country, some people may be hesitant to gather in large groups. Consider hosting a hybrid event, where people can participate in person or remotely. By offering a virtual option, not only will you appeal to supporters who may not be comfortable meeting in person, you will also be able to include those who are too far away to participate otherwise.

# 2021 NATIONAL EVENTS

We would love for you and your community to participate in our national events throughout November.

## NOVEMBER 1 SOCIAL MEDIA BLAST

Kick off National Runaway Prevention Month by posting on social media! We've provided a number of assets to make raising awareness easy and fun.

- Add the #NRPM2021 frame to your Facebook profile picture. To do this, [visit facebook.com/profilepicframes](https://www.facebook.com/profilepicframes), search for NRPM, and upload your new profile picture using the frame. Encourage your networks to do this as well, including staff, board, youth, donors, community leaders and others. You can share this edited picture on other social platforms.
- Post an Instagram Story using the NRPM2021 filter. Create a new story and scroll to 'Browse Effects.' Search for 'NRPM2021' to find our filter. Add it to your story and post an image or video. Use a caption or record yourself talking about why NRPM is meaningful to you or your organization. Increase the buzz by taking a screen capture of your story and posting it directly to your feed!

Be sure to include a caption with your post to let your friends know about NRPM and how they can learn more. For example:

*“4.2 million young people endure homelessness in the U.S. every year. I'm participating in National Runaway Prevention Month to raise awareness of the issues faced by youth experiencing homelessness. Learn more at [1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM](https://1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM) #NRPM2021”*

## NOVEMBER 1–5 EDUCATION WEEK

Throughout this week, the National Runaway Safeline will lead an online educational series to inform the public about runaway and homeless youth issues. We'll provide current statistics, explore existing issues, offer resources and touch upon the challenges of navigating different systems.

Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram ahead of time to join the conversation.

# 2021 NATIONAL EVENTS

CONTINUED

## NOVEMBER 2 NATIONAL RESOURCE DAY

Throughout the day, partners will use social media to spotlight resources in their own communities, showing those in need how they can access help. Use the hashtag #NRPM2021 and NRS will highlight what you share!

## NOVEMBER 5 TWITTER CHAT

The National Runaway Safeline will host a Twitter Chat at 2:00 PM CT to discuss runaway and homeless youth issues with NRPM partners and individuals. Follow along and participate @1800RUNAWAY and use the hashtag #NRPMChat.

Partners will receive the Twitter Chat questions in advance. Contact Kathy LeBell, [klebell@1800RUNAWAY.org](mailto:klebell@1800RUNAWAY.org), for more details.



## NOVEMBER 10 WEAR GREEN DAY

Dress in green to show your support for NRPM. For added impact, post a picture on social media with a message about your commitment to support runaway and homeless youth and include the hashtag #NRPM2021. Get creative and make this a competition in your office: first place to whoever wears the most green! The more creative, the greater the impact.

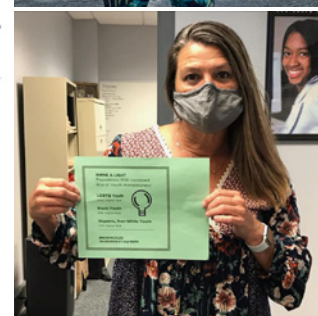
Other fun ideas include:

- Paint your nails green, or wear bright green makeup;
- Wear a green wig or hat;
- Dress your pet in a green sweater.

The possibilities are endless, and they all serve as great conversation starters around NRPM.



NCMEC staff is proud to wear green today to shine a light on the experiences of children who have run away from home in honor of National Runaway Prevention Month. #NRPM2020 #Missing



# 2021 NATIONAL EVENTS

CONTINUED

## NOVEMBER 17 LIGHT THE NIGHT COMMUNITY EVENTS

Youth service agencies, community groups and individuals across the country will host events to “shine a light” on the issues and show solidarity with youth in crisis. Previous events have included resource fairs, sleep outs, open mic nights, walks and more.

If you are planning an event, please email the details to [klebell@1800RUNAWAY.org](mailto:klebell@1800RUNAWAY.org). This way, NRS can highlight the event on social media and track of all the wonderful events happening across the country!

We are creating a National Events Calendar to highlight partner events/activities. Check out the NRPM homepage for events in your area!



## NRPM LUNCH AND LEARNS

The National Runaway Safeline will host three virtual Lunch and Learns, covering various topics related to runaway and homeless youth:

November 1, 2021

November 22, 2021

November 30, 2021

During these events, members of the runaway and homeless youth (RHY) community will come together to bring awareness to RHY issues. Experts will share their experiences on accessing services and how organizations, policies and individuals can best support youth in crisis.



# SPREADING THE WORD

Whether your NRPM campaign revolves around a fundraiser, panel discussion, social media campaign or a combination of activities, it is important to consider how you will communicate your message.

To the right, you will find resources and tips on how to spread the word about NRPM and your events.

## KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

It is important to know who you want to attend your event or engage with your campaign. Your audience will not only guide the type of event you host, but also influence how you communicate your message.

Recognize that there may be youth or adults in your audience who are currently experiencing or have previously experienced homelessness. Approach your messaging in a respectful, well-informed manner. Through NRPM, we aim to reduce stigma and ensure that those experiencing homelessness know they are not invisible and their story matters.

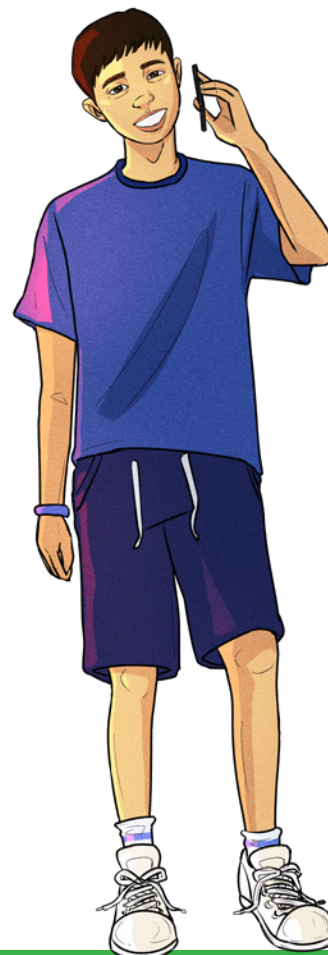
Try to center the voices of those with the lived experience of homelessness, or those working directly with runaway and homeless youth. Be intentional with your messaging.

Examples of who your audience may include:

- Youth
- Parents and guardians
- Service providers
- Law enforcement
- Key stakeholders
- Advocates
- Donors

## HOW TO SPREAD THE WORD

There are many ways to communicate your NRPM messages. See our Resources section on page 16 and download materials for use in your organization's campaign.



## COMMUNICATION CHANNELS MAY INCLUDE:

- Social media posts (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, LinkedIn, YouTube)
- Social media advertising
- Newspapers, magazines and news websites
- Blogs
- Radio stations
- Podcasts
- Television
- Billboards
- Signage
- Word of mouth
- E-mail

Click on the image to read the full article.

### Park Place leader: Youth runaways the 'hidden crisis' of the COVID pandemic

Julie Wade

Published 6:01 a.m. ET Nov 25, 2020

[View Comments](#)

*This column is by Julie Wade, the executive director of Park Place Outreach Youth Emergency Services in Savannah.*

I am not sure what is harder, raising a teenager during a pandemic or being a teenager during a pandemic. When our country and community shut down, teenagers were stuck at home with virtual education and lack of any routine, devoid of typical teen traditions and milestones.



### Louisville youth are in crisis. The YMCA is providing a safe place and needs your help

Matt Reed Opinion contributor

Published 6:50 a.m. ET Nov. 23, 2020 | Updated 11:08 a.m. ET Nov. 24, 2020

[View Comments](#)

November is usually a time of year when we begin celebrating the holiday season, giving thanks and experiencing kindness and joy. It is also National Runaway Prevention Month — a time to reflect upon the challenges faced by youth living in broken and tense environments, or on the streets. While many often slip through the cracks, facing repeated cycles of neglect, they must also struggle as the world is focused on battling a devastating health crisis. During this time, their access to resources and services at school is likely limited, at best.

### The Pueblo Chieftain

#### Pueblo needs host families for homeless teens

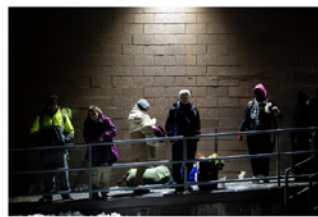
##### OUR PICKS

It's amazing what \$10 can do.

A community thrives

Details too

##### UPCOMING EVENTS



▲ Bill Peltz  
▲ Mike Griffin  
A line forms outside the temporary shelter at 101 W. 10th St. during a freeze in October. A total of 161 homeless teens in Pueblo County were displaced, homeless or in crises, according to a report. ©2020 PHOTO BY MICHAEL GRIFIN FOR THE CHIEFTAIN

#### Shining a light on homelessness



In honor of National Runaway and Homeless Youth Prevention Month, the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Fox Valley's Home Base program will be shining a light on youth homelessness this November. This is often an unseen and unheard population in our community who needs our support.

Locally, 301 students in the Appleton Area School District were identified as homeless during the 2019-2020 academic year, according to Appleton Area School District's Homeless Liaison.

### Parkland Resident Sleeps Out to Raise Awareness for Homeless Youth

By The Press on November 12, 2020

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24 Hour Couch-a-Thon to Raise Awareness of National Runaway Prevention Month

by gnomes November 20, 2018, 5:30 pm

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# CAMPAIGN RESOURCES

To help spread the word about National Runaway Prevention Month, we have created a variety of resources that can be used on social media, in outreach to traditional media, in e-mail campaigns and more. All of the materials listed are available at [1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM](https://1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM).

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Press release template
- Media alert template
- Sample proclamation
- Building lighting request template

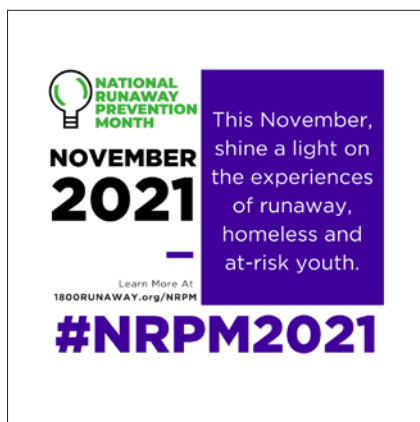
## SOCIAL MEDIA

- Social Media Toolkit, including:
  - Graphics
  - Sample Posts
  - Facebook Cover, Twitter Header, and LinkedIn Banner
- Canva File to cross-brand NRPM graphics with your organization's logo
- Facebook Profile Picture Frame
- AR filter for Instagram

## PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

- National Events Calendar
- Community PowerPoint
- NRPM Logos
- NRPM Call to Action

## SAMPLE GRAPHICS



# MESSAGING GUIDE

This messaging guide is intended to serve as a resource that allows participating organizations and individuals to easily access content and statistics on a range of important topics throughout NRPM.

## ABUSE

- According to an ACF/FYSB Street Outreach Program Study, one of the top three reasons reported for youth becoming homeless was due to physical abuse (23.8%).<sup>2</sup>
- According to the National Runaway Safeline's 2019 Crisis Trends and Prevention Report, 20% of youth contacts reported emotional abuse as their reason for reaching out, 12% reported physical abuse, and 2% reported sexual abuse, those these categories are not mutually exclusive.<sup>4</sup>
- Homeless youth are at high risk for involvement in the criminal justice system. Homeless youth who have been physically abused are almost twice as likely to be incarcerated compared to homeless youth without a history of physical abuse.<sup>5</sup>
- A 2015 study looking at homeless youth in Minnesota found that over half of their homeless youth population had been physically abused, sexually abused, or neglected at some point in their childhood.<sup>6</sup>
- Recommended activity from our *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum* - "Healthy Relationships" activity in Module 4: Peers and Healthy Relationships.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- According to an ACF/FYSB Street Outreach Program Study, almost a quarter of participants (24.1%) said that they had "agreed to be sexual" with someone in exchange for money, and 27.5% had "agreed to be sexual" with someone in exchange for a place to spend the night.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2020, nearly 26,500 runaways were reported to National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) and one in six were likely victim of child sex trafficking.<sup>7</sup>
- In a 2013 study, The Institute of Medicine found that homelessness was the largest risk factor for the commercial sex exploitation of children and sex trafficking of minors.<sup>8</sup>
- In two different studies where trafficked youth were surveyed, nearly all had experienced homelessness or housing instability, and their exploitation occurred while they were homeless.<sup>9</sup>
- Youth from vulnerable populations are disproportionately recruited into trafficking situations.<sup>9</sup>
- In a study conducted by the Modern Slavery Research Project interviewing runaway and homeless youth, 8% of respondents were found to have been trafficked for labor. This includes labor in factories, domestic labor, agriculture, international drug smuggling, and commission-based sales. 3% had been trafficked for both sex and labor.<sup>10</sup>
- 81% of trafficked youth were forced to sell drugs.<sup>10</sup>
- Recommended activity from our *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum* - "Runaway Risks" activity in Module 6: Runaway Reality.



## SYSTEM-INVOLVED YOUTH

- Incarceration disproportionately affects homeless youth: 46% of homeless youth have been in detention or incarcerated versus 15% of the general population.<sup>1</sup>
- There is a disproportionate representation of Black and Hispanic youth, as well as LGBTQ+ youth, who experience homelessness and are involved in the juvenile justice system<sup>11</sup>
- Reasons why runaway and homeless youth are more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system include:<sup>11</sup>
  - Youth without shelter or a safe place to live and are on the street may be acting illegally, as many local governments have laws or public ordinances that prohibit this.
  - Youth experiencing homelessness may commit survival crimes, for example trespassing to be in a warmer place or physical altercations to protect themselves.
  - Young people may enter the system through charges related to victimization, like trafficking.
- According to a report from the Coalition for Juvenile Justice and the National Network for Youth, more than 80% of providers reported that juvenile justice involvement was a top contributor to youth homelessness.<sup>13</sup>
- Recommended activity from our *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum* - "Who's On Your Bus" activity in Module 3: Personal Influences.

## YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

- Studies estimate between 19% and 36% of youth experience homelessness shortly after aging out of the foster care system.<sup>14</sup>
- A youth's risk of homelessness increases as their age of entry into foster care increases. Similarly, a youth's risk of homelessness increases as their number of foster care placements increases.<sup>15</sup>
- According to a FYSB study published in April of 2016:<sup>16</sup>
  - About half (50.6%) of the homeless youth surveyed reported having stayed in a foster home or group home.
  - Youth with a foster care history experienced homelessness for much longer (27.5 months on average) compared to youth who had never been in foster care (19.3 months, on average).
  - Youth who had formerly been in foster care reported higher levels of victimization both prior to and after becoming homeless.
- Youth whose last placement was a state shelter had a 55% greater chance of becoming homeless than those who had been in a family or kinship placement.<sup>17</sup>
- In some states, youth age out of the foster system at 18 years old. In other states, youth age out of the foster system at 21 years old. The youth who were aged out of foster care at 21 years old had a 42.4% lower chance of becoming homeless than those who were no longer in foster care.<sup>18</sup>
- Recommended activity from our *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum* - "Who's Connected to You?" activity in Module 8: Community Response and Responsibility.

## VULNERABLE YOUTH

- According to the 2017 Voices of Youth Count initiative from Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, vulnerable populations experience a greater risk for homelessness.<sup>1</sup>
  - LGBTQ youth had a 120% higher risk of experiencing homelessness.
  - Black youth had an 83% higher risk.
  - Hispanic, non-White youth, had a 33% increased risk.



## NATIVE AMERICAN YOUTH

- A 2017 assessment of Native American housing conditions found that, nationally, 99.8% of tribal officials reported that doubling up (i.e. taking in family and friends who would otherwise risk homelessness) was an issue in their tribal area.<sup>19</sup>
- A national survey of American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN) youth in 2019 found that:<sup>20</sup>
  - Approximately 10% of households with young people aged 13-17 reported youth homelessness or runaway experiences that lasted at least one night.
  - AIAN young adults (18-25 years old) had three times the prevalence of homelessness than their white, non-hispanic peers.
  - Most AIAN youth experiencing homelessness reside in urban areas.
- Native American girls are at a much higher risk of experiencing physical and/or sexual violence. A 2016 National Institute of Justice Report found that 84.3% of American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN) women had experienced some form of violence in their lifetime. 56.1% had experienced sexual violence in their lifetime.<sup>21</sup>

## YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

- The National Center on Family Homelessness reported that children experiencing homelessness, as compared to other children, have three times the rate of emotional and behavioral problems, are four times as likely to show delayed development, and have twice the rate of learning disabilities.<sup>22</sup>
- Major education barriers faced by homeless youth with disabilities include:<sup>23</sup>
  - Difficulty with diagnoses, due to mobility and other stressors;
  - Not being identified as needing special education services; and
  - Lack of timely assessment, diagnosis, or service provision.

## LGBTQ+ YOUTH

- Approximately 7% of youth in the United States are LGBTQ, while 40% of youth experiencing homelessness are LGBTQ.<sup>24</sup>
- A 2018 Research Brief from the Voices of Youth Count found that: <sup>25</sup>
  - LGBTQ youth have over twice the rate of early death among youth experiencing homelessness.
  - LGBTQ youth are at more than double the risk of homelessness compared to non-LGBTQ peers.
  - Youth who identified as both LGBTQ and Black or multiracial had some of the highest rates of homelessness.
  - LGBTQ young people were more likely to report exchanging sex for basic needs (27% vs. 9% of non-LGBTQ peers).
  - Those who identify as LGBTQ experience discrimination or stigma at higher rates both within their family (64 % vs. 37%) and outside their family (60% vs. 37%).
- In the Trevor Project's 2019 National Survey of LGBTQ Youth Mental Health, 25% of youth reported experiencing unstable housing at some point in their life. LGBTQ youth who experienced housing instability reported considering suicide at twice the rate and attempted suicide at more than three times the rate of LGBTQ youth who had not. <sup>26</sup>

## EDUCATION & SCHOOLS

- Experiencing homelessness increases a young person's likelihood of dropping out of school by almost 87%.<sup>27</sup>
- Having an unstable living arrangement or experiencing homelessness greatly impacts the education of youth. Some of the barriers to education and attending school in these situations include:
  - Due to living situations changing, youth may have to transfer schools. Proper records, such as transcripts, proof of residency, and medical records slow down the process of placing youth in the correct classroom. <sup>28</sup>
  - Transportation barriers exist, whether it be transferring schools or continuing at a young person's school of origin. One report cites transportation as the number one barrier to homeless youth remaining and enrolling in school.<sup>29</sup>
  - Homeless children's education is also impacted by a lack of school supplies and clothes to wear, poor health, and hunger.<sup>30</sup>
- When implemented correctly, the McKinney-Vento Act offers wonderful support for homeless youth. [Click here](#) to access your State Coordinator for Homeless Education contact information; this will also link to each state's McKinney Vento Liaison Directory.
- Recommended activity from our *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum* - "Road Map: Got Yours" in Module 14: Future Life Planning.

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