Research shows that 4.2 million young people ages 13 to 25 experience some form of homelessness each year in the United States, with considerably more experiencing crises that put them at risk of facing similar housing insecurity. Think about it this way: in a classroom of 30 students, at least one will experience some form of homelessness this year. Without a safe environment to call home, they may be forced to couch surf, bounce among relatives and friends, stay in shelters, or live on the streets. We need to do more to support these young people and end youth homelessness.

November is National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM), a public awareness campaign designed to “shine a light” on the experiences of youth who have run away and experienced homelessness 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, programs serving youth experiencing homelessness, schools and others committed to supporting vulnerable youth. It contains resources to help you successfully engage with stakeholders to build awareness of the issues youth face every day when living in the streets or other unsafe places.

BECOME AN OFFICIAL 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 official NRPM partner by filling out our partnership form at 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.

Contact Christopher Smith at the National Runaway Safeline (NRS) at csmith@1800RUNAWAY.org or 773-880-9860 with any questions.
GOALS & HISTORY

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.

To increase the visibility of the services and resources provided by the National Runaway Safeline.

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 prevention and awareness campaign.

National leaders continue to advance efforts to assist youth and families in crisis and end youth homelessness. 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 each year by the National Runaway Safeline, with the support of the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) and other national and local partners.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL RUNAWAY SAFELINE

Founded in 1971, NRS connects more than 125,000 people to help and hope each year. Through our 24/7 crisis services as well as a database of over 6,500 resources across the country and valuable prevention and education programs, 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 free, confidential hotline (1-800-RUNAWAY) and online services (1800RUNAWAY.org), including chat, email and forum.

In addition, NRS offers free prevention and educational materials, including the evidence-based Let’s Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum, which teaches young people critical problem-solving skills, with the goal of preventing runaway incidents.

For more information, visit 1800RUNAWAY.org and connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok.
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** are an important part of reducing the number of youth who run away and experience homelessness. Often serving as a community hub of resources and connections, schools and after school programs 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 youth who have run away and experienced homelessness. This includes city governments, county leadership, spiritual organizations, service organizations and more. With the support of local leaders and organizations, NRPM can bring key issues to the forefront and ensure community engagement.

ENGAGING YOUTH IN NRPM AS YOUTH AMBASSADORS

NRPM is most effective when young people get behind the effort. While providing fun, meaningful activities, the campaign also presents youth with an opportunity to share their perspectives and ideas for a worthwhile cause. Further, young people are able to energize their peers and communities to help bring awareness to the needs of youth who have run away and experienced homelessness. We encourage you to involve youth in your NRPM activities wherever possible.

For young people who become NRPM Youth Ambassadors, we offer the NRPM Youth Toolkit, a resource designed specifically to support young partners. The Youth Toolkit can be found on the [NRS website](#).
EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

- National Runaway Prevention Month partners host creative events to engage communities, raise awareness and highlight available services.

- 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.

GREEN LIGHT PROJECT

With green being the official color of NRPM, we created the Green Light Project, a coordinated nationwide effort to illuminate spaces, monuments and buildings in green as symbols of support and beacons of hope. These activities offer excellent visuals that can be shared on social media. You can participate in the Green Light Project by:

- Securing a landmark or well-known building in your community to be lit green in November. While there are usually no fees associated with turning a public space or building a specific color, these requests often need to be made months in advance. Search online to determine who you should contact and what the process is locally.

- Creating and distributing green awareness ribbons for local leaders, businesses and other supporters of your organization to wear during November.

- Purchasing green light bulbs (online or at most hardware stores) and providing those to retailers and residents to shine during the month. In the past, during NRPM, partners have replaced the regular light bulbs on the exterior of their own buildings with green ones.

- Hosting a candlelight ceremony to recognize NRPM and educate attendees about the realities that runaway, homeless and at-risk youth face. Share the stories of what the green lights represent and why NRPM is so important.

Let us know about your Green Light Project plans! NRS can help spread the word by publicizing your lighting activities on social media.
LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

 Invite local government representatives (congressperson, mayor, city councilperson, county official, etc.) to attend your event. Including a respected and notable person adds credibility and potentially garners press coverage of an event.

 Also, request a proclamation - a ceremonial document issued by government officials that serves, in part, to officially highlight the importance of an event - recognizing November as National Runaway Prevention Month in your city or state. Visit [Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.](#) for a sample proclamation.

 If you secure a proclamation for National Runaway Prevention Month, please let us know by emailing Beth Richman at brichman@1800RUNAWAY.org. This way, we can support your efforts by highlighting your proclamation on our social media platforms.

COMMUNITY VISIBILITY

 Develop a display that highlights important statistics and local resources. Consider incorporating free NRS educational and outreach materials (i.e., bookmarks and brochures) for people to take and share. Past NRPM partners have created displays highlighting stories and photos of the youth they serve. You might approach your local library, school, workplace or businesses to request they place your display in a visible location.

 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
 - Contact your local school district about distributing materials and supporting NRPM on their social media platforms
FUNDRAISERS

As an NRPM partner organization or individual, plan an in-person or virtual fundraiser.

For example, if participating as an individual, consider hosting a supply drive to benefit a local nonprofit organization that supports youth who have run away and experienced homelessness. Reach out to the organization in advance to find out what they need, (i.e., shelters may need toiletries), determine how to collect the items and then share the information across your networks.

In 2021, several NRPM partners hosted successful fundraisers. For example, one organization secured a percentage of sales from local retailers and another held a month-long online auction.

LET’S TALK: RUNAWAY PREVENTION CURRICULUM

Our Let’s Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum helps youth explore difficult subjects while building life skills and resiliency. If you engage with youth directly, consider incorporating this curriculum into your work. Download the free, recently re-designed curriculum from the Let’s Talk homepage. See the Messaging Guide on page 17 of this toolkit for recommended Let’s Talk activities.

LET’S TALK PODCAST SERIES

During NRPM 2021, we launched the “Let’s Talk” podcast featuring interviews with youth with lived experience, partners serving youth who have run away or experienced homelessness, representatives from governmental agencies and more. Throughout NRPM 2022, NRS will release weekly podcast episodes. Potential topics for these conversations include the intersection between youth homelessness and teen parenting, LGBTQ youth facing homelessness and mental health support for at-risk youth. Listen and share episodes via our podcast webpage (1800RUNWAY.org/podcast), Spotify, Apple Podcasts, and Google Podcasts.
SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

COMMITMENT CARDS

Share your commitment to ending youth homelessness by completing a commitment card and posting a photo of it on social media. New this year, we encourage you to record a short video explaining to friends and followers how you plan to support youth who have run away, been asked to leave home and have experienced homelessness. Be sure to hold your commitment card on camera and use the hashtag #NRPM2022 in your post.

Consider creating a commitment wall at your office, school or other location. Ask people to complete a commitment card and then hang them in a high-traffic area (i.e., an entryway or a window facing the street). Commitment wall photos and video collages are great content on social media. Tag NRS @1800RUNAWAY and we may share your posts!

TIKTOK STORIES

New this year, join our month-long TikTok campaign by sharing your NRPM activities as a video on TikTok. Remember to use #NRPM2022, and tag @nationalrunawaysafeline on TikTok and @1800RUNAWAY on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
 PARTNER CALLS

In the months leading up to NRPM, we provide partners with guidance and an opportunity to brainstorm and share ideas during frequent calls. 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; all will take place on Zoom at 1:00 PM EST/12:00 PM CST. Register as an NRPM partner to receive the Zoom links, and participate in as many as you are able. Partner call dates and topics include:

- Thursday, August 18th: NRPM 101
- Tuesday, September 15th: Using the NRPM Toolkits
- Thursday, October 6th: Spreading the Word of NRPM through Social Media
- Thursday, October 13th: Pitching the Story to Local Media
- Thursday, October 20th: Hosting Virtual & Hybrid Events

It is always inspiring to hear from others who have executed successful NRPM programs. If you are proud of past NRPM successes and want to share with other partners, we would love to include you as a guest speaker during a partner call. Email Christopher Smith at csmith@1800RUNAWAY.org with details.

AWARDS CEREMONY AND CELEBRATION

In 2021, the National Runaway Safeline hosted its first annual NRPM Awards Ceremony and Celebration to recognize the success of the campaign and our outstanding partners. Representatives from the Family and Youth Services Bureau and NRS presented awards, and each winner spoke about their organization and their NRPM activities. The December 2022 event will recognize the most creative and active NRPM partners as well as our collective accomplishments. Awards will be given out in categories, including:

- OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- GREENEST TEAM
- YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
- YOUTH AMBASSADOR
- SOCIAL MEDIA
- MEDIA MASTER
- “SHINE A LIGHT”

Winners will be selected based upon the unique and creative ways they fulfilled NRPM’s goals throughout November. Visit 1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM for more details on this event, including a final date and time, along with registration information.
TIPS FOR HOSTING EVENTS

COLLABORATE
Connect with local RHY providers and other youth-serving organizations to see if they have planned appropriate events that you can support. Together you can reach more potential attendees, pool resources and strengthen and amplify the messages.

USE SOCIAL MEDIA
Social media is a fun, easy way to spread the word about your events. Use your preferred platform for a virtual event, i.e., Facebook Live or Twitter Chat, and also use it to promote your plans. Engage your virtual networks to bring the experiences of youth who have run away and experienced homelessness 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 of young people who are considering running away, have already left home or are experiencing homelessness. Combining fun, challenging and educational elements in an event may further entice people to participate. Service providers might find it effective to include youth or simply quotes and testimonials from youth served. Consider using available statistics and research findings to engage people. See the Messaging Guide (page 17) for statistics and information.

INVOLVE YOUTH
Incorporate youth voices and leadership in your efforts. As experts of their own experiences, youth will know best how your event can effectively resonate with other young people. Click here to view the NRPM Youth Toolkit, which includes concrete ways young people can participate and take action.

CONSIDER HYBRID EVENTS
While in-person events are being held across the country today, some people may be hesitant to gather in large groups. Consider hosting a hybrid event, allowing people to 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 also open the event to people outside of your community. As you are planning in-person events, make sure to follow CDC Safety Guidelines.
2022 NATIONAL EVENTS

- NRS plans several exciting national events that are open to you and your community throughout November.

### NOVEMBER 1  SOCIAL MEDIA BLAST

Kick off National Runaway Prevention Month by posting on social media! We have provided several assets to make raising awareness easy and fun.

- Use the #NRPM2022 filters on Instagram and Facebook Stories
  - Stories are full-screen and short-form and offer all sorts of creative, customizable overlays. Individual Stories disappear after 24 hours. To post content to Instagram Stories and Facebook Stories using your mobile device, take a new photo or video, as you cannot use previously created content. Use the filter selection tool at the bottom, scroll to the far right until you find the “Browse Effects” option. Click the icon with the magnifying glass to access the “Effect Gallery.” At the top left of the “Effect Gallery,” tap the magnifying glass icon and search “NRPM”. Make sure to tag your followers and encourage them to participate.

- Use the #NRPM2022 hashtag on TikTok. Users will also be able to insert an NRPM sticker by searching for National Runaway Safeline under the “stickers” button when editing a TikTok.

- Add a photo of yourself holding a completed commitment card or create a brief video describing why you are committed to preventing youth homelessness. Be sure to add #NRPM2022 to your post or Stories.

- 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 runaway & homeless youth face. Learn more at 1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM #NRPM2022”

Find more captions in our Social Media Toolkit, which you can download here.

### NOVEMBER 1 – 4  EDUCATION WEEK

Throughout this week, the National Runaway Safeline will lead an online educational series to inform the public about youth who have run away and/or experienced homelessness. We will provide current statistics, explore existing issues, offer resources and touch upon the challenges of navigating different systems.

Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok ahead of time to join the conversation.
2022 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 #NRPM2022, and NRS will highlight what you share!

Use graphics and posts in our Social Media Toolkit on this day and throughout the month!

NOVEMBER 4  TWITTER CHAT
The National Runaway Safeline will host a Twitter Chat at 2:00 PM CST to discuss issues related to youth who have run away and experienced homelessness with NRPM partners and individuals. Follow along and participate @1800RUNAWAY and use the hashtag #NRPMChat.

Contact Christopher Smith at csmith@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 youth who have run away and experienced homelessness and include the hashtag #NRPM2022. Spark a friendly competition in your office: first place to the person who 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
- Put your pet in a green sweater

The possibilities are endless, and they all serve as great conversation starters around issues impacting youth who have run away and experienced homelessness.
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 csmith@1800RUNAWAY.org. This way, NRS can highlight the event on social media and track 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 topics related to youth who have run away and/or experienced homelessness. Lunch and Learn dates, topics and guest speakers will be announced as soon as possible. Please visit 1800RUNAWAY.org/NRPM to find the latest details and registration information.
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.

In the following pages, you will find resources and tips on how to spread the word about NRPM and your events.

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

It is important to identify 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 messages.

Recognizing your audience may include people who are currently experiencing homelessness, approach your messaging in a respectful, informed manner. Through NRPM, we aim to reduce stigma and ensure that those experiencing homelessness know they are not invisible and their story matters.

Examples of who your audience may be include:

- Youth
- Parents and guardians
- Service providers
- Law enforcement
- Advocates
- Donors
- General public
People get news and information from a wide variety of sources today. Use a combination of communication channels to reach your target audiences:

- Social media posts (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, TikTok)
- Social media advertising
- Newspapers, magazines and news websites
- Blogs
- Radio stations
- Podcasts
- Television stations
- Billboards
- Signage
- Word of mouth
- E-mail
- Your own website
To help spread the word about National Runaway Prevention Month, we have created 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.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS**
- Press release
- Media alert template
- Letter to the editor or guest article
- Sample proclamation
- Proclamation request letter

**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
- TikTok stickers and filters for Instagram

**PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS**
- Event flyer
- National events calendar
- NRPM logos
This messaging guide enables NRPM partners to easily access content and statistics on a range of important topics.

**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%).

- The National Runaway Safeline’s National Trends on Youth in Crisis in the United States report found that there was a 65% increase in young people who connected with NRS’ hotline and online services who experienced abuse and neglect in the last 5 years.

- 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.

- 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.

- 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.


**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.

- 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.

- 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.

- 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.

- Youth from vulnerable populations are disproportionately recruited into trafficking situations.

- In a study conducted by the Modern Slavery Research Project interviewing youth experiencing homelessness, 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.

- 81% of trafficked youth were forced to sell drugs.

- 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.\(^1\)
- There is a disproportionate representation Black and Hispanic youth, as well as LGBTQ+ youth, who experience homelessness and are involved in the juvenile justice system.\(^1\)
- Youth who run away and those experiencing homelessness are more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system because:\(^1\)
  - 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.\(^1\)

YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

- Studies estimate between 19% and 36% of youth experience homelessness shortly after aging out of the foster care system.\(^4\)
- 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.\(^5\)
- According to a FYSB study published in April of 2016:\(^6\)
  - 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.\(^7\)
- 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.\(^8\)
- 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.¹
  - 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.¹⁹
- A national survey of American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN) youth in 2019 found that:²⁰
  - 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.²¹

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.²²
- Major education barriers faced by homeless youth with disabilities include:²³
  - Difficulty with diagnoses, due to mobility and other stressors;
  - Not being identified as needed special education services; and
  - Lack of timely assessment, diagnosis, or service provision.
LGBTQIA2S+ YOUTH

- Approximately 7% of youth in the United States are LGBTQ, while 40% of youth experiencing homelessness are LGBTQ.\(^{24}\)
- A 2018 Research Brief from the Voices of Youth Count found that:\(^{25}\)
  - 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 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health, 45% of youth seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year, while 60% of LGBTQ youth who wanted mental health care support were unable to get it.\(^{26}\)

EDUCATION & SCHOOLS

- Experiencing homelessness increases a young person’s likelihood of dropping out of school by almost 87%.\(^{27}\)
- 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.\(^{28}\)
  - 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.\(^{29}\)
  - Homeless children’s education is also impacted by a lack of school supplies and clothes to wear, poor health, and hunger.\(^{30}\)

- 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.
REFERENCES


