

New Rule Strengthens Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs to Better Serve Youth Experiencing Homelessness

The RHY (Runaway and Homeless Youth) final rule reflects existing statutory requirements in the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and changes made via the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-378). The rule details additional requirements that apply to the Basic Center, Transitional Living, and Street Outreach Programs, including non-discrimination, background checks, outreach, and training, and establishes program performance standards for RHY grantees providing services to eligible youth and their families. Performance standards build on standards already used as priorities in funding opportunity announcements and awards. This rule also updates procedures for soliciting and awarding grants.

Highlights

- **Help grantees and stakeholders better understand RHY requirements and RHY Program guidance:** This rule incorporates all of the statutory provisions and explains confusing terms and requirements for better grantee implementation.
- **Ensure homeless youth are not discriminated against or excluded from programs or services** because of their race, ethnicity, age, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, physical or cognitive ability, or background.
- **New performance standards:** Basic Center Program Grantees and Transitional Living Program Grantees, including Maternity Group Homes, are required to measure goal attainment based on the four core outcomes: (1) social and emotional well-being; (2) permanent connections; (3) education or employment; and (4) stable housing. Street Outreach Programs are required to contact a minimum number of at-risk youth based on staff size of the program. Specific performance metrics will be spelled out in future Funding Opportunity Announcements.
- **Licensing Requirement.** The rule requires grantees to ensure that all shelters they operate are licensed and determine that any shelters to which they regularly refer clients have evidence of current licensure, in states or localities with licensure requirements.
- **Require background checks** for all paid and non-paid staff who have regular and unsupervised contact with youth served by a grantee as well as for all adults who reside in or operate host homes.
- Ensure youth receive counseling services that are **trauma informed** and that programs implement the **principles of positive youth development**.
- **Develop and implement aftercare plans** to ensure youth are safe after leaving the program.
- **Promote collaboration and partnership** with communities and federal, state, and local systems; including child welfare, juvenile justice and continuums of care to address youth homelessness.

About the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program

Runaway and homeless youth programs serve and protect nearly 30,000 youth experiencing homelessness each year through the [Street Outreach Program](#), [Basic Center Program](#), [Transitioning Living Program](#) and [Maternity Group Homes for Pregnant and Parenting Youth](#). The RHY programs also provide funding to grantees to improve the quality of services to runaway and homeless youth through research, demonstration projects, the National Runaway Safeline, training and technical assistance.



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