

A person's hand is holding a blue folder. In the background, a pink balloon is visible. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an outdoor or well-lit indoor setting.

Helping Unaccompanied Homeless Youth: Connecticut's New Birth Certificate Law

Diana Bowman, National Center for Homeless Education
Jane Purtill, CT Department of Public Health
Louis Tallarita, CT Department of Education
Stacey Violante, Center for Children's Advocacy

Session Overview

- About Unaccompanied Homeless Youth
- Rights and Services Provided through the McKinney-Vento Act
- Information about Local Liaisons in Connecticut
- Information on PA 13-142 and How it will Help Unaccompanied Homeless Youth



Who is an Unaccompanied Homeless Youth?

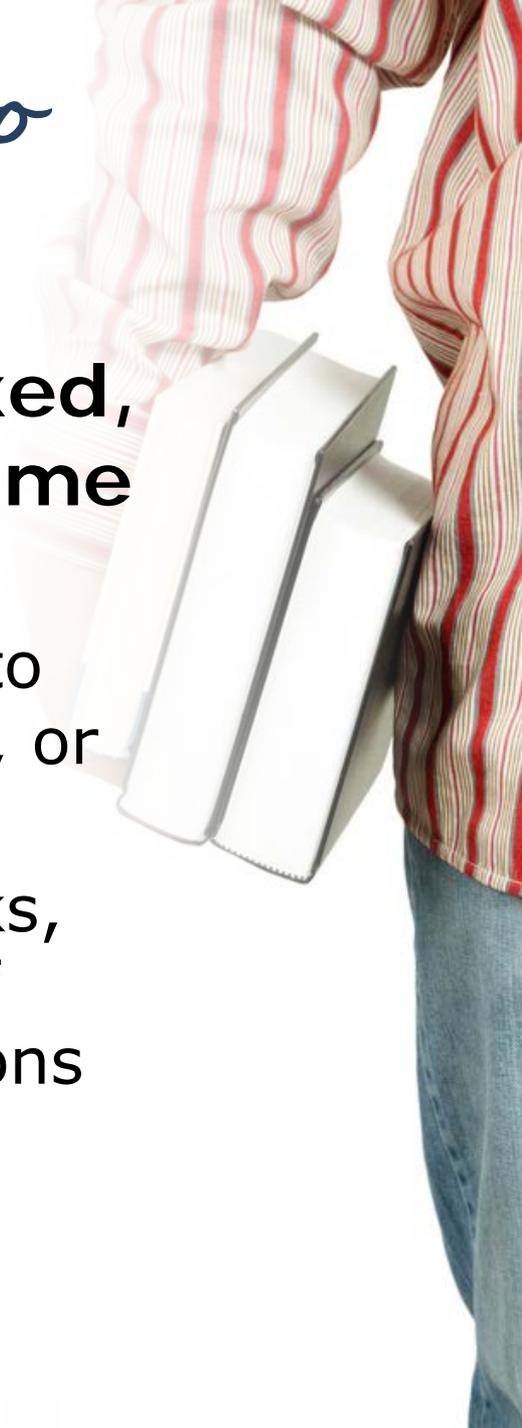
A youth who is:

1. Experiencing homelessness according to the definition in the McKinney-Vento Act, and
2. Not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian (not living with a parent or guardian)



What is the McKinney-Vento Act Definition of Homeless?

- Children or youth who **lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence**, including:
 - Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason (“doubling up”)
 - Living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, camping grounds due to the lack of adequate alternative accommodations
 - Living in emergency or transitional shelters



McKinney-Vento Act

Definition of Homeless (cont.)

- Awaiting foster care placement
- Living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or a similar setting
- Migratory children living in the above circumstances



More on Who is Considered an Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

- No lower age limit; upper age limit is the state upper age limit for public education, and usually higher for special education
- Includes youth who have runaway from home or been asked to leave
- A youth can be eligible regardless of whether he/she was asked to leave the home or “chose” to leave
- Often more than meets the eye in a homeless youth’s situation



Where do Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Live?

- On the streets
- In shelters
- In cars, abandoned buildings, camping grounds
- Most live doubled up, couch-surfing with friends, acquaintances, or relatives



Is a Roof over One's Head Enough?

Many couch surfing situations are unstable, unsafe, or otherwise inadequate

- Can be asked to leave at any time
- Provided no additional support for basic needs
- Live in inadequate spaces like unheated garages or porches
- Could be asked to engage in illegal or unsafe activities for housing





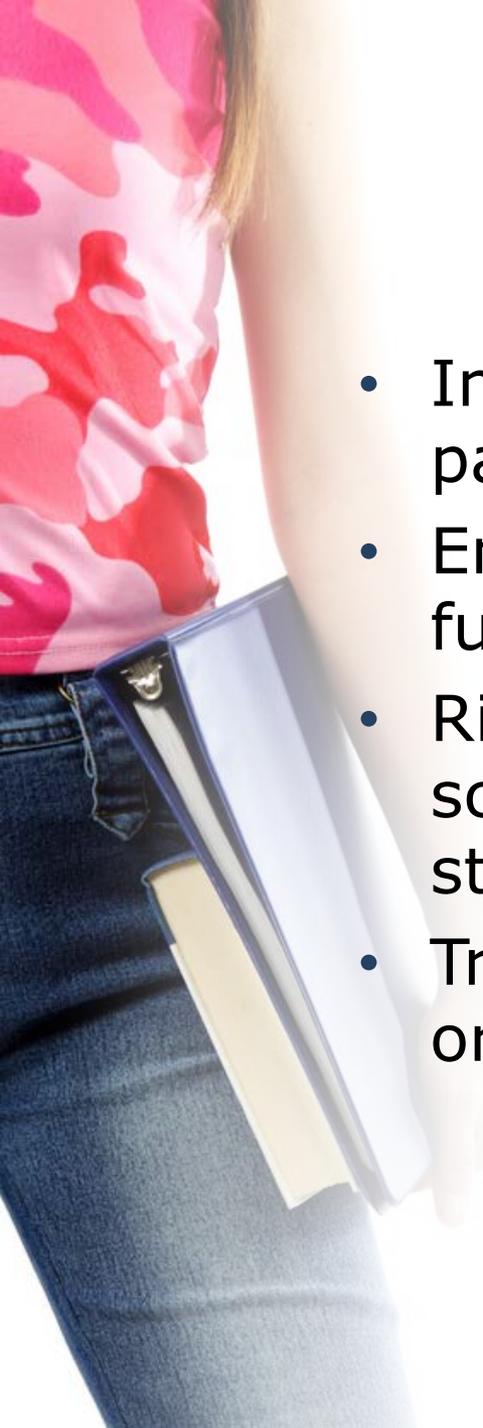
What Educational Challenges Do Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Face?

- Lack of stable housing (access to bathing facilities, laundry, place to keep belongings)
- Lack of school records and paperwork
- Lack of school supplies, clothing
- Fatigue, poor health, hunger, mental health crises
- Inability to accumulate credits, poor academic performance due to mobility, poor attendance
- Lack of transportation

A person wearing a pink floral shirt and blue jeans is carrying a blue folder and books. The person is partially visible on the left side of the frame.

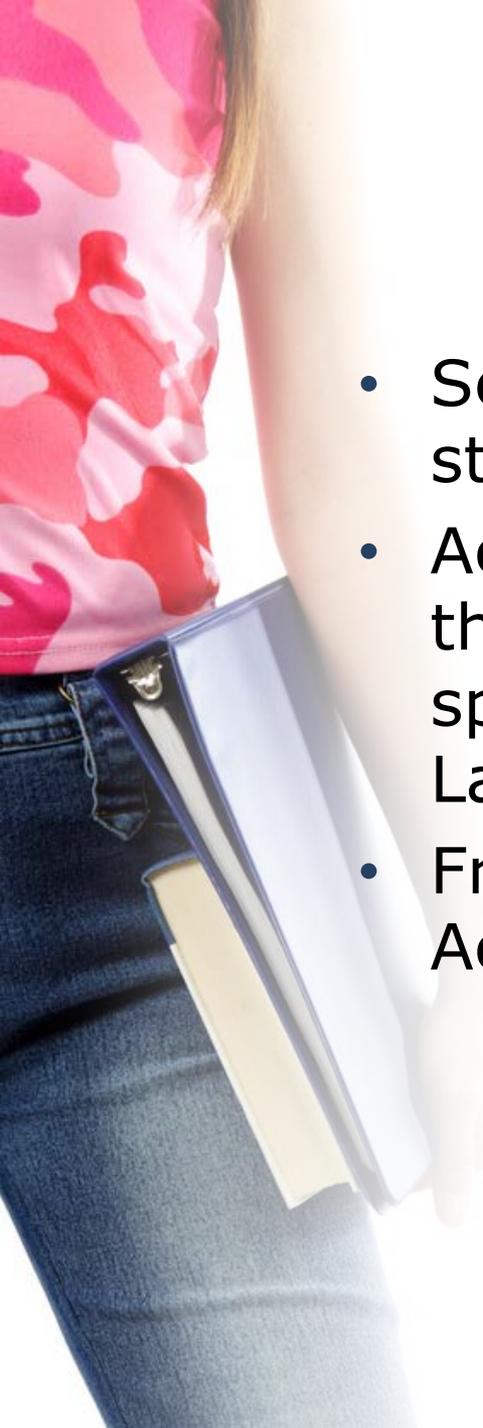
What is the McKinney-Vento Act?

- Federal law that provides educational rights and services for homeless children and youth (Subtitle VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized as Title X, Part C of NCLB)
- Main themes
 - School access
 - School stability
 - Support for academic success
 - Critical role of the local homeless education liaison required in every school district

A person wearing a pink and red patterned shirt and blue jeans is carrying a blue folder and books. The person is positioned on the left side of the frame, with their arm and torso visible. The background is white.

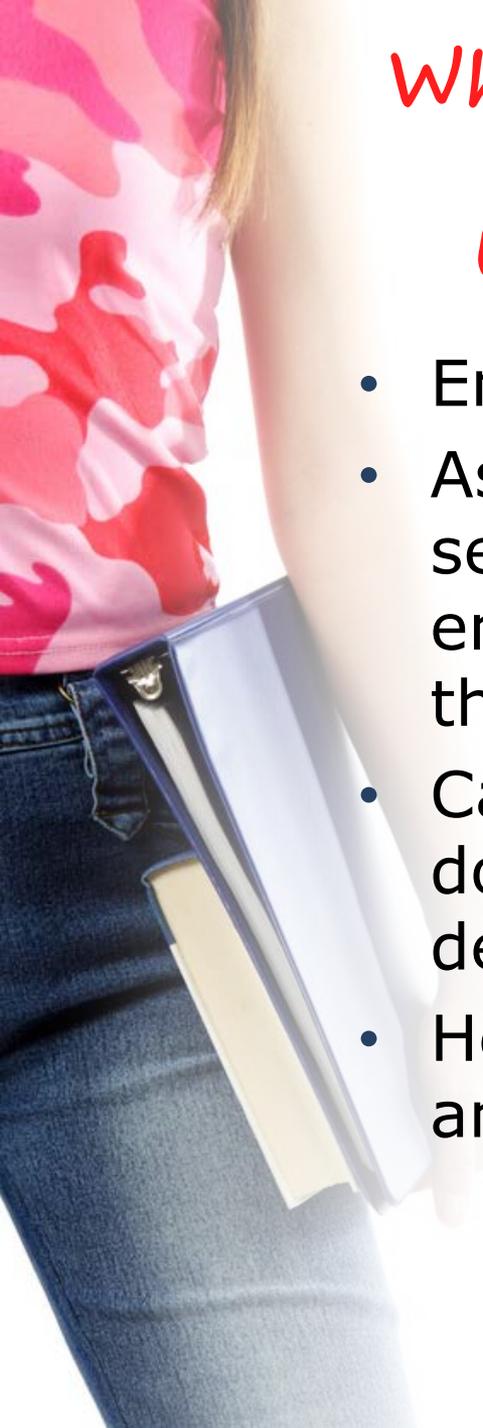
What does the McKinney-Vento Act Provide to All Homeless Students?

- Immediate enrollment, even if lacking paperwork normally required
- Enrollment includes attending classes and full participation in all school activities
- Right to attend the local attendance area school or school of origin, according to the student's best interest
- Transportation to and from the school of origin`

A person wearing a pink floral shirt and blue jeans is carrying a blue folder and books. The person is positioned on the left side of the frame, with their arm and torso visible. The background is white.

What does the McKinney-Vento Act Provide to All Homeless Students? (cont.)

- Services comparable to those of all other students
- Access to educational programs for which they are eligible (academic support, special education, English as a Second Language, vocational/technical education)
- Free school meals (USDA Child Nutrition Act)



What Provisions in the McKinney-Vento Act Apply Specifically to Unaccompanied Homeless Youth?

- Enrollment without proof of guardianship
- Assistance from the local liaison in selecting a school of attendance, enrolling, and receiving transportation to the school of origin
- Can initiate the dispute process if he/she does not agree with school enrollment decision
- Help with referral to community services and agencies

A person wearing a pink and red floral patterned shirt and blue jeans is carrying a blue folder under their arm. The person is partially visible on the left side of the frame.

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth in CT

- Over 250 have been officially counted in CT, many more remain unidentified
- LGBT students are over-represented among this population
- Study of 98 UHY by Yale Consultation Center shows vulnerability to dropping out of school (31.5%) despite the fact that many enjoyed school (35.5%)

Poll: Is Stephen an Unaccompanied Homeless Youth?

Stephen's family was evicted recently from their apartment and is now staying at a family shelter in New Haven.

Because Stephen is 17 years old, however, he cannot stay in the shelter and is staying at a friend's house in West Haven.

Is Stephen an unaccompanied homeless youth?

Poll: Is Andrea an Unaccompanied Homeless Youth?

Andrea was living with her mom and sister in Hartford when her mom was incarcerated. She stayed with her sister for some time, but they fought and her sister kicked her out. Sometimes Andrea stays at a cousin's house and sometimes she stays at friends' houses.

Is Andrea an unaccompanied homeless youth?

Public Act 13-142: An Act Concerning Birth Certificates for Homeless Youth

- Effective October 1, 2013
- Adds language to the statute governing access to birth certificates
- Allows emancipated minors and certified homeless youth to obtain their own, full-size, birth certificate



*Public Act 13-142:
An Act Concerning Birth
Certificates for Homeless Youth*

- For this legislation
- A homeless youth is a person 15 to 17 and has been certified as homeless



Public Act 13-142: An Act Concerning Birth Certificates for Homeless Youth

- Three entities have the authority to certify homeless youth

1. School district homeless liaisons

- One in every school district
- A list of liaisons can be found at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&q=333702> or go to the home page and type “homeless education” in the search box



*Public Act 13-142:
An Act Concerning Birth
Certificates for Homeless Youth*

- 2. Director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or the director's designee**
- Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport, Janus Center for Youth in Crisis, Bridgeport
 - Kids In Crisis, Cos Cob
 - Women & Families Center, Meriden
 - Youth Continuum, New Haven



*Public Act 13-142:
An Act Concerning Birth
Certificates for Homeless Youth*

- 3. Director of an emergency shelter program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, or the director's designee**
 - A list of current shelters can be found at <http://www.cceh.org/findhelp> (updated annually)



*Public Act 13-142:
An Act Concerning Birth
Certificates for Homeless Youth*

- When requesting the birth certificate...
- Both the homeless youth and the certifier must appear in person



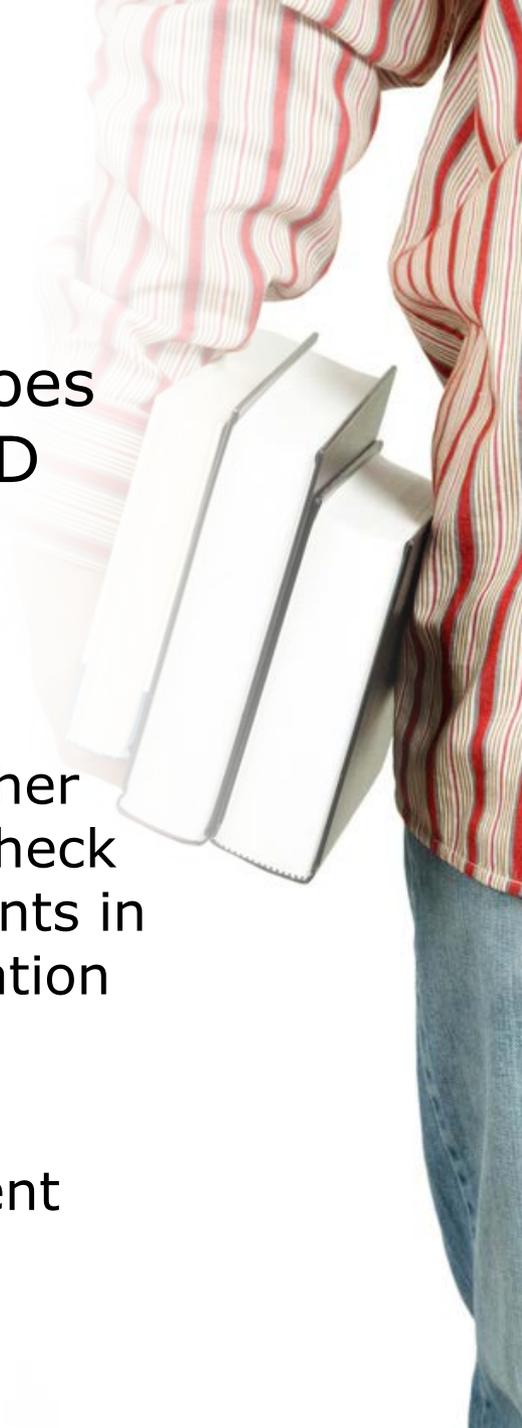
Public Act 13-142: An Act Concerning Birth Certificates for Homeless Youth

- The standard ID requirements must be met
 - Government issued photo ID or alternative documents as specified in regulation 19a-41-2
- Certifier must present identifying information to prove their status as a person authorized to certify homeless youth



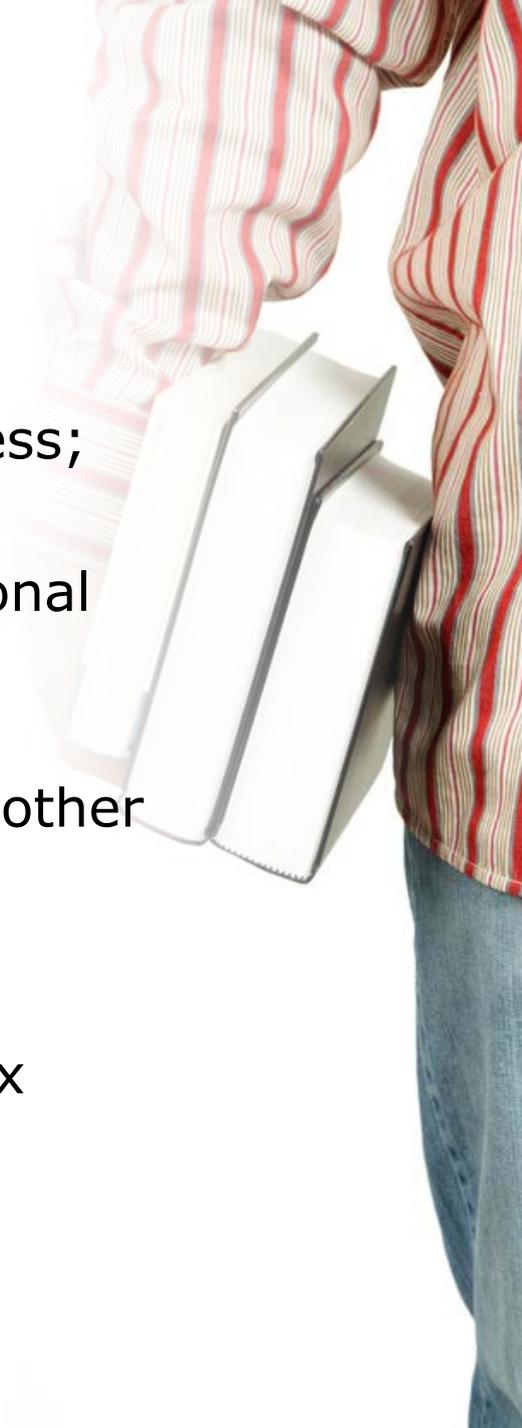
Alternative Forms of ID: Regulation 19a-41-2

- If the requestor of a birth certificate does not have a government issued photo ID
- Copies of two (2) of the following documents can be substituted for it:
 1. social security card;
 2. social security card supplemented with either an employment identification card, a paycheck stub or a W-2 form. Providing the documents in this subdivision fully satisfies the identification requirements of this section;
 3. automobile registration;
 4. copy of utility bill showing name and current address;



Alternative Forms of ID: Regulation 19a-41-2

5. checking account deposit slip or bank statement stating name and current address;
6. voter registration card;
7. valid government issued trade or professional license;
8. valid government issued firearm permit;
9. probation documents issued by a court or other government agency, pursuant to a criminal conviction;
10. letter from a government agency verifying identity. The letter shall be dated within six months prior to the date of the request;



Alternative Forms of ID: Regulation 19a-41-2

11. release documentation from a correctional institution containing a photograph of the former inmate and a release date within 12 months prior to the date of the request;
12. birth certificate of the requester;
13. military discharge papers;
14. current school or college photographic identification; or
15. government issued photographic identification that has expired within 12 months prior to the date of the request



Where can an unaccompanied homeless youth get a birth certificate?

- State DPH Vital Records Office (\$30), 410 Capitol Ave, Hartford, 8:15AM to 3:30PM, M-F
- Has birth records for the entire state
- No fee waiver



Where can an unaccompanied homeless youth get a birth certificate?

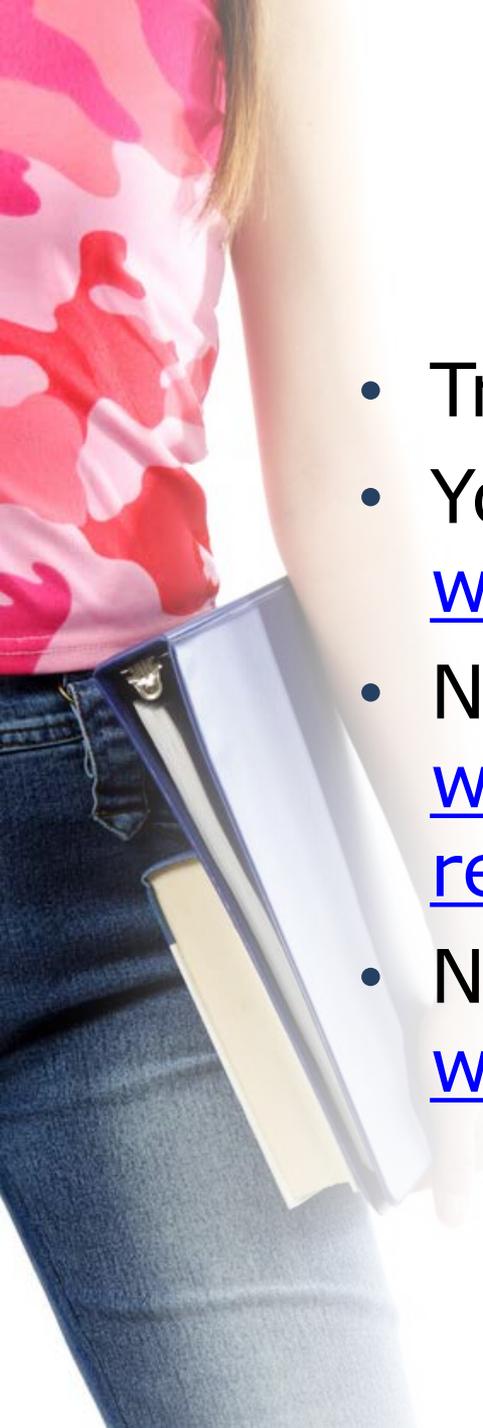
- Town Vital Records Office (\$20)
- Must go to the town in which the birth occurred or where the mother resided at the time of birth
- 169 Cities and Towns
- Vital Records is located in each Town Hall
- Hours vary by town
- No fee waiver



A person wearing a pink floral shirt and blue jeans is holding a blue folder. The person's arm and hand are visible on the left side of the image.

Resources

- CT Homeless Liaisons,
www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&q=333702
- DPH Office of Vital Records,
www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3132&q=388130
- Center for Children's Advocacy,
www.speakupteens.org

A person wearing a pink and red floral patterned shirt and blue jeans is holding a blue folder. The person's arm and hand are visible on the left side of the image.

Resources

- True Colors, www.ourtruecolors.org
- Youth shelters in CT, www.speakupteens.org/shelters/
- NAEHCY Higher Education Helpline, www.naehcy.org/educational-resources/helpline
- National Runaway Safeline, www.1800runaway.org/

A person wearing a pink and red floral patterned shirt and blue jeans is holding a blue folder. The person is positioned on the left side of the frame, with their arm and hand visible. The background is white.

Thanks for Joining Us!

- Presenter Email Addresses:
 - Diana Bowman, dbowman@serve.org
 - Jane Purtill, jane.purtill@ct.gov
 - Louis Tallarita, louis.tallarita@ct.gov
 - Stacey Violante, sviolante@kidscounsel.org