

November 23, 2022

Family and Youth Services Bureau and  
U.S. Department of Education are Partnering to Support  
National Runaway Prevention Month

November is **National Runaway Prevention Month (NRPM)**. This public awareness campaign, led by the [National Runaway Safeline \(NRS\)](#), with support from the [Family and Youth Services Bureau \(FYSB\)](#), is designed to **shine a light** on the experiences of youth contemplating running away and experiencing homelessness, who too often remain invisible. As part of the campaign, individuals, organizations, and communities nationwide work together to prevent youth homelessness.

This year, FYSB's Runway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Division and the Support and Accountability section of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)[i] are joining forces to encourage schools, youth-serving organizations, educators, and other school professionals to support and engage in NRPM activities. One important reason for this collaboration is to increase the support of youth experiencing homelessness or housing instability in school settings by connecting them with critical resources and services. Homelessness and educational attainment can impact one another - low educational attainment is a risk factor for homelessness, and homelessness is a risk factor for lower educational attainment.[ii] That is why collaboration across all levels is an important step toward the prevention of running away incidents and youth homelessness in schools nationwide.



The Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) programs serve nearly 50,000 young people annually nationwide. RHY Programs play an important role in providing a safe place to stay and a range of supportive services to ensure youths' well-being. The National Runaway Safeline

(NRS), which makes 125,000 contacts through its online and offline services, provides critical support and resources to youth in crisis, youth who run away, and those experiencing housing instability or homelessness. The U.S. Department of Education data indicate that almost 95,000 unaccompanied homeless youth were identified by school districts in the 2020-21 school year.

Furthermore, the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) most recent Point-In-Time (PIT) Count report indicated that in 2021, on a single night in the United States, 15,763 unaccompanied youth under the age of 25 experienced sheltered homelessness.[iii] Although any youth can experience homelessness, studies suggest that African American and Hispanic youth are at the greatest risk of homelessness, spend longer periods of time homeless, and have a higher risk of re-entering homelessness afterwards. LGBTQ youth have a 120 percent higher risk of experiencing homelessness.[iv,v]

### **Homelessness Among Youth in School**

During the 2019-2020 school year, public schools identified 1.3 million students who experienced homelessness, 2.5 percent of all students enrolled in public schools.[vi] Youth and young adults who experience homelessness are much less likely to remain and excel in school than their stably housed peers.

U.S. school systems have support systems in place for these youth,[vii] which can include school nurses and educational liaisons.[vi] Helping youth who are experiencing instability due to homelessness into school settings offers substantial benefits: providing a place of safety and security, a sense of belonging, a consistent and caring environment, an organized and predictable daily schedule, and a feeling of being safe and valued – all adding to their emotional well-being.

### **National Runaway Prevention Month – Shine a Light in Schools and Communities**

NRPM offers the opportunity to focus on youth experiencing homelessness in school settings in a way that can make a difference. When school officials identify youth experiencing homelessness, critical resources can be provided to the youth for additional support. This includes sharing information about how youth can contact the National Runaway Safeline (NRS) and services available from local RHY grantee programs.

Is your school interested in supporting NRPM? Here are steps you can take:

- [Register to become an NRPM Partner](#) and encourage your students to become [NRPM Youth Ambassadors](#).
- Encourage school officials to work with local governments to establish community proclamations in support of NRPM, raising community awareness of the homeless issue among youth and how schools are providing support.
- Visit the [NRPM](#) website to learn more about all [NRPM events](#).

[i] Learn more about the U.S. Department of Education's (ED's) programs for students experiencing homelessness at <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/education-for-homeless-children-and-youths-grants-for-state-and-local-activities/>. Access additional resources from the National Center for Homeless Education (an ED-funded technical assistance center) at <https://nche.ed.gov/>.

[ii] Kull, M.A., Morton, M.H., Patel, S., Curry, S. & Carreon, E. (2019). Missed opportunities: Education among youth and young adults experiencing homelessness in America. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. <https://voicesofyouthcount.org/brief/missed-opportunities-education-among-youth-experiencing-homelessness-in-america/>.

[iii] Housing and Urban Development. HUD Releases 2021 Annual Homeless Assessment Report Part 1. [Press Release], [https://www.hud.gov/press/press\\_releases\\_media\\_advisories/HUD\\_No\\_22\\_022](https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/HUD_No_22_022).

[iv] Berger Gonzalez, S., Morton, M., Patel, S., & Samuels, B. (2021). Centering racial equity in youth homelessness. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, <https://www.chapinhall.org/wp-content/uploads/RHY-Centering-Racial-Equity-Brief.pdf>.

[v] Housing and Urban Development. HUD Releases 2021 Annual Homeless Assessment Report Part 1. [Press Release], [https://www.hud.gov/press/press\\_releases\\_media\\_advisories/HUD\\_No\\_22\\_022](https://www.hud.gov/press/press_releases_media_advisories/HUD_No_22_022).

[vi] National Center for Homeless Education (NCHE) (2021). Student Homelessness in America. [Report], <https://nche.ed.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Student-Homelessness-in-America-2021.pdf>.

[vii] The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, <https://nche.ed.gov/legislation/mckinney-vento/>.

[viii] SchoolHouse Connection. 2020, January 13. Supporting the Attendance of Students Experiencing Homelessness, <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/supporting-attendance>.

GEARS Inc. | [4640 Forbes Blvd. Ste 120-P, Lanham, MD 20706](https://www.gearsinc.org/)

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