

FACT SHEET

REAUTHORIZE THE RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH PROGRAM



Pass the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act of 2023 (S.3125/H.R.6041)

The bipartisan and bicameral Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act of 2023 (RHYTPA) S.3125/H.R.6041 would enact critical updates to the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) program to ensure every young person in the United States has a safe place to call home and access to the resources they need to thrive. For over 50 years, RHYA has provided the foundation for American communities' responses to youth and young adult homelessness. However, RHYA has not been comprehensively updated in over a decade.

There are currently five funding streams serving youth and young adults under the RHYA:

- **Street Outreach Program (SOP)** provides education, treatment, counseling, and referrals to vital services to prevent sexual abuse and human trafficking and intervene early in a homelessness experience.
- **Basic Center Program (BCP)** provides temporary shelter, counseling, therapeutic family reunification, supportive, and aftercare services.
- **Transitional Living Program (TLP)** provides long-term housing with supportive services including Maternity Group Homes (MGH) for pregnant and parenting youth.
- **National Communications System** provides 24/7 national phone, text, and online communications systems, which connect youth and families in crisis with prevention services and reunify runaway youth with their families.
- **National Technical Assistance Center** provides training and technical assistance to all RHYA grantees.

RHYTPA would maintain the key components of this program and make the following critical updates:

- Add a new Prevention Services program focused on providing services specifically tailored toward young people at risk of experiencing any form of homelessness.
- Increase authorized appropriations levels to \$319.5 million annually.
- Extend the allowable length of stays in Basic Center Programs from 21 to 30 days (or longer as state law allows).
- Extend Transitional Living Program services to survivors of sexual abuse, exploitation, and trafficking.
- Increase the eligible age for services up to 25 years in Transitional Living Programs.
- Clarify that providers can have more than 20 beds in a building.
- Assist youth in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- Require comprehensive nondiscriminatory practices across all RHYA-funded programs.
- Require staff training on human trafficking, trauma, sexual abuse, and assault.
- Outreach to survivors of sexual abuse, exploitation, or trafficking persons to connect them to services.

RHYTPA WOULD PREVENT HUMAN TRAFFICKING + SERVE SURVIVORS

Annually, 4.2 million young people experience homelessness in America. Youth experiencing homelessness are trafficked at high rates – unsheltered youth are more likely to fall victim to sex trafficking. According to a 2016 report from the Family & Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), 24% of youth living on the streets exchanged sex for money, and 27.5% did so for a place to stay. Covenant House International found that nearly one in five youth experiencing homelessness had been a victim of human trafficking – inclusive of sex and labor trafficking or both.

Youth victims of abuse are more likely to exchange sex for the necessities they lack (e.g., shelter or food). FYSB's 2016 report noted that 23.5% of respondents had been abused before leaving home. A Las Vegas youth shelter found that 71% of minor sex trafficking survivors had been sexually abused.

Providing housing, basic life needs, and services prevents our young people from being exploited and/or trafficked for sex and/or labor. RHYA providers have been at the forefront of this work in American communities for over four decades. RHYTPA will strengthen their ability to prevent human trafficking and serve survivors.

SERVING YOUNG PEOPLE PREVENTS CHRONIC ADULT HOMELESSNESS

Research has found that homelessness among young people is a fluid experience. Many young people experience different types of homelessness, from couch-surfing to sleeping on the streets or in a shelter. American youth experiencing homelessness is a shifting population of young people who use temporary situations to get by when they cannot stay in a home of their own. Investing in a young person's life will enable them to avoid chronic homelessness, intergenerational cycles of poverty, and pervasive instances of trauma.

Additional research from cities has shown that a high proportion of their chronically homeless adult population first experienced homelessness as a young person under 25. The city of Seattle found that 43% of their unsheltered homeless population first experienced homelessness as a minor (18%) or as a young adult between 18 and 24 (25%). The new Prevention Services Program (PSP) funding created under this bill would be available to those who have successfully secured funding for one of the other project grants (BCP, TLP, or MGH).

COSPONSOR THE RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH AND TRAFFICKING PREVENTION ACT OF 2023

To cosponsor [S.3125](#) contact Trent Benishek for Senator Collins at Trent_Benishek@collins.senate.gov or Chastidy Burns for Senate Majority Whip Durbin at Chastidy_Burns@judiciary-dem.senate.gov.

To cosponsor [H.R.6041](#) contact Andrew Dunn for Representative Bonamici at Andrew.Dunn@mail.house.gov or Jaydn Smith for Representative Bacon at Jaydn.Smith@mail.house.gov.

Learn more: nn4youth.org/take-action-center/rhytpa-take-action

If you have questions, contact Darla Bardine at the National Network for Youth at darla.bardine@nn4youth.org.