

State Index on Youth Homelessness

2018

Executive Summary

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it.

Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

Challenges also include systems that are difficult to navigate and harsh environments that discourage them from seeking help. Many of these barriers are embedded in state laws, policies, and systems that states must address to complement ongoing efforts to preventing and ending youth homelessness. But youth are also resilient: with appropriate and adequate supports and services, youth experiencing homelessness can rise above their circumstances, escape the cycle of homelessness, and have the opportunity to succeed and lead fulfilling lives.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

The Index looks at 61 metrics in 50 states and District of Columbia, assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across states' laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation. States are able to determine how they performed across these metrics and how they compare to other states.

Overall findings reveal that states across the country need to do more to address youth homelessness.

- With the highest score being 65, there is still room for improvement in states that ranked near the top. Only 17* states (WA, CO, DC, LA, NV, NY, MA, MD, MN, NM, NJ, ME, OR, TX, CA, CT, CO), met over half of the Index's criteria and recommendations while six* states (AL, SC, ID, AR, UT, WY) failed to meet even a third of the criteria. The states that scored the least and are at the bottom of the rankings also performed worse on the Index's key recommendations. Those that scored at the top tend to have more resources, funding and advocacy dedicated to preventing and ending youth homelessness.
- While each state's performance across different criteria varied, youth experiencing homelessness generally face an environment that is hostile to and not supportive of their needs.
- States need to do a better job of incorporating the voices of youth in their work, prioritizing youth homelessness, increasing awareness for youth homelessness, and protecting vulnerable groups that are disproportionately represented among youth experiencing homelessness.
- Access to education and appropriate recognition of youth homelessness in laws, statutes, and regulations need to be prioritized across states. States need to invest in ensuring that the educational needs of students experiencing homelessness are met. Additionally, states need to dedicate more funding and resources to prevent and end youth homelessness.
- Washington and Massachusetts are particularly notable for meeting the most criteria and recommendations across laws, policies, systems, and environment in the Index. California is notable for having progressive laws and policies that benefit and protect youth experiencing homelessness. Washington along with Minnesota have the most systems within the Index to end youth homelessness. Meanwhile, Connecticut and the District of Columbia had the highest scores within the environments metrics.



Key findings address a wide array of topical areas that cut across laws, policies, systems, and environments, and collectively show some noteworthy albeit concerning trends.

Law & Policy Gaps

Many states lack a state law that provides adequate funding to address youth homelessness and comprehensive support services for youth who have runaway and/or are experiencing homelessness.

- 40 states (except CA, CO, DC, FL, LA, ME, MA, MN, NY, OR, WA) do not have a state law similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that provides funding for emergency services and other supports to prevent and end youth homelessness.

Most states are failing to prioritize the education rights of youth experiencing homelessness.

- Only 13 states (GA, IA, IN, KY, MA, MO, NE, OR, PA, TN, VA, WV, WY) have a grievance process in compliance with federal law that allows a student experiencing homelessness to dispute a decision about eligibility for McKinney-Vento services, school enrollment, or school selection.
- Only five states (CA, MD, NJ, TX, VT) have a process in place for youth who are experiencing homelessness, who are highly mobile and who may have to change schools multiple times during the academic year, to receive or accrue partial or alternative school credit for work completed in other schools.
- Only six states (CA, FL, GA, IA, LA, TX) have regulations that assist youth experiencing homelessness in accessing higher education.

Youth experiencing homelessness are still criminalized for behavior directly related to experiencing homelessness in some states.

- In all states, there are at least some cities that criminalize punish youth and young adults for otherwise innocent, life-sustaining behaviors conducted in public - such as sleeping - that if undertaken in the privacy of a safe home are not crimes. In most cases, neither the youth nor the adults have a legal, safe alternative available to them.
- 20 states criminalize harboring a runaway youth or concealing a minor and 11 states (CT, GA, ID, IN, KT, MD, MO, MT, OR, PA, WY) criminalize interfering with custodial rights. These laws make it difficult for shelters, or even friends/relatives, to take in an unaccompanied youth.
- 11 states (GA, ID, IN, KY, NE, OK, SC, TX, UT, WV, WY) consider running away as a status offense.
- 7 states (GA, ID, IN, NE, OH, SC, WV) classify truancy as a status offense.

Many states lack appropriate recognition of homeless youth in their laws, policies, and regulations.

- 41 states do not have a specific definition of the term “youth;” 32 states do not define the term “runaway;” and 28 states lack explicit definitions of the terms “homeless child,” “homeless youth,” “homeless minor,” and “homeless student.”
- 35 states limit the age of childhood, and by extension, the available critical supports and services most appropriate for young people, to persons under 18 years of age.

Throughout the country, justice-involved youth are at risk of experiencing homelessness upon discharge.

- 21 states do not have transition planning for youth exiting the juvenile justice system.
- 43 states do not address housing needs after discharge at all.
- 32 states do not address custody after discharge.

Many states restrict the contract rights (for example, the right to enter into a lease or a legally binding contract for services) of unaccompanied homeless youth living on their own and make it difficult or impossible to legally live independently.

- 20 states do not have a statutory process for youth under the age of 18 to be granted emancipation, a legal status indicating a minor is independent of their parents and permitted to live on their own.
- In states with established processes for emancipation, barriers continue to exist. Parental consent is required or cannot be waived in 25 states. While 27 states have age restrictions that limit the process to only certain young adults without an individualized assessment of a youth’s capacity.

Many states have barriers to accessing critical supports and services.

- 19 states do not have a specific process to allow unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage without parental consent.
- 21 states do not allow homeless minors to consent to their own mental health treatment.
- 2 states do not allow minors to consent to the diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- 42 states do not allow minors, regardless of their legal status, to consent to examination and treatment relating to a sexual assault.

Many states have not made federal benefits like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) accessible to youth experiencing homelessness.

- 40 states (except AZ, AR, CA, CO, CT, FL, MA, MS, WA, WV, WI) do not subsidize childcare for eligible minor parents when employment or school is required under TANF;
- 10 states (DE, FL, HI, NE, NV, NH, NC, WA, WV, WI) do not accommodate the unique circumstances of youth experiencing homelessness nor provide any exemptions from work or school requirements under TANF;
- In 8 states (AL, AK, FL, KS, KT, MN, NH, WA) youth experiencing homelessness cannot use SNAP benefits to buy prepared meals when they do not have regular access to a kitchen. While most states allow youth experiencing homelessness to use SNAP benefits at soup kitchens, very few (AZ, CA, and RI) actually allow them to use SNAP in restaurants.

Systemic Barriers

Systems that influence the implementation of state homeless youth policies and programs need improvement.

- 9 states (AL, AR, CA, FL, GA, IL, KS, NC, VA) currently do not have a plan to end homelessness, generally;
- 11 states (AL, AR, CA, FL, GA, ID, IL, KS, MS, NC, VA) do not have a plan to address youth homelessness;
- 46 states (except CT, DC, NV, NY, and SD) lack a plan to end youth homelessness that contains a strategy for addressing homelessness among LGBTQ youth;
- 47 states (except CO, MA, MN, and WA) do not have an agency, entity, or state employee that focuses solely on youth homelessness;
- 12 states (AL, CA, ID, IL, KS, MT, NE, NJ, NM, PA, SD, WY) do not maintain an interagency council on homelessness.

Environmental Challenges

Most states have more work to do towards creating environments that don't negatively impact youth who are most vulnerable of experiencing homelessness.

- Only the District of Columbia requires training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems;
- Only six states (CA, CO, CT, MD, MN, and WA) maintain a youth action board or council that informs youth homelessness policy;

- 48 states (except CA, DC, and NY) do not promote safe and inclusive environments in their runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity;
- 30 states do not promote safe and inclusive environments in their juvenile justice programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity;
- 38 states do not ban conversion therapy related to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression for minors;
- 24 states do not promote safe and inclusive environments in their child welfare programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity;
- None of the 50 states, nor the District of Columbia, have a public awareness campaign/common messaging to raise awareness to the issue of youth homelessness.

Key recommendations include:

- States should take specific steps to support LGBTQ youth, who are disproportionately represented in the population of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness.
- Prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in
 - all programs serving youth experiencing homelessness, including runaway and homeless youth programs, HIV treatment and prevention, substance use treatment, and mental health.
 - all systems serving youth experiencing homelessness, including child welfare and juvenile justice
- States should ban abusive, controversial, and ineffective services for LGBTQ youth such as conversion therapy;
- States should include LGBTQ youth in creating a statewide strategy to prevent and end youth homelessness;
- State laws, policies, and regulations should be more inclusive, developmentally and culturally appropriate, non-judgmental, and youth-centric in order to accommodate the needs of youth experiencing homelessness.
 - Older young people through the age of 24 should be made eligible for publicly-funded supports and services available to their younger peers under the age of majority.
- States should enact laws that augment ongoing federal efforts to prevent and end youth homelessness, including adequate funding and resources to supplement existing programs and provide comprehensive supports and services to youth experiencing homelessness.
- States should organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council - including significant representation of youth currently experiencing homelessness or

who have experienced homelessness in the recent past - to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.

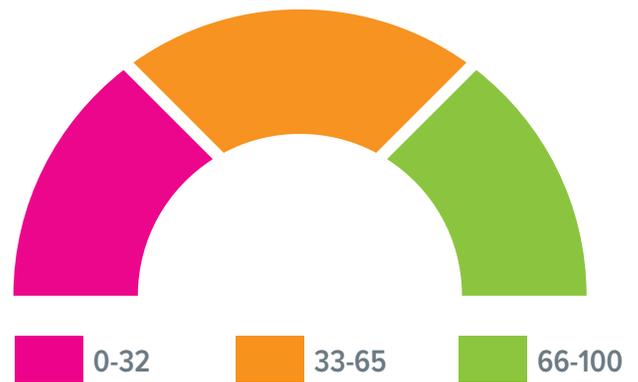
States should create or designate a specific agency, such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services, that will focus on offering, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.

- States should provide adequate and appropriate housing and opportunities for youth experiencing homelessness to access supports and services instead of punishing them for their housing status.
 - Court involvement and contact with the justice systems and law enforcement officers should be minimized and prevented.
 - States should rely on social services agencies instead of criminal justice systems to provide critical supports and services to youth experiencing homelessness.
 - Running away and truancy should be decriminalized.
 - Curfew laws should be revisited to ensure that no youth is punished for not having a safe or adequate home.
 - Service providers and good samaritans should not be penalized when they provide services in good faith to youth experiencing homelessness.
- States should create and appoint an Interagency Council on Homelessness that mirrors the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), providing a multi-sectoral plan to prevent and end youth homelessness.
- If reunification with family or appointment of a guardian is not feasible or not appropriate, states should provide youth experiencing homelessness the option to be emancipated when appropriate. Blanket barriers such as age restrictions or parental consent should be removed and replaced with an individualized assessment. States should also grant youth experiencing homelessness with appropriate contract rights so they could live on their own.
- States should prioritize the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness, ensuring their right to educational continuity and stability are protected.
 - States must address the needs of homeless students, including helping them succeed in school and providing the supports and services youth experiencing homelessness need to pursue post-secondary education.
- Barriers to accessing critical supports and services should be removed. States should ensure that appropriate discharge plans and supports are in place for justice-involved youth and ensure they are not put at risk of homelessness or released directly to homelessness. Streamlining the receipt of federal benefits would improve the ability of youth experiencing homelessness to be self-sufficient.

State Scores and Rankings

State	Score	Rank
Alabama	27	50
Alaska	42	31
Arizona	42	31
Arkansas	32	47
California	61	3
Colorado	60	5
Connecticut	61	3
Delaware	38	38
District of Columbia	58	7
Florida	43	28
Georgia	34	43
Hawaii	47	21
Idaho	30	49
Illinois	43	28
Indiana	45	23
Iowa	50	18
Kansas	33	44
Kentucky	38	38
Louisiana	56	8
Maine	54	12
Maryland	54	12
Massachusetts	63	2
Michigan	48	19
Minnesota	53	15
Mississippi	38	38
Missouri	47	21
Montana	39	36
Nebraska	37	41
Nevada	52	16
New Hampshire	45	23
New Jersey	55	10
New Mexico	54	12
New York	59	6
North Carolina	33	44
North Dakota	44	27
Ohio	43	28
Oklahoma	35	42

State	Score	Rank
Oregon	55	10
Pennsylvania	42	31
Rhode Island	39	36
South Carolina	27	50
South Dakota	45	23
Tennessee	48	19
Texas	51	17
Utah	33	44
Vermont	56	8
Virginia	45	23
Washington	65	1
West Virginia	41	35
Wisconsin	42	31
Wyoming	32	47



State Index on Youth Homelessness

2018

2	Executive Summary
8	About True Colors Fund and National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty
11	Acknowledgments
12	Glossary of Terms
13	Introduction
16	Results & Findings
20	Key Recommendations
23	Notable Practices
26	Appendix A - Detailed Methodology & Glossary of Metrics
33	Appendix B - Examples of Model Legislation and Regulations



About the True Colors Fund

The True Colors Fund was co-founded by Cyndi Lauper and works to end homelessness among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, creating a world where all young people can be their true selves.

Through a wide array of advocacy, training & education, and youth collaboration programs, the True Colors Fund works to ensure that no young person is homeless due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. For more information about the The True Colors Fund and to access publications such as this Index, please visit its website at truecolorsfund.org.

Board of Directors

Cyndi Lauper
Co-Founder

Cathy Nelson
President

Joseph Avallone
Vice President

Lisa Barbaris
Secretary & Co-Founder

Johnny Podell
Member & Co-Founder

Carson Kressley
Member

Nancy McMahon
Member

Ann Oliva
Member

Kevin Philip
Member

Patrick Pocklington
Member

Sara Ramirez
Member

Diane M. Reichenberger
Member

Staff

Gregory Lewis
Executive Director & CEO

Joe Moran, PMP
Chief Creative Officer & Chief of Staff

Jama Shelton, PhD
Chief Strategy Officer

Twiggy Pucci Garçon
Program Director

Justin T. Rush, JD
Public Policy Director

Christa Price, LMSW
Associate Program Director

Dee Balliet
Program Officer

Kahlib Barton
Program Officer

Nick Seip, CAPM
Program & Communications Officer

Coco Wheeler, MSW
Program Officer

Selina Lee
Senior Development & Communications Associate

Chantanae Singletary
MSW Intern

NATIONAL LAW CENTER ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

About The National Law Center On Homelessness & Poverty

The National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty (Law Center) is the only national organization dedicated to using the power of the law to end and prevent homelessness. It works to expand access to affordable housing, meet the immediate and long-term needs of those who are homeless or at risk, and strengthen the social safety-net through policy advocacy, public education, impact litigation, and advocacy training and support.

Our vision is for an end to homelessness in America. A home for every family and individual will be the norm and not the exception; a right and not a privilege.

For more information about the Law Center and to access publications such as this Index, please visit its website at nlchp.org.

Board of Directors

Edward R. McNicholas

*Chair
Sidley Austin LLP*

Kirsten Johnson-Obey

*Secretary
NeighborWorks America*

Bruce J. Casino

Attorney

Julia M. Jordan

Sullivan & Cromwell LLP

Georgia Kazakis

Covington & Burling LLP

G.W. Rolle

Missio Dei Church

Robert Warren

People for Fairness Coalition

Bruce E. Rosenblum

*Vice-Chair
The Carlyle Group*

Eric A. Bensky

Murphy & McGonigle PC

Rajib Chanda

Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP

Steve Judge

*Private Equity Growth Capital Council
(retired)*

Pamela Malester

*U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services (retired)*

Jeffrey A. Simes

Goodwin Procter LLP

Maria Foscarinis

*President
Executive Director*

Robert C. Ryan

*Treasurer
American Red Cross*

Paul F. Caron

Microsoft Corporation

Dwight A. Fettig

Porterfield, Fettig & Sears LLC

Father Alexander Karloutsos

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

Tashena Middleton

Attorney

Vasiliki Tsaganos

**Affiliations for identification purposes only*

**NATIONAL LAW CENTER
ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY**

Staff

Maggie Ardiente

Development & Communications Director

Nicole Davies

Data Management VISTA

Lisa DeBone

Development & Communications Assistant

Amirio Freeman

Emerson National Hunger Fellow

Janet Hostetler

Deputy Director

LeGrand Northcutt

Legal Intern

Eric Tars

Senior Attorney

Tristia Bauman

Senior Attorney

Michael Santos

Attorney

Janna Driskel

Law & Policy Intern

Harry Seavey

Law & Policy Intern

Rachel Lee

Networks & Events VISTA

Nathaniel Pettit

Law & Policy Intern

Cassidy Waskowicz

Volunteer Attorney

Dejah Craddock

Development & Communications VISTA

Charlotte Schwebel

Law & Policy Intern

Maria Foscarinis

Founder & Executive Director

Fina Short

Development & Communications Intern

LeGrand Northcutt

Legal Intern

Brandy Ryan

Legal Intern

Alisha Zhao

Law & Policy Intern

Acknowledgements

True Colors Fund and the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty are grateful to the following individuals and firms for their tremendous contributions to the research, writing, and layout of the Index:

Michael Santos of the Law Center and Justin T. Rush of True Colors Fund as co-authors of the Index.

True Colors Fund staff, especially contributing editors Gregory Lewis, Joe Moran, Twiggy Pucci Garçon, Christa Price, Nick Seip, Coco Wheeler, Selina Lee, and Chantanae Singletary.

Law Center staff, especially contributing editors Janet Hostetler, Maria Foscarinis, LaTissia Mitchell, Eric Tars, and Maggie Ardiente.

Law Center volunteers, interns, and fellows present and past, especially Cassidy Waskowicz, Sara Kang, Darrell Stanley, Audrey Koontz, Asritha Vinnakota, Burhan Abdi, Jason Carroll, Sidi Wen, and Rachel Risoleo.

True Colors Fund and the Law Center acknowledge with gratitude the generous support of the Raikes Foundation.

True Colors Fund and the Law Center also express deep gratitude for the contributions of the Advisory Committee,* which includes Kahlib Barton (True Colors Fund), Megan Blondin (MANY), Cathy ten Broeke (State of Minnesota), Marc Dones (Center for Social Innovation), Katie Durand (Connecticut Dept. of Housing), Arash Gafoori (Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth), Megan Gibbard Kline (A Way Home America), Jasmine Hayes (U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness), Aimee Hendrigan (Melville Charitable Trust), Amy Horton-Newell (American Bar Association), Sarah Hunter (Corporation for Supportive Housing), Melissa Jacobowitz (Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth), Kelli King-Jackson (The Simmons Foundation), Quintay Knight (True Colors Fellow), Katy Miller (U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness), Matthew Morton (Chapin Hall), Cheryl Secorski (Colorado Dept. of State), Naomi Smoot (Coalition for Juvenile Justice), and Rich Hooks Wayman (Children's Defense Fund).

The Law Center is grateful to Latham & Watkins, Carlyle Group, Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, and DLA Piper LLP, who contributed significant pro bono legal research on the relevant laws and policies that informed the Index's content. In particular we are grateful for Anna-Kay Richards of Latham & Watkins, Jonathan Menitove of Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, and Anne Geraghty Helms of DLA Piper LLP, for supervising the research projects for their respective firms.

The Law Center would also like to thank our Lawyers' Executive Advisory Partners (LEAP) member law firms: Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, Arent Fox LLP, Covington & Burling LLP, Debevoise & Plimpton LLP, Dechert LLP, Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP, Goldman Sachs Group, Inc., Goodwin Procter LLP, Hogan Lovells US LLP, Kirkland & Ellis LLP, Latham & Watkins LLP, Microsoft Corporation, Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP, Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP, Sidley Austin LLP, Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, and WilmerHale.

*Affiliations for identification purposes only; organizations may not fully endorse the entire content of the Index.

Suggested citation:

Rush, J., Santos, M. (2018). *State Index on Youth Homelessness*. True Colors Fund and the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty.

Glossary of Terms

The True Colors Fund and the National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty were very intentional when choosing the terms and language found throughout the Index. This included incorporating terms and definitions that communities of youth experiencing homelessness may use to describe themselves and making sure that the terms that were chosen accurately convey how the community wants to be, and should be, represented. To provide clarity, below is a list of commonly used terms and acronyms, arranged alphabetically, found throughout the Index.

Child: The Index is about youth experiencing homelessness. It uses various non-legal terms, such as “young people,” “youth,” “youth on their own,” and “unaccompanied youth.” References to these terms include youth who have not reached the legal age of majority and/or who have left home, either at the demand or request of parents or guardians, or of their own volition. By referring to “youth” or “young people,” rather than “children,” we attempt to recognize the unique developmental stage and needs of older children and young adults. The terms “child,” “children,” or “minor” are also used where legally significant in order to track terms that are used in state statutes, codes, and regulations. Most states define these terms to include youth up to the age of 18.

Cisgender: Denoting or relating to a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex.

Couch surfing: The act of moving from one temporary living arrangement to another without having a secure and stable place to be.

Gender Identity: One’s individual concept of self as male, female, a blend of both, or neither. How one perceives themselves and what they call themselves. One’s gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.

Gender Expression: External appearance of one’s gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.

Homeless: Refers to experiences of sleeping in places not meant for living, staying in shelters, or temporarily staying with others (“couch surfing”) while lacking a safe and stable alternative living arrangement.

LGBTQ: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer and/or questioning.

McKinney-Vento: Refers to the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431.

Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA): For the purposes of the Index, the term RHYA is used as shorthand for a law or series of laws at the state level that provides a significant level of prevention, identification, and/or funded early intervention services (drop-in centers, street outreach, community programs, coordinated entry and assessment (emergency/crisis response, shelters, host homes, transitional housing, etc.), or tailored housing solutions (non-time limited affordable housing, short-term assistance, etc) specifically for unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness.

Federal Runaway & Homeless Youth Act: The federal law that provides funding for three pillars of early intervention to address youth experiencing homelessness: street outreach, basic centers, and transitional living. RHYA received an enacted appropriation of \$119 million for FY18.

Sexual Orientation: An inherent or immutable enduring emotional, romantic or sexual attraction to other people.

State: The use of the terms “state” and “states” include the District of Columbia, unless otherwise noted.

Status Offense: Status offenses are behaviors or actions that are legal for adults but punishable by law when performed by legal minors, under the age of 18.

Unaccompanied Youth: Youth not in the physical custody of their parent, guardian, or custodian.

Youth: Unless otherwise defined within the text, when we use the terms “youth” we are specifically referring to young people ages 12-18.

Young Adults: Unless otherwise defined within the text, when we use the terms young adults we are specifically referring young people ages 18-24.

Introduction

On a single night in January 2017, the United States government counted 40,799 unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness under the age of 25.¹ This number is an underestimation and fails to provide a complete picture of the problem of youth homelessness in America, particularly because youth experiencing homelessness are largely hidden and difficult to identify.² Even more problematic is the fact that the number of youth experiencing homelessness is unlikely to decrease any time soon. For example, public schools have seen the number of unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness enrolled by at least 21% from 2012 to 2015.³

Annually, one in 30 youth ages 13 to 17 and one in 10 young adults ages 18 to 25 endure some form of homelessness.⁴ LGBTQ youth have a 120% increased risk of experiencing homelessness compared to youth who identify as heterosexual and cisgender. African American youth are also overrepresented, with an 83% increased risk of having experienced homelessness over youth of other races or ethnicities. Additionally, Latino and Latina youth make up 33% of 18- to 25-year-olds reporting homelessness. African American youth—especially young men aged 18 to 25—who identify as LGBTQ reported the highest rates of homelessness. Nearly one in four African American young men, ages 18 to 25, identifying as LGBTQ reported homelessness in the last 12 months, and this does not even include those who only reported couch-surfing.⁵ Such findings are consistent with the disparities that have been found among in-school suspensions, incarceration, and foster care placement.⁶

According to a service provider report, LGBTQ youth made up 33% of young people accessing homeless services.⁷ LGBTQ youth of color—particularly transgender youth of color—are more likely to experience violent crime, including sexual assault, police violence, robbery, and murder.⁸ Homelessness makes them even more prone to experiencing these traumatic events. Additionally, LGBTQ youth of color are vulnerable to discrimination in education, employment, housing, and more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system. Institutional racism contributes to pathways into homelessness for these young people, and it stymies their ability to exit homelessness.⁹

LGBTQ youth of color encounter numerous barriers as they attempt to access care and support from programs that are not designed to serve them. Health care, social services, housing, employment, and education systems are ill-equipped and those working in them are often under trained to meet the specific needs of young people experiencing homelessness who have been stigmatized due to lack of housing, racism, homophobia, and transphobia.

States must be held accountable for how they treat all youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth of color, who are particularly vulnerable. At a broader societal level, states must commit to the difficult work of eradicating the racism, homophobia, transphobia, and other forms of discrimination in our culture that have led to homelessness for too many young people. The tools to end homelessness, including the Index, are within our reach. Our willingness to use them remains to be seen.

1 Henry, M., Rosenthal, L., Watt, R., (2017). The 2017 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress. The U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development

2 Nat'l Law Ctr on Homelessness & Poverty, Don't Count On It: How the HUD Point-in-Time Count Underestimates the Homelessness Crisis in America (2017), <https://www.nlchp.org/documents/HUD-PIT-report2017>

3 Federal Data Summary - School Years 2012-13 to 2014-15: Education for Homeless Children and Youth. National Center for Homeless Education. <https://nche.ed.gov/downloads/data-comp-1213-1415.pdf>.

4 Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

5 Id., see also Morton, M. H., Samuels, G. M., Dworsky, A., & Patel, S. (2018). Missed opportunities: LGBTQ youth homelessness in America. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

6 Id. at Missed Opportunities.

7 Choi, S.K., Wilson, B.D.M., Shelton, J., & Gates, G. (2015). Serving Our Youth 2015: The Needs and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Experiencing Homelessness. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund.

8 National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP). (2016). Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and HIV-Affected Hate Violence in 2016. New York, NY: Emily Waters.

9 Price, C., Wheeler, C., Shelton, J., & Maury, M. (Eds.). (2016). At the Intersections: A collaborative report on LGBTQ youth homelessness. True Colors Fund and the National LGBTQ Task Force.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness

True Colors Fund and the Law Center are collaborating to research, analyze, and publish an annual State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) that measures, scores and reports on the systems, environment, and laws of all states as they relate to preventing and ending youth homelessness. The Index paints a broad picture of where states currently are and how they can collectively and individually improve their laws, policies, systems, and environments to end and prevent youth homelessness. The Index also provides an assessment of all states' current capacity to successfully prevent and end youth homelessness based on certain benchmarks and criteria. Additionally, the Index identifies best practices that have arisen through successful investment in runaway and youth homelessness policy and program funding in key states, and serves as a guide for policymakers and advocates on how to make changes to existing policies, systems, and services towards ending and preventing youth homelessness at the state level.

The goal of the Index is to support advocates, policymakers, and youth themselves by identifying problems and promising practices in states' laws, systems, and environments toward ending youth homelessness, and making recommendations for addressing these problems. Additionally, the Index establishes a baseline that can be used for measuring annual progress and that encourages and supports continual improvement in states' laws, systems, and services toward ending youth homelessness.

During the development of the Index, True Colors and the Law Center convened and consulted an advisory committee of nearly 30 leading experts from various sectors, including federal and

state governments, youth who have experienced homelessness, service providers, philanthropic organizations, national advocates, and other stakeholders working on youth homelessness issues ("Advisory Committee"). True Colors Fund and the Law Center, in consultation with Advisory Committee members, created the individual metrics for the following three categories that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation:

- Laws and policies on the state level, including state codes and regulations;
- Systems, including features of a state institution, organization, or system; and
- Environment, which encompasses physical, social, economic, and political factors indicative of how supportive and sensitive the state is to the needs of youth experiencing homelessness.

The key role of the Advisory Committee was to determine the assessment criteria used to score each state. The assessment criteria considered issues that spanned across runaway and homeless youth, child welfare, juvenile justice, and education programs. Through guided discussion, workshopping, and editing, the Advisory Committee informed the development of the 61* graded metrics that were used to evaluate each state. The Index does not examine state practices and how they implement laws and policies. Many states that have employed innovative models and approaches to address youth homelessness are not fully captured in the Index. The Index also does not address or measure the pace of advocacy efforts over time. Some states that may not have performed well in the Index but have ramped up efforts to address youth homelessness should not be discouraged. Even though these dynamics are outside the scope of the Index, states should continue to pursue these efforts.

Alone Without a Home: A State-by-State Review of Laws Affecting Unaccompanied Youth (Alone Without a Home), a 2012 report by the Law Center and the National Network for Youth, reviews the state of current law in 12 key issue areas that affect the lives and future prospects of unaccompanied homeless youth in all 50 U.S. states and six territories. These issue areas include statutes related to legal definitions, youth in need of supervision, status offenses, emancipation, contract rights, access to healthcare and other federal benefits, discharge from the juvenile justice system, right to education, harboring unaccompanied youth, and shelters and services for homeless youth. The report offers an overview of the range of approaches taken by states and the relative prevalence of such approaches, and reveals significant differences in many cases. The report also provides recommendations for policy change in each of the areas, with a view towards strengthening the supports available to unaccompanied youth.

Alone Without a Home informed the law and policy criteria of the Index. The Index shows the current status of states' laws and policies that affect homeless youth, identifying policy gaps, areas where more advocacy is needed, and how states can better support and meet the diverse needs of homeless youth. **To access additional information about the laws and policies included in the Index, please see *Alone Without a Home*, available at: https://www.nlchp.org/Alone_Without_A_Home.**

Youth Homelessness and International Human Rights

Youth homelessness is a social problem not limited to the United States. Yet other countries recognize the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of youth experiencing homelessness through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.¹ As of 2018, the United States is the only country in the world that has not ratified it. The convention preserves a child's right to education, healthcare, housing, and expression.² More recently, the Convention issued General Comment No. 21 on children in street situations, which includes youth experiencing homelessness. The General Comment seeks, among other things, commitment from the international community to prevent youth from entering street situations as well as to protect those already in street situations.³

On November 2017, the True Colors Fund and the Law Center, along with other international experts, assisted the American Bar Association in drafting mechanisms to help governments, including states in the Index, to implement the legal rights of youth experiencing homelessness within the General Comment. The implementation mechanisms call for involving young people in states' decision-making processes; fighting discrimination; developing a holistic and long-term national implementation strategy; providing training on the rights of street-connected youth; developing media campaigns and public education efforts to address societal perceptions of street-connected children and young people; adequately collecting data on street-connected youth; improving laws and policies to reflect the recommendations of the General Comment; and improving systems in place to identify, protect, serve, educate, decriminalize, and increase access to justice for youth experiencing homelessness

While the United States still needs to join the rest of the world in asserting the rights of youth experiencing homelessness and drive forward an agenda that pushes for equity and the health and well-being of all youth and young adults, many states should not - must not - wait to take action. This Index, and its recommendations and metrics, benchmarks, and criteria, is intended as a tool and resource for such action.

1 The United States has signed but not ratified the Convention.

2 Convention on the Rights of the Child, G.A. res. 44/25, annex, 44 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 49) at 167, U.N. Doc. A/44/49 (1989), entered into force Sept. 2, 1990, Article 27(3): "States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing."

3 U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, General comment No. 21 (2017) on children in street situations at 5, U.N. Doc. CRC/C/GC/21 (June 21, 2017).

Results & Findings

The Index seeks to evaluate each state and the District of Columbia's investment towards preventing and ending youth homelessness on certain metrics and benchmarks across laws and policies, systems, and environment. These metrics may look discrete at first blush, but they often overlap and inform each other in practice. And they certainly do not exist in a vacuum. The metrics included in the Index are not an exclusive list of all issues that states must address in order to prevent and end youth homelessness. But they are an integral part of a more comprehensive solution to achieving this goal. In fact, some states are already taking innovative approaches to address youth homelessness that are outside the scope of the Index. While the Index may not capture the full dynamics of how a state tackles youth homelessness, it provides a snapshot, with the metrics tied to constructive steps states could take in order to improve their laws, policies, systems, and environments for youth experiencing homelessness. Additionally, annual updates of the Index will include additional metrics as states begin to make progress and as innovate practices start to become more commonplace. States should address the gaps identified in the metrics and, if possible, incorporate lessons learned from innovative approaches happening on the local, state, and/or federal levels. Some notable practices and innovative approaches that complement the metrics are included in the Index. The Index also provides overall recommendations that applies to all states.

To find out how each state performed against the Index's metrics and the existing gaps that need to be addressed, please refer to the individual state scorecards. Each scorecard provides individual states quick facts and statistics that break down their ranking, their overall score, and their performance for each category in Law and Policy, Systems, and Environment. The scorecard also provides key highlights on how each state has moved the needle on addressing youth homelessness and some recommendations in order to improve their performance.

A closer look at the results of the Index show that majority of states are failing youth experiencing homelessness. Out of 100, 14 states barely got over 50 points. Most states do not prioritize addressing youth homelessness. States do not have political will to address it; the environment, be it physical, social, emotional, or political, is inimical to the interests and needs of youth experiencing homelessness; and state laws and policies do not recognize, protect, and benefit these vulnerable youth. These findings and notable trends are discussed in greater depth in the following section.

Law & Policy

Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied or who have run away from home, face numerous legal barriers. These legal barriers complicate their ability

to seek and receive critical supports and services to escape the intergenerational cycle of homelessness and poverty. Laws and policies vary from state to state but they can provide important protections and benefits for young people experiencing homelessness - making the exit from homelessness easier and faster and the time spent experiencing homelessness safer. Alternately, state laws and policies can offer punishments and barriers that make it more difficult to exit homelessness and make youth less safe while experiencing homelessness. The Index divides Law and Policy issues into 5 major categories, totaling 44 metrics. Additional details on each of these metrics are available in Appendix A.

Enact, enforce, and implement state laws, policies, and regulations that recognize the need for comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness.

Laws that provide adequate funding and resources and comprehensive supports and services are greatly needed across states. Currently, only 11 states - California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Florida, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Oregon, and Washington - have enacted state Runaway Homeless Youth Acts (RHYA). These laws may vary, but they allow states to provide funding and support for a significant level of prevention, identification, or early intervention services (drop-in centers, street outreach, community programs), coordinated entry and assessment (emergency/crisis response, shelters, host homes, transitional housing, etc.) and tailored housing solutions (non-time limited affordable housing, short-term assistance, etc) specifically for unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness.

Even without such comprehensive state law available, states should review, revise, and adopt laws and policies that expand their definitions and understanding of homelessness to account for the multidimensional needs of youth who are runaways and/or have experiencing homelessness. Definitions are critical components of statutes because they establish the meaning of key terms used therein, including who is protected and who is eligible for critical supports and services under the law. The Index examines how the states define young people, whether state law includes definitions of runaway and homeless children and youth, and up to what age young people are considered minors.

While a number of states explicitly define "homeless child," "homeless youth," "homeless minor," and "homeless student" (23 states), more advocacy is needed for state laws, policies, and regulations to include homeless youth in statutory and

other legal definitions in order to recognize their needs and establish a bright-line albeit nuanced rule on who is protected under the law and who is eligible for critical supports and services. Only 10 states specifically define the term “youth” (as opposed to “homeless youth”) in their statutes and only 19 specifically define the term runaway, indicating a need for better understanding of why some youth end up experiencing homelessness. Youth homelessness disproportionately affects LGBTQ youth, yet no state defines “sex” and/or “gender” within their RHYA state licensing agency regulations. While youth may be developmentally different from their younger peers, youth still need protections available to children and minors. Only 16 states establish the age of childhood to include persons older than 18.

Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness. States are struggling to meet the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness.

Data from the Index show that a majority of states are not in full compliance with federal law. In 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) amended, reauthorized, and strengthened the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The Index looked at some of the ESSA provisions to examine what states have done to comply with the 2015 law, which strengthened and clarified the rights of homeless youth to access stable education. Only *13 states (GA, IN, IA, KY, MA, MO, NE, OR, PA, TN, VA, WV, WY), have legally sufficient protections allowing students to dispute decisions denying them accommodations under the law. As clarified by ESSA in 2015, it is essential for students to have a robust grievance procedure in case a dispute arises over their eligibility, school selection, or school enrollment. Additionally, only five states have regulations that allow partial and alternative credit accrual for youth experiencing homelessness. For students who often change schools due to high mobility lack of credit for partial semesters can be a serious impediment to completing and advancing in school. Only *six states have laws or regulations that promote access to higher education for youth experiencing homelessness.

Preventing contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems of youth experiencing homelessness.

In many cities across the United States, youth experiencing homelessness are subject to liability under criminalization ordinances applicable to all age groups, as well as ordinances that apply uniquely to them, such as status offenses. As used throughout the Index, status offenses are behaviors or actions that are legal for adults but punishable when performed by legal minors, under the age of 18. Schools also play a role in entangling homeless children and youth with the juvenile and

criminal justice systems through harsh, zero-tolerance school discipline policies. The Index looks at three specific areas: (1) how state laws and regulations provide opportunities for homeless youth to access diversionary supports and services that limit their court involvement; (2) status offenses; and (3) whether and how those who help homeless youth are criminalized. Many states and territories permit the juvenile or family court to become involved with young people or families who need supervision or services. Reliance on these systems to provide supports and services to homeless youth should be approached with caution because in several jurisdictions, these systems are also authorized to punish homeless youth. States should take proactive steps in providing diversionary services as an alternative to court involvement and, wherever possible, assign the responsibility for the care and support of homeless youth to the social service systems rather than the justice systems. In many jurisdictions, a young person who “needs supervision” can be taken into custody by police or other government officials and may need to go through court proceedings before receiving supports and services.

The Index presents the circumstances in which youth experiencing homelessness are, and the consequences for being, labeled or identified as a child in need of services or supervision (CHINS) under various state laws. Youth and families are considered in need of supervision in a variety of circumstances, including when youth have run away from home, when they have committed a status offense, when they need care or rehabilitation, or when they are in immediate danger. A majority of states (44) have a CHINS related statute that allows the state to either connect youth experiencing homelessness to critical supports and services or entangle them with the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Youth experiencing homelessness could be labeled as CHINS but in only 23 states are they provided the opportunity to receive diversion services without requiring court involvement and in only three states are unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness allowed to request services independent of their parents or guardians. In some jurisdictions, youth experiencing homelessness and labeled CHINS can be ordered to pay fines and/or restitution (15), to undergo drug screening (5), to relinquish their driver’s license (10); or to be detained in secure facilities even without a valid court order (i.e. without having violated a previous directive from a court) (13) and to mingle with delinquent youth when taken into custody (36). Not only do these sanctions punish young people for the mere act of running away, which is often an act of self-preservation, but they open the doors for further court involvement when youth are unable to meet the requirements for such punishments.

Some states have statutes that criminalize youth experiencing homelessness for actions directly related to their homelessness. Youth living on the streets are punished for committing acts in public that are necessary for their survival, such as sleeping,

eating, and resting.¹ Over the past decade, laws prohibiting camping, sitting, lying down, or sleeping in public, laws prohibiting loitering, loafing, and vagrancy, laws prohibiting panhandling, laws prohibiting sleeping in vehicles, and laws prohibiting food sharing have dramatically increased.² Many of these laws are enforced under the guise of the need to address public health concerns. Yet these laws are selectively enforced against individuals who have nowhere else to go but live on the streets, making it much harder for youth to exit homelessness.

There are also status offense laws, which prohibit actions only when conducted by minors, and which may target youth experiencing homelessness unfairly. For example, 13 states consider running away to be a crime. Truancy, or a person under a certain age (often 16 years) being outside of school during school hours, is punishable in seven states. Truancy enforcement can trap youth in the juvenile justice system simply because the youth does not know their rights to school access or because they want to avoid a hostile school environment, where they cannot be protected from abuse or be given a safe space. Youth and young adults commonly experiment with negative behaviors such as running away or being truant. States should provide them the opportunity to learn from the consequences of such behaviors without unfairly punishing them. Further entanglement in the juvenile justice system can make youth more likely to be involved in a life of crime because of their increased exposure to other criminal peers, the justice system, and the effects of “labeling.”³

Some states even penalize adults and organizations trying to help youth experiencing homelessness. Harboring a runaway youth or concealing a minor may be considered a crime in 35* states, and interfering with custodial rights is a crime in 11* states. In only 7* states are shelters allowed to delay or waive requirements to notify parents, discouraging homeless youth who ran away from home from coming forward to seek help in the other 44 states.

Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently where appropriate.

Emancipation allows a young person to become a legal adult while they are still under the legal age of majority. Emancipation facilitates a young person’s ability to legally obtain housing, buy essential goods, engage in other transactions necessary to live independently, or make their own decisions about medical care, education, and other personal matters. The Index consid-

Data concerning youth homelessness are improving, giving us a better picture of which populations are most vulnerable. *Voices of Youth Count (VoYC)* is a national initiative designed to fill gaps in the nation’s data about the scope and scale of youth experiencing homelessness, as well as the life circumstances and experiences of runaway, unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness and unstably housed youth between the ages of 13 and 25 years old. According to the study, the disparities across racial and ethnic groups could not be more striking.

ers whether the states permit youth to be emancipated and under what circumstances, what barriers youth may encounter in seeking emancipation such as parental consent or blanket age restriction, and whether the states give minors contract rights or allow them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes such as obtaining necessities. 20* states still do not have an established process for emancipation while 27* states recognize youth to be emancipated in very limited circumstances (i.e. when they are married while still a minor). Where emancipation is an option, barriers may still exist. Parental consent is required and cannot be waived in 25* states, making it difficult for youth to seek legal independence. Only 5 states allow youth of any age to be emancipated. In 6* states, minors do not have contract rights and are not allowed to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes.

Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services.

Youth experiencing homelessness face numerous barriers to accessing critical supports and services. Youth still cannot apply for health insurance coverage on their own in 19* states, cannot consent to their own mental health treatment in 21* states, and cannot get treatment for substance use in non-residential settings without parental consent in 8* states. However, even fewer states ensure youth experiencing homelessness can immediately receive other health-related services and treatment without parental consent since only 9* allow minors to consent to examination and treatment relating to sexual assault.

While many states have ongoing efforts to prevent and limit the contact of youth experiencing homelessness with the juvenile and criminal justice systems, states also need to ensure that those already in contact with these systems are not released to homelessness. 21* states still do not have transition planning for children and youth exiting the juvenile justice system. Only 8* states specifically address housing needs and only 18* address custody after discharge. Only 6* states require permanency planning for committed adjudicated youth and only 4* provide transportation after discharge from the juvenile justice system.

1 National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, *Housing Not Handcuffs: Ending the Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities*, <https://www.nlchp.org/documents/Housing-Not-Handcuffs>.

2 National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, *Housing Not Handcuffs: Ending the Criminalization of Homelessness in U.S. Cities*, <https://www.nlchp.org/documents/Housing-Not-Handcuffs>.

3 Petrosino, Anthony, Carolyn Turpin-Petrosino, and Sarah Guckenburg. 2010. “Formal System Processing of Juveniles: Effects on Delinquency.” *Campbell Systematic Reviews* <http://campbellcollaboration.org/lib/project/81>

Federal law provides supports and services to youth experiencing homelessness, but the ability of youth experiencing homelessness to access such benefits depends largely on how the states implement the programs. In the case of TANF, only *11 states subsidize child care for eligible minors when employment or school is required to receive benefits. *41 states provide exemptions from TANF's family living, work, or education requirements. Only 3* states provide cash incentives for youth who graduate high school or earn a GED. In the majority of states, receipt of federal benefits is streamlined. TANF recipients are categorically eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or food stamps) in 41* states and youth experiencing homelessness can apply for both SNAP and TANF, or SNAP and Medicaid in over *40 states. In 43 states, youth experiencing homelessness are explicitly allowed to use SNAP to buy hot restaurant or prepared meals, which is helpful for youth without easy access to a kitchen. Youth experiencing homelessness who are eligible for one of these programs should be categorically eligible for the other benefits as well in order to reduce barriers to accessing and utilizing such benefits.

Systems & Environment

Making meaningful changes towards preventing and ending youth homelessness means acknowledging and preemptively addressing the issues that lead to the experience in the first place. Youth homelessness does not have a single root cause nor does it exist in a vacuum, but racism, homophobia, and transphobia are factors that render some youth more susceptible than others to experiencing homelessness. States need to create solutions at multiple levels, including individual, family, community, and institutional systems to improve the environments for vulnerable youth who do not have safe housing. For these solutions to be effective, it is critical to understand that race and ethnicity and sexual orientation and gender identity and expression are not mutually exclusive identities but often overlap and develop in parallel to each other. Youth experiencing homelessness have intersectional identities that need to be addressed concurrently.

Most states have a long way to go towards ensuring that the state's systems (features of an institution or organization that influence state homeless youth policy/program implementation) and environments (the physical, social, or economic factors that influence state homeless youth policy/program implementation) are conducive to preventing and ending the youth homelessness epidemic. Racism, homophobia, transphobia, stigma, and lack of visibility all meet with lack of money, resources, and support to create a perfect storm that often leads to youth experiencing homelessness.

While *43 states have a plan to end homelessness and *41 states have a specific strategy towards addressing the issue of youth homelessness, only *5 states have a strategy in place addressing homelessness among LGBTQ youth, who are at a 120%

higher likelihood of experiencing homelessness than their non-LGBTQ counterparts.¹ Additionally, up to 40% of youth experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQ, even though LGBTQ people only make up 7% of the general population.² Having a plan that not only recognizes, identifies, and proposes concrete steps towards moving the needle on youth homelessness for our most vulnerable youth - LGBTQ and youth of color - is essential. Additionally, most states fail to protect vulnerable youth from abuse via conversion therapy. Only *13 states explicitly ban conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression. Though some states have a plan or strategy to address youth homelessness, only *4 states maintain an office dedicated to homeless youth services and focused solely on creating, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.

States are making some investments in providing support for youth experiencing homelessness, with *39 states currently having systems in place to address the proof of residency requirements that are often necessary for receiving a state-issued identification card. Additionally, *28 states provide tuition waivers to foster youth, allowing them access to higher education. Providing tuition waivers to foster youth is a smart investment in preventing homelessness because the child welfare system is a feeder for youth homelessness and because youth exiting the foster care system often need assistance accessing higher education.

All states have a long way to go towards raising awareness to the issue of youth homelessness with *0 having a public awareness campaign/common messaging for local awareness campaigns for youth homelessness. Additionally, only *3 states consult a youth action board or council - including significant representation of youth currently experiencing homelessness or who have experienced homelessness in the recent past - so that the voices and insights of youth experiencing homelessness are reflected in policy making.

*39 states have heeded the recommendation of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness by establishing and maintaining a state Interagency Council on Homelessness, convening multiple agencies to coordinate the state's response to homelessness.

1 Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). *Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America*. National estimates. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

2 Durso, L.E., & Gates, G.J. (2012). *Serving Our Youth: Findings from a National Survey of Service Providers Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth who are Homeless or at Risk of Becoming Homeless*. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund and The Palette Fund.

Key Recommendations

At the heart of the State Index is a set of core recommendations that states should follow to complement any existing efforts towards preventing and ending youth homelessness. This includes:

- I. Enacting comprehensive laws that provide a significant level of prevention, identification, and early intervention services (drop-in centers, street outreach, community programs, coordinated entry and assessment (emergency/crisis response, shelters, host homes, transitional housing), or tailored housing solutions (non-time limited affordable housing, short-term assistance, etc) specifically for unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness with a corresponding appropriation. Such a state law, sufficiently funded and working in tandem with funding provided by RHYA on the federal level will provide the necessary funding and infrastructure to better address youth homelessness. For an example of what a state RHYA can look like, please refer to Appendix B for model language and legislation.
 - Enacting a state law similar to the federal RHYA will provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
 - While authorizing these new programs is important, adequately funding them is key. An annual appropriation that provides support for RHYA programs ensures that there's state accountability and investment in preventing and ending youth homelessness.
- II. Creating a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services, Homeless Youth State Coordinator, or a Commissioner on Youth Homelessness, etc. - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.
- III. Creating and appointing a State Interagency Council on Homelessness, similar to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, to convene state agencies to develop and carry out a multi-sectoral plan to prevent and end youth homelessness that is consistent with the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness's (USICH) criteria and benchmarks for ending youth homelessness.¹.
 - For those states interested in implementing an Interagency Council on Homelessness, the USICH has provided a step-by-step guide for developing a council.²
- IV. Providing protections against discrimination for youth who are seeking services, implementing policies that ban controversial and ineffective services for LGBTQ youth such as conversion therapy, and creating a statewide strategy to prevent and end youth homelessness that is inclusive of LGBTQ youth. Such strategy should also include explicit prohibition on discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in state statutes and regulations specific to child welfare systems, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth systems.
- V. Organizing and maintaining a self-governing youth action council - including significant representation of youth who are currently experiencing homelessness or who have experienced homelessness in the recent past - to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- VI. Recognizing youth experiencing homelessness in state laws, policies, and regulations. Key definitions need to be adopted, and they, along with other relevant laws and policies need to be more inclusive, developmentally and culturally appropriate, non-judgmental, and youth-centric.
 - States should establish a definition of “youth” that is distinct from “child;”
 - Eligibility for publicly-funded opportunities and supports available to children and youth should be extended to include older young people through age 24;
 - The terms “runaway youth,” “homeless youth,” and “runaway child” should be specifically defined in both criminal and civil statutes, using the definition of homelessness found in the education subtitle of the federal McKinney-Vento Act.³

1 United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2018, February). Criteria and Benchmarks for Achieving the Goal of Ending Youth Homelessness. Retrieved from: https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Youth-Criteria-and-Benchmarks-revised-Feb-2018.pdf

2 United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, Developing a State Interagency Council on Homelessness: A Step-by-Step Guide. https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/pptsich.pdf

3 42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.

- VII. Complying with the federal requirements to ensure access to education for youth experiencing homelessness.
- The federal McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, recently updated by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, requires states to meet the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness. States must ensure proper implementation of the law in order to ensure homeless youth do not experience any barriers to access free, appropriate public education. Under the 2015 amendments, states must also adopt statutes or regulations to improve access to education for youth experiencing homelessness.
 - States should implement a robust dispute resolution process that would protect the education rights of students experiencing homelessness and allow them and their families to appeal such rights should there be a dispute in regards to eligibility, school placement, or enrollment. States also should find ways to help homeless youth stay and succeed in school, including permitting them to accrue credits for work previously done in another school and promoting access to higher education.
- VIII. Preventing and limiting youth experiencing homelessness contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems and connecting them to critical supports and services.
- Punitive approaches to unaccompanied youth should be avoided and court involvement minimized. Court sanctions such as fines, fees, drug screening, and suspended driving privileges increase the probability of more court involvement. Rather than punishing youth, states should provide them with the opportunity to access diversionary supports and services. The juvenile justice system should not be used for the sole purpose of providing youth services related to housing or homelessness.
 - Youths' safety should be the paramount concern. States should rely less on law enforcement and more on service providers to address the needs of youth experiencing homelessness. Youth should only be taken into custody in limited circumstances and with their consent, or if they are in immediate physical danger. States should adopt more nuanced policies that cover youth experiencing homelessness in different circumstances, including those who are on their own and those in families that need services. At no point should law enforcement or any entity force youth to return home against their will as this could put them at even greater risk of harm or danger.
 - Running away and truancy should be decriminalized. The juvenile justice system should not bear the responsibility for the safety and care of youth experiencing homelessness who run away from home. Communities should work with schools to ensure youth experiencing homelessness have access to safe, adequate, and appropriate transportation and that school attendance policies accommodate the needs of these students.
 - Curfews for youth experiencing homelessness should be eliminated and states should find ways to provide adequate and appropriate shelter, rather than issuing fines and citations, to those youth who call the streets their home.
 - Service providers, "Good Samaritans," and other professionals should be protected from civil or criminal liability when they render medical care or service in good faith to unaccompanied youth.
- IX. Legally permitting unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness to live on their own if reunification with family or appointment of a guardian is not feasible or is not appropriate.
- Barriers to emancipation, such as blanket minimum age restrictions or parental consent without exceptions, should be reviewed and revised.
 - States should consider establishing emancipation procedures with no minimum age restriction, but rather an individualized assessment of each youth's ability to live independently. Emancipation procedures should permit courts the maximum flexibility to grant emancipation according to the best interests of the youth. Young people develop independent living skills at different ages, and as such, emancipation statutes should not limit courts by establishing minimum age limits. Likewise, youth should be allowed to initiate the procedures independently and should not have to obtain parental consent.
 - In some cases, neglectful or abusive parents may withhold consent to punish their children. The law should not permit such a harmful outcome, as emancipation may be essential for youth to live independently.
 - Procedural safeguards should be in place to ensure the process is fair and accessible to youth and to prevent abuse of the process by parents.
 - In cases of extreme family conflict, it can be advantageous for youth to become emancipated from their parents. Emancipation can ensure that financial benefits to which a youth is entitled go directly to a youth who is caring for themselves, rather than to parents or guardians.
 - Emancipation should be approached cautiously; among other concerns it can terminate parents' responsibility for a young person and leave the youth with no legal rights to demand support or care from parents or to receive benefits upon their death. Nonetheless, emancipation can be extremely important for unaccompanied youth, as it permits them to function as adults in many circumstances, including controlling their finances, entering into contracts, renting property, consenting to medical treatment, and marrying. The availability of emancipation and the ability to contract for necessities is crucial for those youth experiencing homelessness who live independently, either by choice or because there are no adults available to support them. Youth experiencing homelessness should be given authority to make important decisions about their own health, safety, and welfare. Unaccompanied minors able to live on their own should be allowed to contract for necessities, including real property, employment, student loans, admission to school, medical and/mental health care treatment, bank accounts, cell phones, insur-

ance, and admission to shelter, housing, and supportive service programs.

X. Removing barriers facing youth experiencing homelessness in accessing critical supports and services.

- States should authorize or require the provision of healthcare, education, and other needed supports and services to youth experiencing homelessness in cases where obtaining parental consent is not possible or necessary. In addition to financial barriers that may exist and obstacles associated with confidentiality of services, homeless youth should be given authority to consent for their own care. Youth should be able to access care and services for health conditions, without the significant deterrent of parental consent and notification requirements.
- States should ensure discharge-planning and aftercare procedures are in place for youth in juvenile justice facilities so that they are not at risk of experiencing homelessness upon release. Youth should not be released into unsafe or temporary living situations that could lead to homelessness; states should focus on appropriate release procedures that include adequate supports and services that foster reintegration of youth discharged from the juvenile justice system. Combating youth homelessness upon release can benefit youth who are at-risk of displacement and also reduce rates of youth re-entering juvenile justice systems. .
- State laws, policies, and regulations implementing federal benefits such as SNAP and TANF should provide exemptions that account for the precarious circumstances of youth experiencing homelessness.

Notable Practices

To capture the full dynamics of how to effectively and efficiently support youth experiencing homelessness in addition to the metrics and benchmarks, the Index puts a spotlight on some states for notable practices that complement existing resources and ongoing efforts. Other states should consider informing their own plans with these few examples of work taking place across the country.

Washington State's Office of Homeless Youth Services

The Evergreen State is notable for ranking first in the Index, albeit there is still room for improvement (see Washington scorecard). Specifically, Washington can do more to ensure that the voices of youth experiencing homelessness are considered and included in policymaking, as well as increasing public awareness of issues related to youth homelessness. Relative to other states' performance in the Index, Washington did well across law and policy, systems, and environment. The Evergreen State also has already implemented many of the Index's key recommendations.

For example, many states lack a single agency or entity responsible for creating, maintaining, and evaluating a coordinated spectrum of services and targeted interventions to improve the safety, health, and welfare of runaway and homeless youth. Additionally, the investment in policies, programs, and allocated funding towards ending youth homelessness varies from state-to-state. By implementing a department, such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services, Homeless Youth State Coordinator, or Commissioner on Youth Homelessness, that focuses exclusively on creating, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs, states can take an active step towards preventing and ending youth homelessness.

This is precisely what Washington did. Through the implementation of an office within its Department of Commerce, the Evergreen State made a major move towards preventing and ending youth homelessness by enacting an Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs (OHY), which leads the statewide efforts to reduce and prevent homelessness for youth and young adults. The OHY has five priority service areas that work toward the meeting the goal of ensuring Washington youth and young adults have:

- **Stable Housing:** every youth has a safe and healthy place to sleep at night;
- **Family Reconciliation:** families are reunited when safe and appropriate;
- **Permanent Connections:** youth have opportunities to establish positive, healthy relationships with adults;
- **Education and Employment:** youth have opportunities to advance in their education or training and obtain employment;
- **Social and Emotional Well-Being:** youth have access to behavioral and physical health care.

Furthermore, the OHY works with partners and communities to establish ongoing and future funding, policy, and best practices related to improving the lives of youth experiencing homelessness in Washington. Funding for the OHY is specifically allocated to core programs, each with a targeted mission, working together to increase the well-being of youth and young adults in transition.

- **Crisis Residential Centers:** Temporary residence, assessment, referrals, and permanency planning services provided in semi-secure and secure facilities for youth ages 12 through 17 who are in conflict with their family, have run away from home, or whose health and safety is at risk.
- **Hope Centers:** Temporary residence, assessment, referrals, and permanency planning services for street youth under the age of 18
- **Independent Youth Housing Program:** Rental assistance and case management for eligible youth who have aged out of the state foster care system. Participants must be between 18 and 23 years old, have been a dependent of the state at any time during the four-month period preceding

his or her 18th birthday, and meet income eligibility. Priority is given to young adults who were dependents of the state for at least one year

- **Street Youth Services:** Street Youth Services (SYS) connect youth under the age of 18 to services and resources through street and community-based outreach. Services can include either directly or through referral drug/alcohol abuse intervention, crisis intervention, counseling, access to emergency shelter or housing, prevention and education activities, employment skill building, advocacy, family-focused services, and follow-up support
- **Young Adult Shelter:** Emergency, temporary shelter, assessment, referrals, and permanency planning services for young adults ages 18 through 24.

The Office of Homeless Youth provides the following guidance to Coordinated Entries (CE's) regarding protocols for assessing, prioritizing, and referring youth experiencing homelessness (under 18) and young adults (18-24) to housing resources: Five Recommendations for Making Coordinated Entry Work for Homeless Youth and Young Adults. This guidance is a tool for CE's and homeless youth providers as they mutually work to ensure housing resources are accessible to those youth experiencing homelessness and young adults who are most in need.¹

Interagency Work Group on Youth Homelessness - Washington instituted an Interagency Work Group on Youth Homelessness, by the Governor's directive, in 2017. The Work Group convenes state agency partners to develop shared goals, outcomes, and action plans to prevent and design system response to youth homelessness in Washington State. Additionally, the work group focuses on designing action plans, creating goals to operationalize the Governor's directive and provide feedback on policy initiatives.

Minnesota's Public and Private Partnerships

Innovative approaches towards preventing and ending youth homelessness should not only include not only legislative, administrative, or executive actions but also public and private partnerships. If done effectively, partnerships with the private sector can provide additional funding and resources for programs, supports, and services necessary to prevent and end youth homelessness.

The North Star State's performance within the Systems category of the Index is particularly notable for receiving the most points

(tied along with Washington) and for having already implemented the Index's key recommendations within this category. One aspect of Minnesota's ongoing efforts to address youth homelessness not fully captured in the metrics is how its leverages public and private partnerships.

Heading Home Minnesota (HHM) began in 2004 with the Minnesota's Business Plan to end long-term homelessness, which Minnesota Housing and its partners successfully completed in November 2013 by funding the last of 4,000 housing opportunities called for in the plan. Following release of the state plan, several philanthropic leaders formed a "Partners Fund" to support the work to end homelessness. Led by the Frey Foundation, these funders have contributed a total of \$3.9 million over the ensuing eight years. In 2010, the State published Heading Home Roadmap to Ending Homelessness. The Roadmap drew ideas from local and regional plans to set the stage for the next state plan.

In 2013, Minnesota put new energy behind its work to end homelessness by reconstituting the Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness (MICH), to include eleven commissioners and the Governor's Chief of Staff. Chaired by Commissioners Tingerthal of Minnesota Housing and Jesson of the Department of Human Services, MICH has built on past success to develop a plan that will take the state to a new level in its work to prevent and end homelessness. The Interagency Council Plan focuses on housing stability as the foundation for the state's goals of a Minnesota whose residents are healthy, educated, and employed.

The HHM Funders Collaborative includes many of the state's most recognized foundations and intermediaries. By marshaling resources and aligning investments, collaborative members amplify the work of public agencies and the private and philanthropic sectors to replace the revolving door of housing instability with a front door to a safe, stable home for all Minnesotans.

The Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness leads the state's work to prevent and end homelessness through the collaboration of 11 state agencies. The purpose of MICH is to maximize and align state resources. The State Director to Prevent and End Homelessness directs the work of MICH.

The HHM Coordinators Council (HHM Council) brings together the staff leaders of all state, county, and regional plans to end homelessness. The purpose of the HHM Council is to maximize and align state resources and identify systems improvements to prevent and end homelessness. Collectively, the Council generates new strategies to prevent and end homelessness.

¹ Washington Department of Commerce, Office of Homeless Youth. Retrieved from: <http://www.commerce.wa.gov/serving-communities/homelessness/office-of-youth-homelessness/>

New York’s Runaway & Homeless Youth Act

While data from the Index clearly indicate more work is needed, the Empire State, along with Colorado and Maine, nonetheless beat all the other states in having laws, policies, and regulations that recognize the need for comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, a key recommendation in the Index. States should enact, either by legislative action or executive order, a state law that provides funding for any level of prevention, identification, or early intervention services (drop-in centers, street outreach, community programs, coordinated entry and assessment (emergency/crisis response, shelters, host homes, transitional housing), and tailored housing solutions (non-time limited affordable housing, short-term assistance, etc) specifically for unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness.

New York’s Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (NYRHYA) provides a broad framework for the provision of shelter and support services to runaway and homeless youth in New York State. Among the statutory duties of the New York State Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS) in administering and overseeing the act is to “submit to the governor and legislature an annual report detailing the numbers and characteristics of runaway and homeless youth throughout the state and their problems and service needs” [Executive Law, Article 19-H §532-e(d)]. To gather data for the annual report, OCFS conducts an Annual Survey of Services of all programs that serve runaway and homeless youth that are funded or certified by OCFS, and any other programs in the state that primarily serve runaway and homeless youth. This report includes information from 42 individual program respondents in 26 counties and New York City.

Currently, FY2018 New York’s enacted RHYA changes allows local governments that receive Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) funding the option to make the following changes to their local plan to deliver RHYA services:

- Raise the maximum permissible age for homeless youth that may be served in runaway and homeless youth programs to 24 years of age;
- Permit a youth under 16 years of age to be served in a Transitional Independent Living Support Program (TILP) with required written notice to OCFS;
- Extend the permissible length of stay for homeless youth in TILP from 18 to 24 months;
- Extend the permissible length of stay for a runaway youth age 14 or older in a Crisis Services Program from 30 to 60 days when an Article 10 abuse and neglect petition is not contemplated;
- Extend the permissible length of stay for a runaway youth of any age in a runaway and homeless youth crisis services program from 60 to 120 days without filing a petition upon the consent of the youth and the youth’s legal custodian.

Appendix A: Detailed Methodology & Glossary Of Metrics

Each state was evaluated on certain key metrics and recommendations listed in the Index. Out of a possible 100 points, over half (52%) of the points were distributed evenly to evaluate whether the state has incorporated the following 13 recommendations in the Index:

1. A state Runaway & Homeless Youth Act – or similar legislation – with corresponding funding.
2. Opportunities for youth in need of supervision to receive diversion services without court involvement.
3. Contract rights for homeless youth.
4. Declassify running away as a status or delinquent offense.
5. Grievance process for students experiencing homelessness implemented that complies with federal law.
6. Unaccompanied youth under 18 can apply for health insurance coverage on their own.
7. A state entity (office of homeless youth services, homeless youth state coordinator, commission on homeless youth, etc.) that focuses solely on youth homelessness.
8. A current state plan to end homelessness.
9. A state plan that has a “youth” component.
10. A State Interagency Council on Homelessness that mirrors itself after the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, convening multiple federal agencies to determine strategies towards preventing and ending homelessness.
11. A self-governing youth action council - including significant representation of youth currently experiencing homelessness or who have experienced homelessness in the past - to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
12. A public awareness campaign/common messaging for local awareness campaigns for youth homelessness.
13. Banned conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.

These recommendations are critical to effectively addressing youth homelessness on the state level. How states perform on each of these metrics is indicative on a broader scale of how their laws, policies, systems, and environments treat youth experiencing homelessness. The remaining metrics, grouped by law and policy, systems, and environment, were weighted equally. Detailed explanations of the metrics are included in the following sections. Additional metrics may be included as states make progress on tackling youth homelessness in order to better evaluate each state’s commitment towards preventing and ending youth homelessness.

The Index does not examine state practices and how they implement laws and policies. Many states that have employed innovative models and approaches to address youth homelessness are not fully captured in the Index. The Index also does not address or measure the pace of advocacy efforts over time. Some states that may not have performed well in the Index but have ramped up efforts to address youth homelessness should not be discouraged. Even though these dynamics are outside the scope of the Index, states should continue to pursue these efforts.

Law & Policy

The Law and policy section looks at 5 key areas: (1) how the state recognizes the need for comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness in state laws, policies, and regulations; (2) how the state addresses the educational needs of homeless youth; (3) how the state limits or prevents homeless youth's contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems; (4) whether the state provides homeless youth the option to be emancipated; and (5) how the state allows youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services. Each of these areas and the specific metrics or criteria associated with them are discussed in greater depth below. Laws, policies, and regulations surveyed for the Index are current as of September 2017.

1. State has comprehensive state laws, policies, and regulations ensuring supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness

Laws that provide adequate funding and resources and comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness are very much needed. The Index looks at which states have enacted a state Runaway Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that allow such states to have an emergency response for its most vulnerable youth and to provide funding and support for a significant level of prevention, identification, or early intervention services (drop-in centers, street outreach, community programs, coordinated entry and assessment (emergency/crisis response, shelters, host homes, transitional housing) and tailored housing solutions (non-time limited affordable housing, short-term assistance, etc.) specifically for unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness. Additionally, the Index also examines whether the state defines “sex” and/or “gender” that includes coverage of sexual orientation and gender identity within its RHYA State licensing agency regulations. Unless states provide definitions for sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, such terms will always be left to interpretation.

Definitions are critical components of statutes because they establish the meaning of key terms and interact with other statutory provisions to determine who is legally protected and who is eligible for supports and services. Some definitions set forth the parameters of the group of persons to be affected by the statutory provision. Three definitional issues were researched for this analysis: how the statutes define young people, whether the statutes include definitions of runaway and homeless children and youth, and up to what age young people are considered minors. The Index looks at how the state defines “youth,” “runaway,” “homeless child,” “homeless youth,” “homeless minor,” and “homeless student.” Other determinants that could also classify one as a child, such as mental dis-

ability, were not captured. For more information on the research methodology, please consult the “Definition of Terms Pertinent to Unaccompanied Youth” section of Alone Without a Home.

2. State addresses the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness

The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (“ESSA”) recently amended and reauthorized the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (“McKinney-Vento”), strengthening the rights of homeless youth to access free, appropriate public education. This Index looks at some of these provisions to examine what states have done to provide additional protections for the right to educational continuity and stability of youth experiencing homelessness.

Federal law requires that a dispute resolution process must be in place if a dispute arises over a student's McKinney-Vento eligibility, school enrollment, or school placement. The Index looks at states' dispute resolution procedures and whether these procedures reflect ESSA's changes to McKinney-Vento. The Index did not look at whether states had a prior existing dispute resolution process before ESSA. Some of the changes include an explicit presumption that staying in the same school the student was attending before experiencing homelessness is in the best interest of the youth. The best interest must give priority to the youth's request and must consider student-centered factors related to the impact of mobility on achievement, education, health, and safety of the youth. Students without stable housing who are transitioning from elementary to middle, or middle to high school sometimes face barriers in remaining enrolled in school with their peers. Changes under the new federal law clarified that youth experiencing homelessness are able to attend the same schools as their peers in feeder school systems. Most importantly, the law clarifies that students experiencing homelessness must remain enrolled in the school in which enrollment is sought pending resolution of all available appeals. The Index did not address the quality of the procedural safeguards under each state's dispute resolution process.

The law also minimizes the disruptive effects of homelessness on students' education by allowing students experiencing homelessness to accrue credits to progress in school and receive credit for prior work done from a different school.¹ The Index considers whether states explicitly allow partial and alternative school credit accrual for youth experiencing homelessness through regulations. Relatedly, recent changes under federal law recognize

1 See e.g., Nat'l Ctr. for Homeless Educ., NCHC Credit Accrual Tip Sheet, <https://nche.ed.gov/downloads/credit-accrual-tips.pdf>; see also Maximizing Credit Accrual and Recovery for Homeless Students, <https://nche.ed.gov/downloads/briefs/credit.pdf>.

the need for youth experiencing homelessness to receive supports and services to pursue post-secondary education. The Index examines whether states have laws or regulations that promote access to higher education for youth experiencing homelessness.

The Index only reviews what was publicly available under state statutes and regulations. Informal policies, procedures, and practices related to the McKinney-Vento dispute resolution process, credit accrual, and access to higher education, including those posted on state educational agency websites are beyond the scope of this survey. For additional information on access to education for homeless youth, please consult the “Rights of Unaccompanied Youth to Public Education” section of *Alone Without a Home and No Barriers: A Legal Advocate’s Guide to Ensuring Compliance with the Education Program of the McKinney-Vento Act*, available at <https://www.nlchp.org/documents/NoBarriers>.

3. **State limits or prevents contact of youth experiencing homelessness with the criminal and juvenile justice systems**

While there are several ways states can limit or prevent youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems, the Index looks at three specific areas: (1) how state laws and regulations provide opportunities for youth experiencing homelessness to access diversionary supports and services and limit their court involvement; (2) status offenses; and (3) how those who help youth experiencing homelessness are criminalized. On diversionary supports and services, the Law Center and TCF looked at “Child in Need of Supervision” or “Child in Need of Services” (CHINS) state statutes. Many states and territories permit the juvenile or family court to become involved with young people or families who “need supervision,” but terminology and procedures vary widely. The Index looks at the circumstances in which youth experiencing homelessness are, and the consequences for being, labeled or identified as CHINS under various state laws. In particular, states were evaluated on whether the state prohibits mingling of CHINS youth taken into custody with delinquent youth, whether courts are authorized to force CHINS to pay fines or fees, undergo drug screening, and relinquish their driver’s license or suspend driving privileges. More importantly, this Index explores whether the state provides opportunities for CHINS to receive diversion services without court involvement and whether unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness can request services independently under CHINS statutes. Research into the consequences of being characterized a CHINS was limited to the terms and limits of taking the young person into custody and what types of treatment and other consequences a court can order after labeling a youth as CHINS. Specific hearing procedures and other details

are outside the scope of the Index. For more information on the research methodology, please consult the “Youth in Need of Supervision” section of *Alone Without a Home*.

Another way to look at how states limit youth’s contact with the justice systems is to look at how many jurisdictions included running away from home as a status offense and the legal consequences of running away. Status offenses are behaviors or actions that are legally punishable only when performed by minors. Some of the penalties and sanctions associated with status offenses, such as fines, community service, or revocation of driving privileges are counterproductive and can lead to youth missing school and lose employment, making it harder for them to escape the intergenerational cycle of homelessness and poverty. The Index surveys runaway youth, truancy, and curfew statutes. Specifically, the Index looks at which states do not consider running away as a status offense, which states do not consider runaway youth as delinquent, which states do not explicitly allow police to take runaway youth into custody, and which states do not allow runaway and youth experiencing homelessness to be detained in secure facilities (without a valid court order). It is important to note that there are justifications, other than being a suspected runaway, for law enforcement to be able to take a runaway youth into custody. Contact with law enforcement, while helpful to remove youth experiencing homelessness from dangerous situations, can cause suspicion and hostility between young people and law enforcement and can discourage youth from seeking out available services. The Index also looks at whether a state classifies truancy as a status offense and whether truants are classified as delinquents. While truancy statutes are designed to ensure youth attend school, they can also be harmful to those who are unable to get to school on time because they don’t have access to safe, adequate, and appropriate transportation. Finally, the Index examines whether states have curfew laws, which can encourage local governments to enact one and end up criminalizing youth who have nowhere else to go but the streets. For more information on the research methodology and limitations, please consult the “Status Offenses” section of *Alone Without a Home*.

Finally, the Index examines how criminalization extends to those who attempt to help homeless youth. Some states have enacted statutes that either explicitly or implicitly prohibit “harboring” of runaway youth by individuals and organizations not holding legal custody of the young person. While enacted to protect the rights of families to raise their children and protect children from abuse, these statutes may pose a risk to those individuals and organizations that have a legitimate purpose in providing safe havens for young people currently away from their guardian. For more information on the research methodology and limitations, please consult the “Harboring Unaccompanied Youth” section of *Alone Without a Home*.

4. **State provides unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the option to be emancipated**

Generally, contracts entered into by minors are not legally binding, which allows them to break a contract without legal consequences. But this protection, while beneficial, may also make companies and certain parties unwilling to enter into a contract with minor youth. Potentially minors that cannot be reunited with family, unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness may be unable to legally obtain housing, buy essential goods, engage in other transactions necessary to live independently, or make their own decisions about medical care, education, and other personal matters. Emancipation allows a young person to become a legal adult while he or she is still under the legal age of majority, allowing them to overcome these barriers. Some unaccompanied youth are financially able to rent apartments, buy cars, or enter into other contracts such as legal services, but prevented from doing so by lack of legal authority. The Index looked at whether the states permit youth to be emancipated and under what circumstances, what barriers youth may encounter in seeking emancipation such as parental consent or age restriction, and whether the states give minors contract rights or allow them to enter into binding contracts for certain purposes such as obtaining necessities. Minors in some jurisdictions may also be permitted to enter into binding contracts by court cases, policies, or practices not reflected in the statutes, which is beyond the scope of the Index. For more information on the research methodology and limitations, please consult the “Emancipation” section of *Alone Without a Home*.

5. **State allows youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services**

Youth experiencing homelessness face numerous barriers to accessing critical supports and services across the country. Many of these barriers are caused by underidentification of youth experiencing homelessness, lack of funding and resources to meet multidimensional needs, and laws and policies that either prevent or discourage youth from seeking much needed help. The Index looks at several key areas, including access to healthcare, youth released from the juvenile justice system, and access to federal benefits.

The challenges of living on the streets or in inadequate housing make unaccompanied youth are particularly vulnerable to health care problems. Unaccompanied youth should have a basic right to health care and be empowered to proactively seek care, rather than fearing the financial consequences and putting off seeking care until medical issues progress. Unaccompanied youth face hurdles in accessing healthcare due to both financial, consent, and confidentiality barriers. The Index only looks

at certain laws dealing with a minor’s ability to consent, although it is equally, if not more, important to recognize that homeless youth may not have the necessary financial resources to access and pay for health care or they may not know their rights to maintain the confidentiality of their medical records and the mandates or discretion given to physicians to notify their parents or legal guardians. For more information about these issues, including access to Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program for youth experiencing homelessness, please consult the “Health Care Access for Unaccompanied Youth” in *Alone Without a Home*. The Index examines the difficulty associated with providing legally authorized consent for their own health care when they are unwilling or unable to secure that consent from their parents or legal guardians. The Index looks at whether states explicitly allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage (without parental consent), and whether states allow unaccompanied youth to consent to mental health treatment, non-residential treatment for substance use, diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, and examination and treatment relating to a sexual assault. Generally, the consent of a parent is required for health care that is provided to a minor child. However, every state has numerous laws that allow minors to give their own consent for care in specific circumstances. These laws are based either on the status of the minor (emancipated minors, minors living apart from their parents, married minors, minors in the armed services, pregnant minors, minor parents, high school graduates, or minors over a certain age) or on the services sought by the minor (general medical care, emergency care, family planning or contraceptive services, pregnancy related care, sexually transmitted infection care, HIV/AIDS care, care for reportable infectious diseases, care for sexual assault, drug or alcohol care, and outpatient mental health services). Often, however, young people themselves, their health care providers, and the sites where they seek care are not aware of the different ways in which laws may allow these youth to give their own consent for care. For more information on the research methodology and limitations, please consult the “Health Care Access for Unaccompanied Youth” section of *Alone Without a Home*.

In addition to presenting at how states ensure contact with the juvenile and criminal justice systems are limited or prevented for youth experiencing homelessness, the Index also looks at what states are doing to prevent youth released from the juvenile justice system from being released either directly into homelessness or to a placement from which they can easily become displaced. In particular, the Index looks at whether each state has transition planning for children exiting the juvenile justice system, whether the transitional planning specifically addressed housing needs, whether each state addresses custody after discharge from the juvenile justice system, whether each state requires permanency planning for

committed adjudicated youth, and whether each state provides transportation home after discharge from the juvenile justice system. Discharge-planning and aftercare procedures that are not codified in state statutes were not examined and are beyond the scope of the Index. Related issues, such as the release of youths from mental health systems or welfare systems, as well as laws related to aging out of juvenile justice systems or other care systems, are also beyond the scope of the Index. For more information on the research methodology and limitations, please consult the “Discharge from the Juvenile Justice System” section of *Alone Without a Home*.

Critical to ensuring youth experiencing homelessness have access to supports and services is to look at how states implement federal programs like the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). TANF provides assistance and work opportunities to needy children and families by granting states the federal funds to develop and implement their own welfare programs.¹ The program is designed to help move recipients into work and turn welfare into a program of temporary assistance. Like TANF, SNAP provides nutrition assistance to eligible low-income individuals and families through state agencies and resources. Homeless youth are eligible to apply for TANF and SNAP benefits, providing them with necessary support to meet their survival needs. The federal government provides states a lot of flexibility in regulating these federal programs and so implementation vary across states. For the TANF program, the Index evaluates states depending on whether the state subsidized childcare for eligible minors when employment or school is required under TANF, the state has exemptions from TANF’s family living and/or work/education requirements, the state provides cash incentives for youth who graduate high school or earn a GED, and whether TANF recipients are categorically eligible for SNAP. With SNAP, the Index’s evaluation focuses on whether the state has guidance or resources specifically for homeless youth using SNAP. The Index also looks at whether the state explicitly allows youth experiencing homelessness to use SNAP to buy hot restaurant or prepared meals since youth may not have regular access to a kitchen to prepare and cook meals. The Index does not evaluate states but examines nonetheless whether states allow youth to concurrently apply for both SNAP and TANF, to concurrently apply for SNAP and Medicaid, and whether states have exemptions from SNAP’s work and/or employment requirements. For more information on the research methodology and limitations, including additional information on SNAP and TANF, please consult the “Federal Benefits” section of *Alone Without a Home*.

Systems

Outside of the legal or regulatory actions that have a significant impact on youth homelessness, the Index also examines systems, evaluating features of an institution, organization, or system at the state level that influences state homeless youth, child welfare, juvenile justice, and education program implementation. In order to implement comprehensive state laws and policies, states should have official plans to prevent and end youth homelessness. The Index looks at whether such plans includes treatment, outreach, and emergency strategies to address homelessness among the broader youth community and among LGBTQ youth, specifically. As both populations are disproportionately impacted by experiences of homelessness, any statewide plan to address homelessness should include extensive strategies that are aligned with USICH’s criteria and benchmarks for achieving the goal of ending youth homelessness.²

Additionally, the Index evaluates whether or not there is a state entity - an Office of homeless youth services, homeless youth state coordinator, Commission on homeless youth, etc.) - that focuses solely on youth homelessness. By creating such an entity, states are implementing key systems that provides data, coordination, support services, and infrastructure around homeless youth. Without such an entity, the state lacks a formal response to youth homelessness and misses opportunities to collect key data regarding youth who are experiencing homelessness. In choosing this metric as part of the index, we knew that most states did not maintain such an entity. However, some metrics found within the Index are designed to promote innovation as it pertains to strategies towards preventing and ending youth homelessness, and it is our hope that states will positively receive the recommendations around implementing an Office of Homeless youth services or other state entity and see this as an opportunity for growth.

The Index examines whether each state has established an interagency council on homelessness that coordinates the state’s efforts towards preventing and ending homelessness. At the federal level, the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH) has catalyzed the federal response to tackling homelessness, working in close partnership with Cabinet Secretaries and other senior leaders across our 19 federal member agencies. It is the glue that holds together the U.S. response to homelessness. Ongoing efforts have yielded positive results - homelessness among veterans has been reduced by 46%, including a 50% decrease in the number of veterans living unsheltered;³ chronic homelessness has been reduced by 27%;⁴ and family homelessness has been reduced by 23%, including a 65% drop

1 42 U.S.C. § 601 et seq.

2 United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2018, February 27). Criteria and Benchmarks for Achieving the Goal of Ending Youth Homelessness. Retrieved from: <https://www.usich.gov/tools-for-action/criteria-and-benchmarks-for-ending-youth-homelessness/>

3 United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2018, April 13). Ending Veteran Homelessness. Retrieved from: <https://www.usich.gov/goals/veterans>

4 United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2017, August 7). Ending Chronic Homelessness. Retrieved from: <https://www.usich.gov/goals/chronic>

in unsheltered homelessness among families.¹ States can learn from the successes of USICH and utilize the agency as a guide for establishing a state interagency council on homelessness.

The Index also evaluates whether the state maintains systems which makes obtaining a state-issued identification card easy. The importance of obtaining a state ID cannot be underestimated as an ID is often necessary to gain access to key supportive, housing, and health-related services. For LGBTQ youth that have been displaced due to lack of support or unsafe family environments, many are left unable to access key medical and/or social safety net services. Having a state-issued identification card means young people can identify themselves when attempting to access services, making it easier for them to receive the assistance they need. Because we know that youth who have experienced homelessness are often estranged from their families or have families that are unavailable due to struggling with poverty, incarceration, multiple jobs, caring for other relatives, requiring parental consent to receive a state ID can serve as a barrier towards ending an experience of homelessness.² As such, the Index evaluates whether or not the state requires parental consent for youth under the age of 18 to obtain an ID. Additionally, under the REAL ID Act, most states require proof of residency to obtain a state ID. This often includes having to supply a permanent address or providing a utility bill in one's name to the address listed. For youth experiencing homelessness, these proof of residency requirements provide another barrier to gaining access to an ID. As such, the Index looks at whether the state transportation department has the framework needed to address proof of residency requirements. This can include allowing applicants to list a park, corner, or bridge in lieu of a street address; accepting letters of documentation from a range of service providers; or permitting someone with whom a young person lives to complete an affidavit. Some states allow for a descriptive address and may use a letter from hospitals, homeless shelters, halfway houses, or transitional service providers as proof of residency.³

It's difficult to focus programming, funding, or other resources when it is not clear what the state's needs are as it pertains to housing and homelessness. Housing needs assessments are important because they include key state data regarding affordability, housing supply, subsidized inventory, housing needs, and identifies the populations at greatest risk of experiencing homelessness. Once housing needs assessments have been completed, states can use the assessments to craft short-term and long-term strategies towards preventing and ending homelessness, target resources towards identifying, reaching, and serving vulnerable populations, and make changes to strate-

gies as innovative models are created and identified. As such, the Index looked at whether states have completed a housing needs assessment.

To ensure that youth homelessness is a brief and rare occurrence and that youth have the tools necessary to be self-sufficient, completion of educational and vocational training activities can be particularly important. The foster care system is a well-known pipeline for youth homelessness and how states address the education of those in foster care is indicative of their commitment to more broadly prevent and end youth homelessness. Access to higher education often seem out of reach not just for youth who have or are currently experiencing homelessness but also to those who are in the foster care system. The Index looks at whether the state provides tuition waivers for foster youth. Currently, youth with foster care experience seeking higher education are at a disadvantage, with around 60 percent of the general population will obtain a bachelor's degree, compared with only 3 percent of foster care alumni.⁴ The importance of state-based tuition assistance programs for foster youth cannot be understated, and states should do more to ensure that those exiting the foster care system have the supports they need to succeed.

Environment

Laws, policies, and the systems that operationalize and implement them also influence the environment for youth experiencing homelessness. The Index looks at several metrics that provide some measure of how supportive or hostile state environments are to youth experiencing homelessness. One of the most heinous examples of states creating environments that can lead to stigma is the use of conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. We know that there is no scientific evidence that conversion therapy works and that it can be particularly harmful to LGBTQ individuals.⁵ Additionally, the American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, American College of Physicians, American Counseling Association, American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Psychoanalytic Association, American Psychological Association, American School Counselor Association, American School Health Association, National Association of Social Workers, and World Psychiatric Association do not support conversion therapy as a therapeutic intervention. Therefore, the Index looks at whether or not states ban conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity because states should not allow such a harmful and ineffective practice to persist.

1 United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. (2017, August 4). Ending Family Homelessness. Retrieved from: <https://www.usich.gov/goals/families>

2 Soon Kyu Choi and others, "Serving Our Youth 2015: The Needs and Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning Youth Experiencing Homelessness" (New York and Los Angeles: The Palette Fund, True Colors Fund, and The Williams Institute, 2015), available at <https://new.truecolorsfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Serving-Our-Youth-June-2015.pdf>.

3 Center for American Progress. (2015, October). Expanding ID Access for LGBT Homeless Youth. Retrieved from: <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/01071118/IDHomelessLGBT.pdf>

4 Burt S. Barnow et al. , "Effective Services for Improving Education and Employment Outcomes for Children and Alumni of Foster Care Service: Correlates and Educational and Employment Outcomes," *Child & Family Social Work* (2013):159.

5 American Psychological Association, Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation. (2009). Report of the American Psychological Association Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation. Retrieved from <http://www.apa.org/pi/lgbc/publications/therapeutic-resp.html>

Over the past 30 years there has been a shift in how the American public views homelessness, with more compassion, government, support, and liberal attitudes about homelessness being adopted over the years.¹ Less is known about public perceptions about youth experiencing homelessness. However, greater support for homeless individuals could mean an opportunity for new strategies towards sounding the alarm of youth homelessness. Many states have instituted public awareness campaigns around public health issues (smoking, obesity, HIV, viral hepatitis). Because homelessness is a determinant to many other disparities, implementing a campaign that raises awareness of youth homelessness within states could be an opportunity to increase public knowledge of the issue, lessen the stigma of youth experiencing homelessness, and spark a dialogue concerning youth homelessness.experiencing homelessness. As such, the Index looks at whether states have instituted public awareness campaigns regarding youth homelessness.

1 S.L. Wenzel, H. Rhoades, H. Moore, J. Lahey, B. Henwood, W. La Motte-Kerr and M. Bird, Life Goals Over Time Among Homeless Adults in Permanent Supportive Housing, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, (2018).

Appendix B: Model Legislation And Regulations

For states looking to put the recommendations found within the Index into action, having examples of existing legislation, model legislation, and regulations, can be helpful in the crafting of future policy. Legislation included within this section is meant to serve as a guide, may or may not be considered “model” in its entirety, and may need to be adjusted to fit depending on the state.

- I. **Office of Homeless Youth Services** *2016 Colorado Revised Statutes Title 24 - Government - State Principal Departments Article 32 - Department of Local Affairs Part 7 - Division of Housing - Colorado Housing Act of 1970 § 24-32-723. Office of homeless youth services - creation - function - duties - definitions*
 - A. CO Rev Stat § 24-32-723 (2016):
 - (1) This section shall be known and may be cited as the “Colorado Homeless Youth Services Act.”
 - (2) As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires:
 - (a) “Entity” means any state agency, any state-operated program, or any private nonprofit or not-for-profit community-based organization.
 - (b) “Homeless youth” means a child or youth who is at least eleven years of age but is less than twenty-one years of age who:
 - (I) Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; or
 - (II) Has a primary nighttime residence that is:
 - (A) A supervised, publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations; or
 - (B) A public or private place not designed for, nor ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
 - (III) “Homeless youth” shall not include any individual imprisoned or otherwise detained pursuant to an act of congress or a state law.
 - (3) There is hereby created the office of homeless youth services in the department of local affairs for the purpose of providing information, coordination, and support services to public and private entities serving the homeless youth of Colorado. The office of homeless youth services shall seek to:
 - (a) Identify and remove obstacles to the provision of services;
 - (b) Improve the quality of services provided to homeless youth;
 - (c) Reduce needless expenditures caused by the provision of overlapping services; and
 - (d) Identify housing and supportive services funding resources available to entities serving homeless youth.
 - (4) (a) In providing the services described in this section, the office of homeless youth services is strongly encouraged to work with the executive directors, or their designees, of the Colorado department of public health and environment, the judicial department, private nonprofit and not-for-profit organizations, appropriate federal departments, and other key stakeholders in the community.
 - (b) At a minimum, the office of homeless youth services shall have the following duties:
 - (I) To provide information, coordination, and technical assistance as may be necessary to reduce needless expenditures associated with the provision of overlapping services and to improve the quality of services provided to homeless youth;
 - (II) To identify both procedural and substantive obstacles to the provision of services and to make recommendations to the entities specified in this section concerning procedural, regulatory, or statutory changes necessary to remove such obstacles;
 - (III) To obtain information from service providers concerning known services available for the homeless youth population in the state of Colorado and to post such information on a website on the internet;
 - (IV) To develop, maintain, and make available a listing of all rights and organizations that may be relevant to the homeless youth population in the state of Colorado, including but

not limited to a listing of legal, educational, and victims' rights and organizations related thereto;

(V) To obtain information concerning known funding sources available for the homeless youth population in the state of Colorado; and

(VI) To work with entities to identify issues concerning sharing of information in providing services to homeless youth and to facilitate resolution of such information-sharing issues.

(c) On or before January 15, 2012, and on or before each January 15 thereafter, the office of homeless youth services, in conjunction with the prevention services division in the department of public health and environment and the department of education, shall submit a consolidated report to the general assembly of existing reports relating to prevention, intervention, and treatment services provided to homeless youth eighteen years of age to twenty-one years of age by the department of human services, county departments of social services, and other state departments that operate prevention, intervention, and treatment programs serving youth eighteen years of age to twenty-one years of age. The report shall also include the data that the department of education annually compiles on the number of homeless youth enrolled in public schools in the state, the type of homelessness, and the list of services that are provided to such homeless youth. The consolidated report shall include the number of youth served, the types of services provided, and the outcomes derived from such services.

II. Runaway & Homeless Youth Act (Legislative mechanism)¹

A. §100 Purpose

1. To prevent, reduce, and end youth homelessness in [State].

B. §101 Definitions (a) “Unaccompanied homeless youth” means a person 24 years of age or younger who is unaccompanied by a parent or guardian and is without shelter where appropriate care and supervision are available, whose parent or legal guardian is unable or unwilling to provide shelter and care, or who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The following are not fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residences:

1. A supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;
 2. An institution or a publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;
 3. Transitional housing;
 4. Living in hotels;
 5. Temporarily living with other people who have not offered permanent residence, or a residential lease; or
 6. A public or private place not designed for, nor ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.
- “Homeless youth” does not include persons incarcerated or otherwise detained under federal or state law.

C. “Youth at risk of homelessness” means a person 24 years of age or younger whose status or circumstances indicate a significant danger of experiencing homelessness in the near future. Status or circumstances that indicate a significant danger may include:

1. Youth exiting out-of-home placements;
2. Youth who previously were homeless;
3. Youth whose parents or primary caregivers are or were previously homeless;
4. Youth who are exposed to abuse and neglect in their homes; Y
5. Youth who experience conflict with parents; and (6) runaways.

D. “Runaway” means an unmarried child under the age of 18 years who is absent from the home of a parent or guardian or other lawful placement without the consent of the parent, guardian, or lawful custodian.

E. §102 State Agency Responsible for Administration of Services and Funding

1. (a) There is hereby created the Office of Homeless Youth Services and led by a director which shall establish and support a comprehensive program for homeless youth in the State by contracting with organizations and agencies, licensed by the office, that provide services for homeless youth. The office shall establish licensure requirements and shall contract for programs that ensure that services, as specified by this act, are provided to homeless youth in the State in an appropriate and responsible manner. The director may establish such other requirements for the homeless youth programs as he deems necessary.
2. The Office of Homeless Youth Services shall report to the Commissioner [or Secretary] of State [Agency Name ____] and shall receive appropriations from the State and contributions from private donors to fund a spectrum of shelter, housing, and services to meet the needs of unaccompanied, homeless youth in the state. The monies shall be distributed to a spectrum of programs, as outlined in Sections 105 through 107, including, but not limited to: shelter, youth housing, drop-in centers, case management, outreach, health care, after-care services employment services, transportation and prevention services to youth in crisis and their families when safe and appropriate.
3. At a minimum, the Office of Homeless Youth Services shall have the following duties:
 - a. Identify existing programs dealing with runaway and homeless youth and develop a directory of service providers;

¹ See e.g., Model Legislation to Provide Housing and Services to Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY), <https://www.nn4youth.org/wp-content/uploads/Model-Legislation-to-Provide-Housing-and-Services-to-Runaway-and-Homeless-Youth-NN4Y-2015-For-Advocates.pdf>

- b. Develop resources and offer technical assistance to increase statewide capacity and coordination of services to unaccompanied homeless youth;
 - c. Study the feasibility of the establishment of a web-based referral system for runaway and homeless youth including a listing of all rights and organizations that may be relevant to the homeless youth population in [Name of State], including but not limited to a listing of legal, educational, and victims' rights and organizations related thereto;
 - d. Compile statistics on runaway and homeless youth;
 - e. Identify existing and potential funding sources for services to runaway and homeless youth, and provide information to the public;
 - f. Provide advice and technical assistance, as requested, to administrators of programs relating to runaway and homeless youth on issues relating to collaborative models of services to homeless youth to improve service coordination, decrease duplicative efforts, increase specialization and effectiveness, and create common outcome measures and data collection protocols to measure success in ending youth homelessness in the State;
 - g. Design models for service delivery by local communities;
 - h. Develop standards necessary to achieve and maintain, on a statewide basis, more comprehensive and integrated community-based youth services;
 - i. Assist local organizations in developing programs, which address the problems of youths and their families through direct services, advocacy with institutions, and improvement of local conditions;
 - j. To provide information, coordination, and technical assistance as may be necessary to reduce needless expenditures associated with the provision of overlapping services and to improve the quality of services provided to homeless youth;
 - k. To identify both procedural and substantive obstacles to the provision of services and to make recommendations to the entities specified in this section concerning procedural, regulatory, or statutory changes necessary to remove such obstacles, including obstacles related to child protective services reporting;
 - l. To work with entities to identify issues concerning sharing of information in providing services to homeless youth and to facilitate resolution of such information-sharing issues.
 - m. To identify and remove obstacles to the provision of services including requirements for parental consent for runaways and unaccompanied homeless youth to receive services;
 - n. To improve the quality of services provided to homeless youth;
 - o. To establish a competitive application and written application process to disburse state monies directly to community-based nonprofit corporations, including faith-based nonprofit corporations, to serve unaccompanied homeless youth;
 - p. Design and support implementation of models for collaboration among service providers, early education programs, public schools, and institutions of higher education;
 - q. Administer funds so housing and services are provided to both minors and young adults under this Act such that 3 year grants are distributed for Street and Community Outreach and Drop-in Programs, and Residential Youth Centers, and 5 year grants are distributed for Supportive Housing and Transitional Living Programs. Further, existing grantees must be notified at least 6 months prior to the end of their grant cycle as to whether they will receive another multi-year grant; and
 - r. In consultation with professional youth workers, supervisors, and researchers, complete a statewide code of ethics for any funded agency or program including personnel and volunteers.
- F. §103 Priority in fund distribution** - Public or private nonprofit organizations and faith-based organizations holding a nonprofit corporation status shall be eligible to apply for funds under this Act and these organizations shall be required to annually contribute a local match of at least 15 percent in cash or in-kind contribution to the project during the term of the grant award agreement. Preference shall be given to organizations that:
- 1. Demonstrate a community need for funds and services,
 - 2. Demonstrate significant need in a community lacking any resources dedicated to housing youth experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness,
 - 3. Demonstrate a record of providing effective services to runaway youth or families in crisis,
 - 4. Successfully operating a youth shelter or a transitional living facility for runaway and homeless youth,
 - 5. Demonstrate a history of collaborating with other agencies and individuals in providing such services,
 - 6. Show ability to progressively decrease their reliance on resources provided under this section and to operate this project beyond the period that the organization receives funds under this section, and
 - 7. Fill existing priority service deficits or gaps as identified by the Office of Homeless Youth Services.
- G. § 104. Homeless Youth Shelters—Authority—Duties**
- 1. Licensed homeless youth shelters may provide both crisis intervention services and alternative residential services to homeless youth.
 - 2. If a homeless youth under the age of 18 is admitted to a Residential Youth Center without the consent of the youth's parent

- or guardian, the shelter shall:
- a. Within 72 hours of admission to the shelter, notify the youth's parent or guardian, or make reasonable efforts to notify the youth's parent or guardians, concerning the youth's whereabouts, physical and emotional condition, and the circumstances surrounding the youth's placement, unless there are compelling reasons not to provide the parent or legal guardian with this information. Compelling reasons include, but are not limited to, circumstances in which the youth is or has been a victim of child abuse or neglect;
 - b. Notify the youth's parent that where it is safe and appropriate, it is the paramount concern of the facility or shelter to achieve reconciliation between the parent and the youth, to reunify the family, and to inform the parent about the alternatives that are available;
 - c. Offer homeless youth admitted to a licensed homeless youth shelter program, 72 hours of safe harbor, with or without parental consent, unless otherwise designated by order of a court exercising jurisdiction in juvenile court regarding custody of the minor children or unless the youth participant is currently under the custody of the [State Child Welfare Agency Name];
 - d. Arrange transportation for the youth to the residence of the youth's parent when the youth and the parent agree that the youth shall return to the home of the youth's parent. The parent shall reimburse the party who paid for the transportation costs to the extent of the parents' ability;
 - e. Upon request by the youth, the youth will be allowed to return to the home environment at any time; and
 - f. Offer youth participants safe, dignified shelter, including private shower facilities, beds, clean linen, and at least one hot meal each day.
3. (c) Any homeless youth under the age of 18 admitted to a licensed homeless youth shelter pursuant to this article and who is not, with the parent's or guardian's consent, returned to the home of the youth's parent or is not placed in a voluntary alternative residential placement pursuant to [State Statute Section ____] within 72 hours, shall reside at a facility or shelter described in section 106 of this Act for a period not to exceed thirty (30) days from the time of intake except as otherwise provided in this section. A licensed homeless youth shelter shall make a concerted effort to achieve a reconciliation between the youth and the parent or guardian. If a reconciliation and voluntary return of the youth have not been achieved within 72 hours, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, from the time of intake, then the director of the facility or shelter, or other person in charge, shall provide the youth and the youth's parent or guardian with a statement identifying:
 - a. The availability of counseling services;
 - b. The availability of longer term residential arrangements; and
 - c. The possibility of referral to the county department.
 4. The licensed homeless youth shelter may arrange for the establishment of a supervised independent living arrangement or may arrange a voluntary residential agreement between the youth and a relative or other responsible adult, a licensed child care facility, or a public or private landlord if the youth is under the age of 18 and has been admitted to a licensed homeless youth shelter and:
 - a. Two weeks have passed since admission;
 - b. The youth's parent or guardian cannot be found after diligent effort by the facility or shelter to locate such parent or guardian, the youth's parent or guardian has failed to respond to a notice sent by the facility or shelter, or the youth's parent or guardian has renounced responsibility for the youth; and
 - c. The youth has no other suitable place to live.
 5. A supervised independent living arrangement can only be established if:
 - a. The youth has not been deemed to be dependent on controlled substances or alcohol and is in need of treatment;
 - b. The youth is not currently demonstrating behavior that poses a danger to the youth or others;
 - c. The youth is not engaging in persistent high-risk behavior that renders the youth inappropriate for an independent living arrangement without reasonable accommodations; and
 - d. The youth has the ability and capacity to manage his or her own affairs, demonstrates emotional independence, and has the opportunity and ability to achieve financial independence through legitimate activities and life skills, including the following:
 1. Educational accomplishments or a plan for achieving educational goals;
 2. A vocational plan or goal; and
 3. An opportunity or ability to achieve adequate housing and living arrangements apart from the youth's parent, guardian, or custodian.
 6. For the purposes of this article,
 - a. A voluntary residential agreement shall not require the county department to assume custody of the youth or to exercise any parental power or control over the youth.
 - b. A person assuming responsibility for the youth shall have the authority to:
 1. Enroll the youth in the school district in which the youth resides or maintain enrollment in the youth's school dis-

- trict of origin when in the youth's best interest, pursuant to the voluntary residential agreement and consent to extra-curricular and out-of-school time activities; and
2. Authorize and obtain preventive medical and dental care, counseling, and treatment for the youth.
 7. If the homeless youth is in the legal care or custody of the [State's child welfare and county child protective services agency], the [County child protective service agency] in consultation with the Residential Youth Center, shall determine what services shall be provided to the youth. The services may include, but are not limited to: crisis intervention services, continued temporary placement in the Residential Youth Center for up to 30 days, placement in an alternative living arrangement or referral to a youth housing program or to other appropriate organizations and agencies.
 8. When the licensed homeless youth shelter has reason to believe that the youth is an abused or neglected child as defined in [State Statute], the Residential Youth Center shall report the allegation to the [State or local child protective services] pursuant to [State Statute Section ____]. A homeless youth may remain at a Residential Youth Center for up to 30 days pending the [State or local child protective services] disposition of any case originated pursuant to this subsection.
 9. If reunification with the parent or legal guardian is not in the youth's best interest or not possible because the youth's parent or legal guardian cannot be located, the local child protective services unit, in consultation with the Residential Youth Center, shall determine what services shall be provided to the youth. The services may include, but are not limited to, crisis intervention services and continued temporary placement in the Residential Youth Center for up to an additional 30 days, or an alternative longer term placement, including a potential independent living arrangement as defined above.
 10. In the case of a homeless youth from another state who is under the age of 18, a Residential Youth Center shall notify the office of homeless youth services, as soon as practicable, but within 72 hours of the youth's admission to the Residential Youth Center. The office of homeless youth services shall facilitate the youth's return home to his parent or legal guardian or make other suitable care arrangements for the youth.
- H. **§105 Street and Community Outreach and Drop-in Program** Youth drop-in centers must provide walk-in access to crisis intervention and ongoing supportive services including one-to-one case management services on a self-referral basis. Street and community outreach programs must locate, contact, and provide information, referrals, and services to homeless youth, youth at risk of homelessness, and runaways. Information, referrals, and services provided may include, but are not limited to:
1. Family reunification services;
 2. Conflict resolution or mediation counseling;
 3. Assistance in obtaining temporary emergency shelter;
 4. Assistance in obtaining food, clothing, medical care, or mental health counseling;
 5. Counseling regarding violence, sexual exploitation, substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy;
 6. Referrals to other agencies that provide support services to homeless youth, youth at risk of homelessness, and runaways;
 7. Assistance with education, employment, and independent living skills;
 8. Aftercare services;
 9. Specialized services for highly vulnerable runaways and homeless youth, including teen parents, emotionally disturbed and mentally ill youth, and sexually exploited youth; and
 10. Homelessness prevention
- I. **§ 106 Residential Youth Centers.** Residential Youth Centers must provide homeless youth and runaways with referral and walk-in access to emergency, short-term residential care. The program shall provide homeless youth and runaways with safe, dignified shelter, including private shower facilities, beds, and at least one meal each day; and shall assist a runaway and homeless youth with reunification with the family or legal guardian when required or appropriate. The services provided at Residential Youth Centers may include, but are not limited to:
1. Family reunification services;
 2. Individual, family, and group counseling;
 3. Assistance obtaining clothing; (d) access to medical and dental care and mental health counseling;
 4. Educational assessment and referrals to educational programs, and supplemental educational and employment services;
 5. Recreational activities;
 6. Advocacy and referral services;
 7. Independent living skills training;
 8. Aftercare and follow-up services;
 9. Transportation; and
 10. Homelessness prevention.
- J. **§ 107 Supportive Housing and Transitional Living Programs.** Transitional living programs must help homeless youth and youth at risk of homelessness to find and maintain safe, dignified housing. The program may also provide rental assistance and related supportive services, or refer youth to other organizations or agencies that provide such services. Services provided may include, but are not limited to:
1. Educational assessment and referrals to educational programs;

2. Career planning, employment, work skill training, and independent living skills training;
3. Job placement;
4. Budgeting and money management;
5. Assistance in securing housing appropriate to needs and income;
6. Counseling regarding violence, sexual exploitation, substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy;
7. Referral for medical services or chemical dependency treatment;
8. Parenting skills;
9. Self-sufficiency support services or life skill training;
10. Aftercare and follow-up services; and
11. Homelessness prevention

K. § 108 Statewide Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan

1. The Office of Homeless Youth Services shall develop a statewide needs assessment and strategic plan, at least every five years, which shall be completed and sent to the Legislature by [Date], with preliminary information provided to the Legislature by [Date], regarding the need for youth shelters for runaway youths. The needs assessment and strategic plan shall identify all of the following:
 - a. The capability of existing centers and shelters presently to address the needs of [State] youths, including an incidence study of the number of unaccompanied, homeless youth in the State;
 - b. The nature and extent of youth needs that are presently unmet or unaddressed by existing shelter and housing facilities;
 - c. The number of youth who access shelter, are reunified with their parents or guardians, and subsequently re-apply for shelter services on an annual basis.
 - d. The nature and extent of future need for youth shelters and housing with appropriate support services;
 - e. Cost estimates for addressing shelter, housing, and appropriate support service needs for minor and transitional aged youth; and
 - f. Other information, issues, and trends relevant to understanding and serving the youths under study.

L. § 109 Confidentiality of records

1. Records of a runaway youth, homeless youth, or youth at risk of homelessness that identify the youth who has been admitted to, or has sought assistance from, the program are confidential and are not subject to inspection or copying unless:
 - a. After being informed of his or her right to privacy, the youth consents in writing to the disclosure of the records for a particular purpose and for a particular period of time;
 - b. The records are relevant to an investigation or proceeding involving child abuse or neglect that was reported by the program and only with respect to that report of abuse or neglect; or
 - c. Disclosure of the records is necessary to protect the life of the youth.

M. § 110 Nondiscrimination NONDISCRIMINATION.

1. **IN GENERAL.**—No person in the United States shall, on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving State financial assistance under this title.
2. **EXCEPTION.**—If programming that is segregated by or specific to sex is necessary to the essential operation of a program, nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the entity carrying out any such program or activity from consideration of an individual’s sex.
 - a. In such a circumstance, the entity may meet the requirements of this section by providing comparable services to individuals who cannot be provided with the sex-segregated or sex-specific programming.

N. § 111 Liability

1. The officers, directors, and employees of a licensed program for runaway youth, homeless youth, and youth at risk of homelessness are not liable for civil damages as a result of an act or omission in admitting a youth to the program.
2. This section does not preclude liability for civil damages as a result of recklessness or intentional misconduct.
3. The officers, directors, and employees of a licensed program for runaway youth, homeless youth, or youth at risk of homelessness are not criminally liable under state statutes related to Harboring a Runaway, Interference with Custodial Rights, Concealing a Minor or Contributing to the Delinquency or Dependency of a Minor for assisting a minor in the program in accordance with the requirements of this Act.

III. Runaway & Homeless Youth Act (Executive action) 2013 New York Consolidated Laws EXC - Executive Article 19-H - (532 - 532-E) Runaway and Homeless Youth Act of 1978 532 - Short title. Universal Citation: NY Exec L § 532 (2012)

- A. **§ 532.** Short title. This article shall be known and may be cited as the “runaway and homeless youth act of nineteen hundred seventy-eight.”
- B. **§ 532-a.** Definitions. For the purposes of this article the term:
 1. “Runaway youth” shall mean a person under the age of eighteen years who is absent from his legal residence without the

- consent of his parent, legal guardian or custodian.
2. “Homeless youth” shall mean a person under the age of twenty-one who is in need of services and is without a place of shelter where supervision and care are available.
 3. “Youth in need of crisis intervention or respite services” shall mean a person under the age of eighteen years who is a potential respondent under article seven of the family court act, who, with the consent of his or her parent or other person legally responsible for the youth, is determined by the local juvenile probation department or social services official to be in need of crisis intervention or respite Services.
 4. “Approved runaway program” shall mean any non-residential program approved by the office of children and family services after submission by the county youth bureau, as part of its comprehensive plan, or an residential facility which is operated by an authorized agency as defined in subdivision ten of section three hundred seventy-one of the social services law, and approved by the office of children and family services after submission by the county youth bureau as part of its comprehensive plan, established and operated to provide services to runaway and homeless youth in accordance with the regulations of the office of temporary and disability assistance and the office of children and family services. Such programs may also provide non-residential crisis intervention and residential respite services to youth in need of crisis intervention or respite services, as defined in this section. Residential respite services in an approved runaway program may be provided for no more than twenty-one days in accordance with the regulations of the office of children and family services.
 5. “Runaway and homeless youth service coordinator” shall mean any person designated by a county whose duties shall include but not be limited to answering inquiries at any time concerning transportation, shelter and other services available to a runaway or homeless youth or a youth in need of crisis intervention or respite services.
 6. “Runaway and homeless youth service coordinator” shall mean any person so designated by a municipality whose duties shall include but not be limited to answering inquiries at any time concerning transportation, shelter and other services available to a runaway or homeless youth or a youth in need of crisis intervention or respite Services.
 7. “Runaway and homeless youth service coordinator” shall mean any person designated by a county whose duties shall include but not be limited to answering inquiries at any time concerning transportation, shelter and other services available to a runaway or homeless youth or a youth in need of crisis intervention or respite services.
 8. “Transitional independent living support program” shall mean any non-residential program approved by the office of children and family services after submission by the county youth bureau as part of its comprehensive plan, or any residential facility approved by the office of children and family services after submission by the county youth bureau as part of its comprehensive plan, established and operated to provide supportive services, for a period of up to eighteen months in accordance with the regulations of the office of children and family services, to enable homeless youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one to progress from crisis care and transitional care to independent living. Such transitional independent living support program may also provide services to youth in need of crisis intervention or respite services. Notwithstanding the time limitation in paragraph (i) of subdivision (d) of section seven hundred thirty-five of the family court act, residential respite services may be provided in a transitional independent living support program for a period of more than twenty-one days.
 9. “Transitional independent living support program” shall mean any non-residential program approved by the office of children and family services after submission by the municipality as part of its comprehensive plan, or any residential facility approved by the office of children and family services after submission by the municipality as part of its comprehensive plan to offer youth development programs, established and operated to provide supportive services, for a period of up to eighteen months in accordance with the regulations of the office of children and family services, to enable homeless youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one to progress from crisis care and transitional care to independent living. Such transitional independent living support program may also provide services to youth in need of crisis intervention or respite services. Notwithstanding the time limitation in paragraph (i) of subdivision (d) of section seven hundred thirty-five of the family court act, residential respite services may be provided in a transitional independent living support program for a period of more than twenty-one days.
 10. “Transitional independent living support program” shall mean any non-residential program approved by the office of children and family services after submission by the county youth bureau as part of its comprehensive plan, or any residential facility approved by the office of children and family services after submission by the county youth bureau as part of its comprehensive plan, established and operated to provide supportive services, for a period of up to eighteen months in accordance with the regulations of the office of children and family services, to enable homeless youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one to progress from crisis care and transitional care to independent living. Such transitional independent living support program may also provide services to youth in need of crisis intervention or respite services. Notwithstanding the time limitation in paragraph (i) of subdivision (d) of section seven hundred thirty-five of the family court act, residential respite services may be provided in a transitional independent living support program for a period of more than twenty-one days.
 11. “Safe house” shall mean a residential program for sexually exploited children as defined in subdivision one of section four

- hundred forty-seven-a of the social services law. An approved runaway program may operate a short-term safe house, as defined in subdivision two of section four hundred forty-seven-a of the social services law, for sexually exploited children. A transitional independent living support program may operate a long-term safe house for sexually exploited children.
12. "Municipality" shall mean a county, or a city having a population of one million or more.
- C. **§ 532-b.** Powers and duties of approved runaway program.
1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, pursuant to regulations of the office of children and family services an approved runaway program is authorized to and shall:
 - a. provide assistance to any runaway or homeless youth or youth in need of crisis intervention or despite services as defined in this Article;
 - b. attempt to determine the cause for the youth's runaway or homeless Status;
 - c. explain to the runaway and homeless youth his legal rights and options of service or other assistance available to the youth;
 - d. work towards reuniting such youth with his parent or guardian as soon as practicable in accordance with section five hundred thirty-two-c of this article;
 - e. assist in arranging for necessary services for runaway or homeless youth, and where appropriate, their families, including but not limited to food, shelter, clothing, medical care, education and individual and family counseling. Where the approved runaway program concludes that such runaway or homeless youth would be eligible for assistance, care or services from a local social services district, it shall assist the youth in securing such assistance, care or services as the youth is entitled to; and
 - f. immediately report to the local child protective service where it has reasonable cause to suspect that the runaway or homeless youth has been abused or neglected or when such youth maintains such to be the case.
 1. The runaway youth may remain in the program on a voluntary basis for a period not to exceed thirty days from the date of admission where the filing of a petition pursuant to article ten of the family court act is not contemplated, in order that arrangements can be made for the runaway youth's return home, alternative residential placement pursuant to section three hundred ninety-eight of the social services law, or any other suitable plan. If the runaway youth and the parent, guardian or custodian agree, in writing, the runaway youth may remain in the runaway program up to sixty days without the filing of a petition pursuant to article ten of the family court act, provided that in any such case the facility shall first have obtained the approval of the county runaway coordinator, who shall notify the county youth bureau of his approval together with a statement as to the reason why such additional residential stay is necessary and a description of the efforts being made to find suitable alternative living arrangements for such youth.
- D. **§ 532-c.** Notice to parent; return of runaway youth to parent; alternative living arrangements.
1. The staff of the program shall, to the maximum extent possible, preferably within twenty-four hours but within no more than seventy-two hours following the youth's admission into the program, notify such runaway youth's parent, guardian or custodian of his or her physical and emotional condition, and the circumstances surrounding the runaway youth's presence at the program, unless there are compelling circumstances why the parent, guardian or custodian should not be so notified. Where such circumstances exist, the runaway program director or his designee shall either file an appropriate petition in the family court, refer the youth to the local social services district, or in instances where abuse or neglect is suspected, report such case pursuant to title six of article six of the social services law.
 2. Where custody of the youth upon leaving the approved program is assumed by a relative or other person, other than the parent or guardian, the staff of the program shall so notify the parent or guardian as soon as practicable after the release of the youth. The officers, directors or employees of an approved runaway program shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability for or arising out of the release of a runaway or homeless youth to a relative or other responsible person other than a parent or guardian.
- E. **§ 532-d.** Residential facilities operated as transitional independent living support programs. Notwithstanding any inconsistent provision of law, pursuant to regulations of the office of children and family services, residential facilities operating as transitional independent living support programs are authorized to and shall:
1. provide shelter to homeless youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one as defined in this article;
 2. work toward reuniting such homeless youth with his parent, guardian or custodian, where possible;
 3. provide or assist in securing necessary services for such homeless youth, and where appropriate, his family, including but not limited to housing, educational, medical care, legal, mental health, and substance and alcohol abuse services. Where such program concludes that such homeless youth would be eligible for assistance, care or services from a local social services district, it shall assist such youth in securing such assistance, care or services;
 4. for a homeless youth whose service plan involves independent living, provide practical assistance in achieving independence, either through direct provision of services or through written agreements with other community and public agencies for the provision of services in the following areas; high school education or high school equivalency education; higher education assessment; job training and job placement; counseling; assistance in the development of socialization

skills; guidance and assistance in securing housing appropriate to needs and income; and training in the development of skills necessary for responsible independent living, including but not limited to money and home management, personal care, and health maintenance;

5. provide residential services to a youth in need of crisis intervention or respite services, as defined in this article; and
 6. continue to provide services to a homeless youth who is not yet eighteen years of age but who has reached the eighteen month maximum provided by subdivision six of section five hundred thirty-two-a of this article, until he or she is eighteen years of age or for an additional six months if he or she is still under the age of eighteen; and
 7. provide such reports and data as specified by the office of children and family services.
- F. **§ 532-e.** Powers and duties of the office of children and family services. The office of children and family services shall:
1. visit, inspect, and make periodic reports on the operation and adequacy of approved runaway programs and transitional independent living support Programs;
 2. certify residential facilities providing care to runaway and/or homeless youth, provided, however, that no certification shall be issued or renewed until it can be demonstrated that a program operated pursuant to this article has consistent with appropriate collective bargaining agreements and applicable provisions of the civil service law, developed and implemented a procedure for reviewing and evaluating the backgrounds of and the information supplied by any person applying to be an employee, volunteer or consultant, which shall include but not be limited to the following requirements: that the applicants set forth his or her employment history, provide personal and employment references and sign a sworn statement indicating whether the applicant, to the best of his or her knowledge, has ever been convicted of a crime in this state or any other jurisdiction;
 3. maintain a register of approved runaway programs, transitional independent living support programs and runaway and homeless youth service coordinators;
 4. submit to the governor and legislature an annual report detailing the numbers and characteristics of runaway and otherwise homeless youth throughout the state and their problems and service needs;
 5. develop and promulgate in consultation with county youth bureaus and organizations or programs which have had past experience dealing with runaway and homeless youth, regulations concerning the coordination and integration of services available for runaway and otherwise homeless youth and prohibiting the disclosure or transfer of any records containing the identity of individual youth receiving services pursuant to this section, without the written consent of the youth; and
 6. develop and promulgate regulations in consultation with the office of temporary and disability assistance concerning the provision of services by transitional independent living support programs consistent with the provisions of this article.
 7. in conjunction with the commissioner of education, develop and annually review a plan to ensure coordination and access to education for homeless children, in accordance with the provisions of section thirty-two hundred nine of the education law, and monitor compliance of residential programs for runaway and homeless youth with such plan.
- G. **§ 532-F Nondiscrimination**
1. **IN GENERAL.**—No person in the United States shall, on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving State financial assistance under this title.
 - a. **EXCEPTION.**—If programming that is segregated by or specific to sex is necessary to the essential operation of a program, nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the entity carrying out any such program or activity from consideration of an individual’s sex.
 - b. In such a circumstance, the entity may meet the requirements of this section by providing comparable services to individuals who cannot be provided with the sex-segregated or sex-specific programming.
- IV. **State Interagency Council on Homelessness (Executive action)** Executive Order 2004-13, State of Arizona, Establishing the Governor’s Interagency & Community Council on Homelessness
- A. WHEREAS, an estimated 30,000 people experience homelessness each year in the State of Arizona and of that total, families comprise approximately 30% of the homeless population; and
 - B. WHEREAS, an estimated 10 percent of the homeless population has been homeless for longer than one year, many homeless individuals and families have been turned away from homeless and domestic violence shelters due to a lack of capacity, and many have experienced repeated incidents of homelessness over the past three years; and
 - C. WHEREAS, multiple state agencies bear the responsibility of serving the homeless and those who are at risk of homelessness; and
 - D. WHEREAS, ending homelessness requires collaboration among state agencies, local governments, the private sector and service provider networks to coordinate program development, deliver essential services and provide housing; and
 - E. WHEREAS, ending or reducing homelessness contributes to economic development and improves the overall quality of life within our communities;
 - F. NOW, THEREFORE, I, Janet Napolitano, Governor of the State of Arizona, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of this State, hereby order and direct as follows:

1. The Governor’s Interagency and Community Council on Homelessness (the “Council”) is created to develop and implement a plan to prevent and end homelessness in the State of Arizona.
2. The Council shall be chaired by the Governor of the State of Arizona, and in his/her absence, co-chaired by the Directors of the Department of Economic Security and the Department of Housing, each of whom shall have the power to convene the Council.
3. The Council shall be comprised of the following eighteen (18) members, each of whom shall be appointed by the Governor, and serve, without compensation, at the pleasure of the Governor:
 - a. Director, Department of Economic Security;
 - b. Director, Department of Housing;
 - c. Director, Governor’s Office for Children, Youth and Families;
 - d. Director, Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System;
 - e. Director, Department of Health Services
 - f. Director, Arizona Department of Corrections;
 - g. Director, Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections;
 - h. Director, Arizona Department of Commerce;
 - i. Director, Arizona Department of Veterans’ Services;
 - j. Director, the Office of the Courts;
 - k. Director, Government Information Technology Agency;
 - l. The Arizona School Superintendent (or his/her designee); and
 - m. Six members of the public.
4. Members of the Council shall attend meetings and vote in person.
5. The Council shall serve as a statewide homelessness planning and policy development resource for the Governor and the State of Arizona, and shall:
 - a. Develop a plan to prevent and end homelessness in Arizona including evidence-based improvements to programs and policies that will ensure services and housing are provided in an efficient, cost-effective, and productive manner.
 - b. Develop recommendations to:
 1. expand and maximize housing resources as central to all efforts to end homelessness;
 2. increase access to mainstream state and federal social service resources such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Social Security Income (SSI) and veteran benefits;
 3. expand and maximize service resources such as mental health and substance abuse services;
 4. improve cross system policies and procedures through system integration, streamlined application and eligibility processes, and improved outreach;
 5. ensure persons in state institutions have access to services that will help prevent homelessness upon their discharge.
 - c. Develop a strategy to implement the plan and to recommend resource, policy and regulatory changes necessary to accomplish the goals of the plan;
 - d. Recommend and assist in developing partnerships with private entities, including corporate, philanthropic and faith and community-based organizations, as well as the federal and local government, to obtain involvement and support to achieve the goals of the plan;
 - e. Monitor and oversee the implementation of the plan to ensure accountability and consistent results;
 - f. Identify and maximize the leveraging of resources to improve the system of services for people who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless; and
 - g. Meet with the Governor to discuss and consider the Council’s recommendations.
6. The Council shall be supported by a work group to assist it in its duties and make recommendations about its work. The work group shall report its activities and recommendations to the Council. The work group may be comprised of state agency staff, representatives of the state’s continuum of care organizations, a statewide homeless advocacy group, and other public and private entities as determined by the Council. The work group shall also assist the Council in reaching out to local communities regarding the state’s plan to prevent and end homelessness.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Alabama

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 50

Overall Score: 27

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 42% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 52% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 50% of metrics met
- Systems: 5% of metrics met
- Environment: 0% of metrics met



State Highlights

An area where Alabama has moved the needle relative to other states includes preventing youth experiencing homelessness from increased contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems.



Law & Policy

- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides contract rights for youth experiencing homelessness.



Systems

- Youth can gain access to a state-issued identification card without the requirement of parental consent in certain circumstances.



Environment

- None

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for significant improvement throughout the metrics for the Yellowhammer State, with emphasis across all categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness, crafting statewide plans to address homelessness that contains a youth-specific component, designating agencies to develop and enforce these plans, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact a state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- Create a comprehensive statewide plan to end homelessness that includes a strategy to prevent and end youth homelessness and LGBTQ youth homelessness.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.
- Create an Interagency Council on Homelessness that mirrors the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), providing a multi-sectoral approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Alaska

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 31

Overall Score: 42

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 44% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 11% of metric met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 57% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 39% of metrics met
- Systems: 71% of metrics met
- Environment: 0% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Alaska has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.



Law & Policy

- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides partial or full contract rights for youth experiencing homelessness.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- None

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Last Frontier state, with emphasis on the Environment category. Protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact a state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Arizona

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 31

Overall Score: 42

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 48% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 22% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 52% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 61% of metrics met
- Systems: 52% of metrics met
- Environment: 6% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Arizona has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.



Law & Policy

- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides partial or full contract rights for youth experiencing homelessness.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.



Environment

- Promotes safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Grand Canyon State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact a state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.
- Create an Interagency Council on Homelessness that mirrors the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), providing a multi-sectoral approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Arkansas

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 47

Overall Score: 32

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 42% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 71% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 28% of metrics met
- Systems: 29% of metrics met
- Environment: 0% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Arkansas has moved the needle relative to other states includes limiting contact by youth experiencing homelessness with the criminal and juvenile justice systems and providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides partial or full contract rights for youth experiencing homelessness.



Systems

- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- None

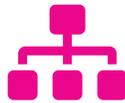
Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement across the metrics for the Natural State. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, addressing their educational needs, and protecting the rights and interests of vulnerable youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- Create a comprehensive statewide plan to end homelessness that includes a strategy to prevent and end youth homelessness and LGBTQ youth homelessness.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in California

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 3

Overall Score: 61

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 69% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 67% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 89% of metrics met
- Systems: 29% of metrics met
- Environment: 71% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where California has moved the needle relative to other states includes authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, preventing their contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems, and promoting safety and inclusion by providing protections for LGBTQ youth within key state programs.



Law & Policy

- State does not criminally punish youth who run away.
- State law provides partial or full contract rights for youth experiencing homelessness.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.
- State has RHY legislation similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that provides funding for emergency services and other supports to prevent and end youth homelessness.



Systems

- The State Department of Transportation has systems in place to address proof of residency requirements to receive a state-issued identification card.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state has banned conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and/or expression.
- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

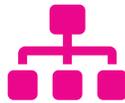
Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Golden State, with emphasis on the Systems and Environment categories. Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness and creating structures like a statewide plan to end homelessness that includes a youth-specific component should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- Create a comprehensive statewide plan to end homelessness that includes a strategy to prevent and end youth homelessness and LGBTQ youth homelessness.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Colorado

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 5

Overall Score: 60

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 60% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 78% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 71% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 50% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 61% of metrics met
- Systems: 67% of metrics met
- Environment: 38% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Colorado has moved the needle relative to other states includes authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, preventing their contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems, elevating the voices of youth who have experienced homelessness by partnering with them throughout policy development, and promoting safety and inclusion by providing protections for LGBTQ youth within key state programs.



Law & Policy

- State legislation does not criminally punish youth who run away.
- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides contract rights for youth experiencing homelessness.
- State has RHY legislation similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that provides funding for emergency services and other supports to prevent and end youth homelessness.



Systems

- The state has created an entity - an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state maintains a self-governing youth action board or council that informs youth homelessness policy.
- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Centennial State, with emphasis on the Environment category. Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness and protecting the rights and interests of vulnerable youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- Update the current state plan to end youth homelessness to provide a specific strategies towards preventing and ending LGBTQ youth homelessness.



Environment

- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Connecticut

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 3

Overall Score: 61

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 53% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 11% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 76% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 56% of metrics met
- Systems: 81% of metrics met
- Environment: 65% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Connecticut has moved the needle relative to other states includes preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems, addressing their educational needs, and elevating the voices of youth who have experienced homelessness by working with them throughout policy development.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.



Systems

- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.
- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains youth-specific and LGBTQ youth-specific strategy components.



Environment

- The state maintains a self-governing youth action board or council that informs youth homelessness policy.
- Ending youth homelessness is a goal of the Executive branch
- The state has banned conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.
- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Constitution State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness and addressing their educational needs should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Delaware

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 38

Overall Score: 38

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 39% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 48% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 50% of metrics met
- Systems: 67% of metrics met
- Environment: 0% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Delaware has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.



Law & Policy

- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides partial or full contract rights for youth experiencing homelessness.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- None

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the First State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, addressing their educational needs, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact a state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in the District of Columbia

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 7

Overall Score: 58

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 53% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 57% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 56% of metrics met
- Systems: 76% of metrics met
- Environment: 53% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where D.C. has moved the needle relative to other states includes authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, and promoting safe and inclusive environments by providing protections for LGBTQ youth across multiple sectors.



Law & Policy

- The District does not criminally punish youth who run away and limits their contact with the criminal justice system.
- The District provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- The District allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.
- State has RHY legislation similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that provides funding for emergency services and other supports to prevent and end youth homelessness.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains youth-specific and LGBTQ youth-specific strategy components.
- There is a interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The District requires training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems
- The District has banned conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.
- The District promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the District, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact a law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- Create a District entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the District.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Florida

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 28

Overall Score: 43

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 55% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 76% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 28% of metrics met
- Systems: 38% of metrics met
- Environment: 6% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Florida has moved the needle relative to other states includes authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, preventing their contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems, and providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.



Law & Policy

- State does not criminally punish youth who run away.
- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law provides partial or full contract rights for homeless youth.
- State has RHY legislation similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that provides funding for emergency services and other supports to prevent and end youth homelessness.



Systems

- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- State state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Sunshine State, with emphasis on the Systems and Environment categories. Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness, creating a statewide strategy to end homelessness that includes a youth-specific component, and protecting the rights and interests of vulnerable youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- Create a statewide strategy to prevent and end youth homelessness that includes a plan to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Georgia

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 43

Overall Score: 34

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 45% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 11% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 19% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 83% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 67% of metrics met
- Systems: 29% of metrics met
- Environment: 0% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Georgia has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, addressing their educational needs, and allowing them to access critical supports and services.



Law & Policy

- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- The state has a grievance process in compliance with federal law.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- None

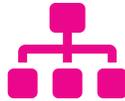
Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement across the metrics for the Peach State. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, preventing their contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact a state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Declassify running away as a status or delinquent offense.



Systems

- Create a comprehensive statewide plan to end homelessness that includes a strategy to prevent and end youth homelessness and LGBTQ youth homelessness. that includes a plan to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Hawaii

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

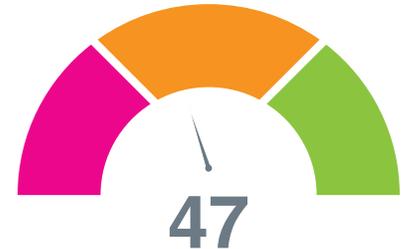
Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 21

Overall Score: 47

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 50% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 76% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 56% of metrics met
- Systems: 67% of metrics met
- Environment: 12% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Hawaii has moved the needle relative to other states includes preventing homeless youth's contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

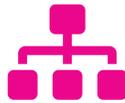
Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Aloha State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, addressing their educational needs, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Idaho

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 49

Overall Score: 30

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 35% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 22% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 24% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 56% of metrics met
- Systems: 33% of metrics met
- Environment: 6% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Idaho has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.



Law & Policy

- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness.



Environment

- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

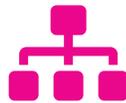
Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement across metrics for the Gem State. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, preventing their contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems, addressing their educational needs, creating a statewide strategy to end homelessness that includes a youth-specific strategy, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Declassify running away as a status or delinquent offense.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- Add a strategy to prevent and end LGBTQ youth homelessness to the current state plan to end homelessness.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.
- Create an Interagency Council on Homelessness that mirrors the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), providing a multi-sectoral approach to prevent and end youth homelessness.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Illinois

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 28

Overall Score: 43

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 53% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 57% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 67% of metrics met
- Systems: 19% of metrics met
- Environment: 35% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Illinois has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and allowing them to access critical supports and services.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- The state provides tuition waivers for foster youth.
- Youth can gain access to a state-issued identification card without the requirement of parental consent in certain circumstances.



Environment

- The state has banned conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.
- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare and juvenile justice programs providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Prairie State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness should be of importance, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- Enact a comprehensive statewide plan to end homelessness.
 - Create a statewide strategy to prevent and end youth homelessness that includes a plan to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.
- Create an Interagency Council on Homelessness that mirrors the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), providing a multi-sectoral approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Indiana

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

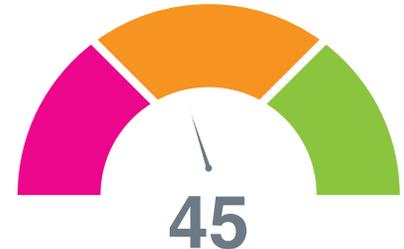
Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 23

Overall Score: 45

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 45% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 22% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 29% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 50% of metrics met
- Systems: 71% of metrics met
- Environment: 12% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Indiana has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, addressing their educational needs, and creating systems to address their other needs.



Law & Policy

- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- The state has a grievance process in compliance with federal law.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness with a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice and child welfare programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Hoosier State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness should be prioritized. Additionally, protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Declassify running away as a status or delinquent offense.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Iowa

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 18

Overall Score: 50

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 55% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 11% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 52% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 83% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 61% of metrics met
- Systems: 71% of metrics met
- Environment: 6% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Iowa has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, addressing their educational needs, and allowing them to access critical supports and services.



Law & Policy

- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- The state has a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness in compliance with federal law.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Treasure State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness should be prioritized. Additionally, protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact a state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Kansas

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 44

Overall Score: 33

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 50% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 22% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 62% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 50% of metrics met
- Systems: 10% of metrics met
- Environment: 0% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Kansas has moved the needle relative to other states includes preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems and providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.



Systems

- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- None

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Sunflower State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness should be prioritized. Additionally, protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- Create a statewide strategy to prevent and end youth homelessness that includes a plan to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Kentucky

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 38

Overall Score: 38

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 35% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 11% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 29% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 33% of metrics met
- Systems: 71% of metrics met
- Environment: 6% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Kentucky has moved the needle relative to other states includes creating systems to address the needs of youth experiencing homelessness, providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, and addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness.



Law & Policy

- State law provides partial or full contract rights for homeless youth.
- The state has a grievance process in compliance with federal law.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Bluegrass State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact a state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Declassify running away as a status or delinquent offense.
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Louisiana

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

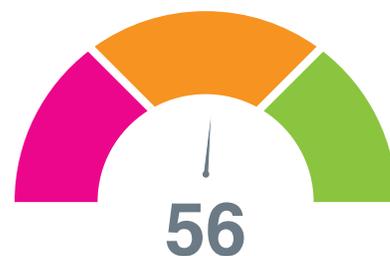
Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 8

Overall Score: 56

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 66% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 90% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 44% of metrics met
- Systems: 67% of metrics met
- Environment: 6% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Louisiana has moved the needle relative to other states includes preventing homeless youth's contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems, providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, and creating systems to address the needs of homeless youth.



Law & Policy

- State does not criminally punish youth who run away.
- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.
- State has RHY legislation similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that provides funding for emergency services and other supports to prevent and end youth homelessness.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

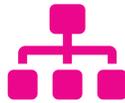
Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Pelican State, with emphasis on the Environment category. Protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Maine

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

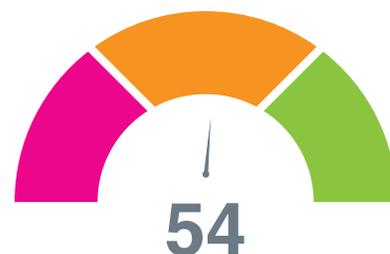
Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 12

Overall Score: 54

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 63% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 11% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 29% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 33% of metrics met
- Systems: 67% of metrics met
- Environment: 6% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Maine has moved the needle relative to other states includes laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, allowing them to access critical supports and services, and promoting safe and inclusive environments by providing protections for LGBTQ youth in key programs.



Law & Policy

- State does not criminally punish youth who run away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.
- State has RHY legislation similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that provides funding for emergency services and other supports to prevent and end youth homelessness.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice and child welfare programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Pine Tree State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact a state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as a Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Maryland

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

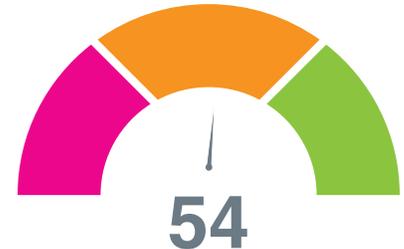
Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 12

Overall Score: 54

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 40% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 57% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 39% of metrics met
- Systems: 90% of metrics met
- Environment: 59% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Maryland has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently and creating systems to address the needs of youth experiencing homelessness.



Law & Policy

- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state has banned conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.
- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement across the metrics for the Old Line State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness should be prioritized. Additionally, protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact a state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Massachusetts

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 2

Overall Score: 63

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 68% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 44% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 81% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 67% of metrics met
- Systems: 90% of metrics met
- Environment: 12% of metrics met



Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Massachusetts

State Highlights

Some areas where Massachusetts has moved the needle relative to other states includes preventing homeless youth's contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems, allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services, creating systems to address the needs of homeless youth, and promoting safe and inclusive environments by providing protections for LGBTQ youth in key programs.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- The state has a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that is in compliance with federal law.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.
- State has RHY legislation similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that provides funding for emergency services and other supports to prevent and end youth homelessness.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- The state has created an entity that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice and child welfare programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

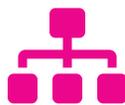
Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Bay State, with emphasis on the Environment category. Creating a more welcoming, safe, and inclusive environment for youth experiencing homelessness should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Establish a formal process for emancipation.
- Pass laws and regulations that promote access to higher education for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Allow unaccompanied youth to consent to mental health treatment.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Michigan

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

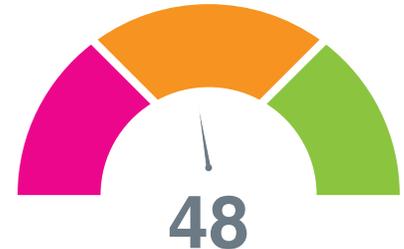
Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 19

Overall Score: 48

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 48% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 11% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 62% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 50% of metrics met
- Systems: 76% of metrics met
- Environment: 12% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Michigan has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, creating systems to address the needs of homeless youth, and promoting safe and inclusive environments by providing protections for LGBTQ youth in key programs.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare and juvenile justice programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Great Lakes State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Minnesota

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

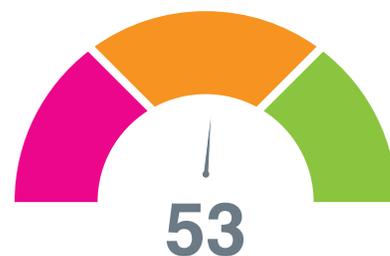
Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 15

Overall Score: 53

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 45% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 11% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 62% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 50% of metrics met
- Systems: 90% of metrics met
- Environment: 35% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Minnesota has moved the needle relative to other states include laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, allowing them to access critical supports and services, and implementing a multi-sectoral approach to addressing youth homelessness.



Law & Policy

- State does not criminally punish youth who run away.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.
- State has RHY legislation similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that provides funding for emergency services and other supports to prevent and end youth homelessness.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- The state has created an entity that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.
- Provides tuition waivers for foster youth.



Environment

- The state elevates the voices of youth by including them in policymaking decisions as it pertains to youth homelessness policy and programs.
- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the North Star State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact a state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Pass legislation that gives youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- Create a system within the State Department of Transportation to address proof of residency requirements to receive a state-issued identification card.



Environment

- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Mississippi

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 38

Overall Score: 38

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 44% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 22% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 43% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 50% of metrics met
- Systems: 48% of metrics met
- Environment: 6% of metrics met



State Highlights

One area where Mississippi has moved the needle relative to other states is in providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.



Law & Policy

- State law prevents runaway youth to the criminal justice system.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- The state has a grievance process in compliance with federal law.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Magnolia State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Allow youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.



Systems

- Add a strategy to prevent and end LGBTQ youth homelessness to the current state plan to end homelessness.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Missouri

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 21

Overall Score: 47

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 50% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 22% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 57% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 44% of metrics met
- Systems: 76% of metrics met
- Environment: 0% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Missouri has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently and addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness.



Law & Policy

- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- The state has a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that is in compliance with federal law.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- None

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement across the metrics for the Show-Me State, with much more state support needed to prevent and end youth homelessness. Protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Montana

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 36

Overall Score: 39

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 45% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 11% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 62% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 39% of metrics met
- Systems: 52% of metrics met
- Environment: 0% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Montana has moved the needle relative to other states includes not relying on the criminal justice system to provide services to youth experiencing homelessness, maintaining a state plan to end homelessness, and providing youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.



Environment

- None

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Treasure State, with emphasis on the Systems and Environment categories. Protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.
- Create an Interagency Council on Homelessness that mirrors the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), providing a multi-sectoral approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Nebraska

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 41

Overall Score: 37

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 44% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 43% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 50% of metrics met
- Systems: 48% of metrics met
- Environment: 0% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Nebraska has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing contract rights for youth experiencing homelessness, independent health insurance coverage, and maintaining a state plan to end homelessness.



Law & Policy

- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- The state has a grievance process in compliance with federal law.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.



Environment

- None

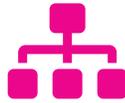
Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Cornhusker State, with emphasis on the Environment category. Creating a coordinated state response to youth homelessness and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Declassify running away as a status offense.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.
- Create an Interagency Council on Homelessness that mirrors the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), providing a multi-sectoral approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Nevada

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 16

Overall Score: 52

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 50% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 76% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 50% of metrics met
- Systems: 48% of metrics met
- Environment: 0% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Nevada has moved the needle relative to other states includes not specifically criminalizing running away, providing them some contract rights, and having an interagency council on homelessness on the state level that promotes a multi-sectoral approach to preventing and ending homelessness within the state.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific and LGBTQ youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state has banned conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.
- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Silver State, with emphasis on the Environment category. Protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in New Hampshire

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

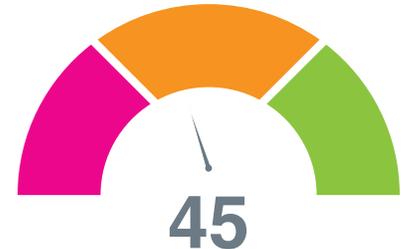
Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 23

Overall Score: 45

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 45% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 11% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 86% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 13% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 44% of metrics met
- Systems: 76% of metrics met
- Environment: 6% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where New Hampshire has moved the needle relative to other states includes minimizing court involvement of youth experiencing homelessness, making healthcare accessible to them, and maintaining a state plan to prevent and end homelessness.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- Ending youth homelessness is a goal of the Executive branch (Governor).

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Granite State, with emphasis on the Environment category. Making it easier to receive services without court involvement and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Pass legislation that gives youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in New Jersey

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 10

Overall Score: 55

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 61% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 86% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 61% of metrics met
- Systems: 52% of metrics met
- Environment: 35% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Pennsylvania has moved the needle relative to other states includes decriminalizing youth homelessness, providing youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights, and maintaining a state plan to prevent and end homelessness.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.



Environment

- The state has banned conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.
- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare and juvenile justice programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Garden State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Enacting and funding a state law similar to the federal RHYA and implementing a coordinated state government response to youth homelessness should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.
- Create an Interagency Council on Homelessness that mirrors the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), providing a multi-sectoral approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in New Mexico

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 12

Overall Score: 54

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 60% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 90% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 61% of metrics met
- Systems: 57% of metrics met
- Environment: 29% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where New Mexico has moved the needle relative to other states includes decriminalizing youth homelessness, implementing a state plan to end homelessness, and granting contract rights to youth experiencing homelessness.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides partial or full contract rights for homeless youth.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.



Environment

- The state has banned conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.
- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Land of Enchantment, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Enacting and funding a state RHYA law, implementing a coordinated state government response to youth homelessness, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.
- Create an Interagency Council on Homelessness that mirrors the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), providing a multi-sectoral approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in New York

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

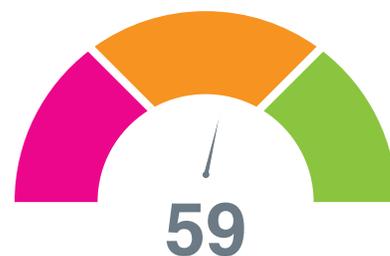
Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 6

Overall Score: 59

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 58% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 78% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 76% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 44% of metrics met
- Systems: 76% of metrics met
- Environment: 41% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where New York has moved the needle relative to other states includes having a state RHYA, decriminalizing youth homelessness, granting homeless youth contract rights, and promoting safety and inclusion by providing protections for LGBTQ youth within key state programs.



Law & Policy

- State does not criminally punish youth who run away.
- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.
- State has RHY legislation similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that provides funding for emergency services and other supports to prevent and end youth homelessness.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific and LGBTQ youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state has banned conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.
- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Land of Enchantment, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Enacting and funding a state RHYA law, implementing a coordinated state government response to youth homelessness, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law



Systems

- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in North Carolina

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 44

Overall Score: 33

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 40% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 11% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 57% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 33% of metrics met
- Systems: 38% of metrics met
- Environment: 0% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where North Carolina has moved the needle relative to other states includes decriminalization of runaway youth, allowing youth to live independently, and maintaining a state interagency council on homelessness.



Law & Policy

- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.



Systems

- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- None

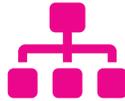
Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Tar Heel State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Enacting and funding a state RHYA law, implementing a coordinated state government response to youth homelessness, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact a state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- Enact a comprehensive statewide plan to prevent and end homelessness that includes a plan to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in North Dakota

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

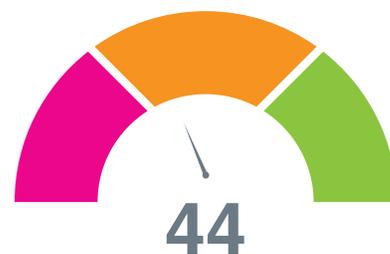
Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 27

Overall Score: 44

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 50% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 11% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 67% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 61% of metrics met
- Systems: 62% of metrics met
- Environment: 0% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where North Dakota has moved the needle relative to other states includes preventing contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems, providing youth with the opportunity to seek legal independence.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- None

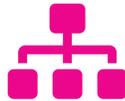
Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Peace Garden State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Addressing the educational needs and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Ohio

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

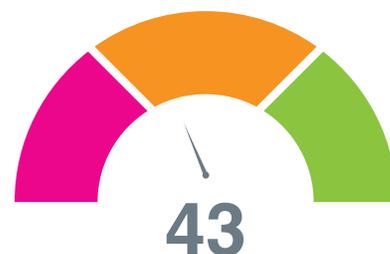
Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 28

Overall Score: 43

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 45% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 11% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 48% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0%
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 67% of metrics met
- Systems: 67% of metrics met
- Environment: 6% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Ohio has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing youth the opportunity to seek legal independence, allowing youth to access critical supports and services, maintaining an interagency council on homelessness, and promoting safety and inclusion by providing protections for LGBTQ youth within key state programs.



Law & Policy

- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare and juvenile justice programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Buckeye State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Enacting and funding a state RHYA law, implementing a coordinated state government response to preventing and ending youth homelessness, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Oklahoma

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 42

Overall Score: 35

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 34% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 11% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 38% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 28% of metrics met
- Systems: 67% of metrics met
- Environment: 6% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Oklahoma has moved the needle relative to other states includes allowing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness to live independently and creating a multi-sectoral approach to addressing youth homelessness.



Law & Policy

- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- None

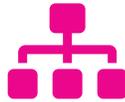
Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Sooner State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, as well as protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Declassify running away as a status or delinquent offense.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Oregon

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 10

Overall Score: 55

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 53% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 43% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 44% of metrics met
- Systems: 76% of metrics met
- Environment: 35% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Oregon has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, minimizing barriers to their access to comprehensive supports and services, addressing their educational needs, and promoting safety and inclusion by providing protections for LGBTQ youth within key state programs.



Law & Policy

- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- The state has a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that is in compliance with federal law.
- State has RHY legislation similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that provides funding for emergency services and other supports to prevent and end youth homelessness.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state has banned conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.
- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare and juvenile justice programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Beaver State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Preventing contact by youth experiencing homelessness with the criminal and juvenile justice systems should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Pennsylvania

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 31

Overall Score: 42

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 52% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 81% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 13% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 56% of metrics met
- Systems: 48% of metrics met
- Environment: 0% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Pennsylvania has moved the needle relative to other states includes preventing contact of youth experiencing homelessness with the criminal and juvenile justice systems and addressing their educational needs.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- The state has a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that is in compliance with federal law.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains youth-specific strategy component.



Environment

- None

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Keystone State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Pass legislation that gives youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.
- Create an Interagency Council on Homelessness that mirrors the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), providing a multi-sectoral approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Rhode Island

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 36

Overall Score: 39

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 27% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 48% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 13% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 33% of metrics met
- Systems: 76% of metrics met
- Environment: 35% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Rhode Island has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights while limiting their contact with the criminal justice system and providing protections for LGBTQ youth within key state programs.



Law & Policy

- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state has banned conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.
- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare and juvenile justice programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

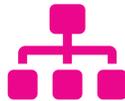
Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Ocean State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy category. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, and addressing their educational needs should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact a state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Pass legislation that gives youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in South Carolina

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 50

Overall Score: 27

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 21% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 11% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 29% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 13% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 28% of metrics met
- Systems: 67% of metrics met
- Environment: 0% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where South Carolina has moved the needle relative to other states includes creating institutional entities such as an inter-agency council on homelessness and maintaining a statewide, youth-specific plan to address and end youth homelessness.



Law & Policy

- None



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- None

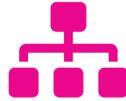
Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Palmetto State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, addressing their educational needs, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact a state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Declassify running away as a status or delinquent offense.
- Provide youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in South Dakota

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

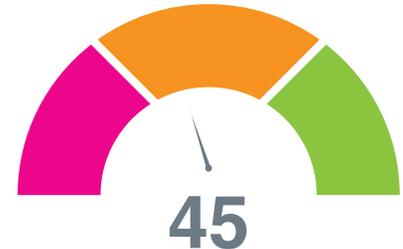
Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 23

Overall Score: 45

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 53% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 11% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 76% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 56% of metrics met
- Systems: 52% of metrics met
- Environment: 6% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where South Dakota has moved the needle relative to other states includes preventing homeless youth's contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems and providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific and LGBTQ youth-specific strategy component.



Environment

- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Mount Rushmore State, with emphasis on the Systems and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, addressing their educational needs, and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.
- Create an Interagency Council on Homelessness that mirrors the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), providing a multi-sectoral approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Tennessee

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

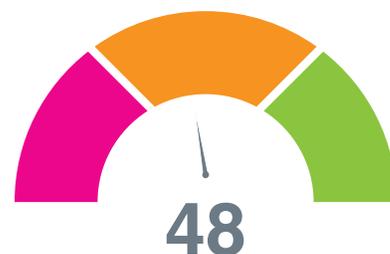
Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 19

Overall Score: 48

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 50% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 22% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 48% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 100% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 39% of metrics met
- Systems: 71% of metrics met
- Environment: 12% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Tennessee has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness, and promoting safety and inclusion by providing protections for LGBTQ youth within key state programs.



Law & Policy

- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- The state has a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare and juvenile justice programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Volunteer State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact a state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Texas

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 17

Overall Score: 51

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 55% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 22% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 48% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 72% of metrics met
- Systems: 71% of metrics met
- Environment: 6% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Texas has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently and allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

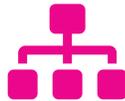
Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Lone Star State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, addressing their educational needs, and protecting their rights and interests, including the rights and interests of LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Declassify running away as a status or delinquent offense.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Utah

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 44

Overall Score: 33

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 27% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 22% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 24% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 22% of metrics met
- Systems: 71% of metrics met
- Environment: 6% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Utah has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently and implementing a multi-sectoral approach to preventing and ending homelessness.



Law & Policy

- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights for homeless youth.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

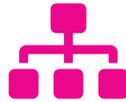
Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Beehive State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness, allowing them to access critical supports and services, and protecting their rights and interests, including the rights and interests of LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact a state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Declassify running away as a status or delinquent offense.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in juvenile justice and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Vermont

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 8

Overall Score: 56

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 58% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 33% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 57% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 17% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 72% of metrics met
- Systems: 67% of metrics met
- Environment: 35% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Vermont has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing unaccompanied youth opportunities to achieve legal independence, allowing access to critical supports and services, limiting contact with the justice systems, and protecting the rights of LGBTQ youth within key state programs.



Law & Policy

- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- Youth under the age of majority have contract rights that would allow them to obtain necessities and enter into agreements for supports and services, making it easier to live independently.
- Unaccompanied youth under 18 years of age can apply for health insurance coverage (without parental consent).



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state has banned conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.
- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare and juvenile justice programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Green Mountain State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact a state law that provides comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness and adequate funding to address youth homelessness generally.
- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.
- Expand eligibility for publicly-funded opportunities and supports available to children and youth to include older young people through the age of 24.
- Revise curfew statutes to further limit court and police involvement.
- Protect providers from civil and criminal liability when they provide services in good faith to youth experiencing homelessness.
- Remove barriers to accessing critical supports and services. Youth experiencing homelessness should be able to consent to their own care, including consenting to examination and treatment relating to a sexual assault without the need for parental consent.
- Address housing needs in transition planning for justice-involved youth.
- Subsidize childcare for eligible recipients of TANF.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.
- Remove barriers to obtaining a state-issued identification card such as requiring parental consent.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Virginia

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

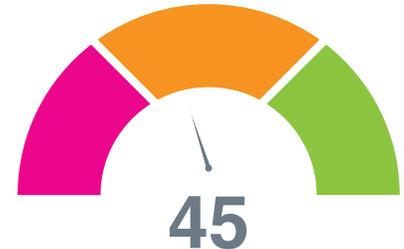
Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 23

Overall Score: 45

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 50% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 76% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 63% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 33% of metrics met
- Systems: 67% of metrics met
- Environment: 0% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Virginia has moved the needle relative to other states includes preventing homeless youth's contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems and addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- None

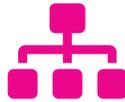
Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Old Dominion State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness and protecting the rights and interests of youth experiencing homelessness, including LGBTQ youth, should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Washington

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

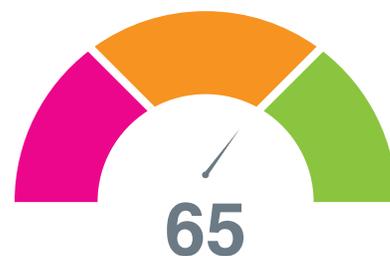
Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 1

Overall Score: 65

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 63% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 81% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 56% of metrics met
- Systems: 86% of metrics met
- Environment: 41% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Washington has moved the needle relative to other states includes laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, preventing their contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems, and promoting safety and inclusion by providing protections for LGBTQ youth within key state programs.



Law & Policy

- State does not criminally punish youth who run away.
- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law provides youth experiencing homelessness some contract rights.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.
- State has RHY legislation similar to the federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) that provides funding for emergency services and other supports to prevent and end youth homelessness.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- The state has created an entity that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- The state has banned conversion therapy for minors on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.
- The state promotes safe and inclusive environments in child welfare and juvenile justice programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Evergreen State, with emphasis on the Systems category.



Law & Policy

- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- The State Department of Transportation should implement systems to address proof of residency requirements to receive a state-issued identification card.
- Work with state and local advocacy partners to create a public awareness campaign designed to raise awareness about youth homelessness.



Environment

- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in West Virginia

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

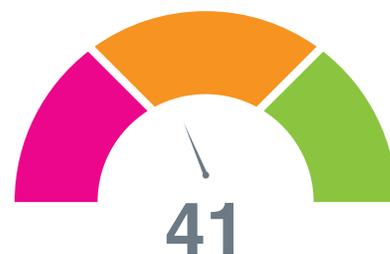
Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 35

Overall Score: 41

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 44% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 11% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 29% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 88% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 50% of metrics met
- Systems: 67% of metrics met
- Environment: 0% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where West Virginia has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently and addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness.



Law & Policy

- State law provides partial or full contract rights for homeless youth.
- The state has a grievance process in compliance with federal law.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- None

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Mountain State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, preventing homeless youth's contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems, and protecting the rights and interests of LGBTQ youth should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Enact state law that allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- Declassify running away as a status or delinquent offense.
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Wisconsin

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 31

Overall Score: 42

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 45% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 81% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 13% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 56% of metrics met
- Systems: 67% of metrics met
- Environment: 0% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Wisconsin has moved the needle relative to other states includes preventing homeless youth's contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law does not specifically criminalize running away.
- State allows unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.
- There is a state interagency council on homelessness.



Environment

- None

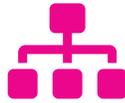
Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Badger State, with emphasis on the Law & Policy and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness, providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently, and protecting the rights and interests of LGBTQ youth should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Pass legislation that gives homeless youth partial or full contract rights.
- Implement a grievance process for students experiencing homelessness that complies with federal law.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Moving the Needle on Youth Homelessness in Wyoming

An estimated 4.2 million youth and young adults up to age 24 experience homelessness each year in the United States, and we as a nation are not doing enough to change it. Youth experiencing homelessness, particularly those who are unaccompanied, face numerous challenges, which can include legal barriers to meeting the basic necessities of life and to accessing assistance.

The State Index on Youth Homelessness (the Index) provides a snapshot of some of the legal, systemic, and environmental barriers and complex challenges youth experiencing homelessness face. The Index also provides states, advocates, grassroots activists, and youth themselves with a tool recommending concrete steps that states can take to protect the safety, development, health, and dignity of youth experiencing homelessness, thereby helping end the cycle of homelessness and increasing youth's prospects for a brighter future.

This scorecard evaluates the state based on 61 metrics assigning points up to 100. The metrics span across state laws and policies, systems, and environments that affect youth experiencing homelessness and influence state policy and program implementation.

Quick Facts & Stats

State Ranking: 37

Overall Score: 32

Performance Breakdown:

- Law & Policy: 37% of metrics met
 - Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness: 0% of metrics met
 - Preventing youth experiencing homelessness from coming into contact with the criminal and juvenile justice systems: 52% of metrics met
 - Providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently: 75% of metrics met
 - Addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness: 67% of metrics met
 - Allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services: 11% of metrics met
- Systems: 43% of metrics met
- Environment: 0% of metrics met



State Highlights

Some areas where Wyoming has moved the needle relative to other states includes providing unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness the opportunity to seek legal independence and live independently and addressing the educational needs of youth experiencing homelessness.



Law & Policy

- State law allows youth in need of supervision to receive services without court involvement.
- State law provides partial or full contract rights for homeless youth.
- The state has a grievance process in compliance with federal law.



Systems

- There is a current state plan to end homelessness that contains a youth-specific strategy component.



Environment

- None

Recommendations for Improvement

There is room for improvement throughout the metrics for the Equality State, throughout the Law & Policy, Systems, and Environment categories. Laws authorizing comprehensive supports and services for youth experiencing homelessness, allowing youth experiencing homelessness to access critical supports and services, and protecting the rights and interests of LGBTQ youth should be prioritized.



Law & Policy

- Enact and fund a state law similar to the federal RHYA to provide key intervention and emergency services for youth experiencing homelessness.
- Declassify running away as a status or delinquent offense.
- Allow unaccompanied youth under 18 to apply for health insurance coverage on their own.



Systems

- As part of the state plan to prevent and end youth homelessness, include a strategy to address homelessness among LGBTQ youth.
- Create a state entity - such as an Office of Homeless Youth Services - that focuses solely on designing, implementing, and evaluating youth homelessness programs.
- Create an Interagency Council on Homelessness that mirrors the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness (USICH), providing a multi-sectoral approach to preventing and ending youth homelessness.



Environment

- Organize and maintain a self-governing youth action board or council to inform youth homelessness policy within the state.
- Require training about sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, healthy sexual development, or issues specific to LGBTQ youth for staff working in runaway and homeless youth systems.
- Ban controversial and ineffective service provision that includes conversion therapy.
- Promote safe and inclusive environments in child welfare, juvenile justice, and runaway and homeless youth programs by providing protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

State Index on Youth Homelessness

2018

www.truecolorsfund.org/index