

# REPORT TO CONGRESS

*on the Runaway  
and Homeless Youth  
Programs of the Family  
and Youth Services  
Bureau for Fiscal Years  
2008 and 2009*



**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
Administration for Children and Families  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
Family and Youth Services Bureau

***Report to Congress  
on the  
Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs of the  
Family and Youth Services Bureau  
for Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009***

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## **NOTE REGARDING DATA USED IN THIS REPORT**

All data in this report pertaining to services provided by Runaway and Homeless Youth Program grantees were obtained from the Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System (RHYMIS). The reporting rates in fiscal years (FYs) 2008 and 2009 were close to 99 percent, and almost 95 percent of all reports were complete and valid. Grantees submit data twice a year, in April and October.

FY 2008 RHYMIS data included in this report reflect information collected in fall 2008 and spring 2009. FY 2009 RHYMIS data included in this report reflect information collected in fall 2009. Information collected in spring 2010 may alter the FY 2009 service provision numbers included in this report.

# Introduction

For more than 30 years, the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), has administered the programs serving runaway and homeless youth and their families authorized by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. This responsibility is in keeping with FYSB's mission to provide national leadership on youth and family issues. FYSB promotes positive outcomes for children, youth, and families by supporting a wide range of comprehensive services and collaborations at the local, Tribal, State, and national levels.

The programs for runaway and homeless youth were originally authorized by the Runaway Youth Act, Title III of the 1974 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP) (P.L. 93-415). Later renamed the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, the legislation was last amended by the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-378). The Act authorizes HHS to make grants to local public and private entities to provide services for runaway and homeless youth and their families, and Section 382 requires HHS to report biennially to Congress on the status, activities, and accomplishments of grantees.

## A Coordinated Response to Youth Homelessness

According to a 2002 report from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, between 1.6 and 2.8 million young people run away from their homes, are asked to leave home, or become homeless in the United States each year.

A majority of youth cite family conflict as a major reason for their homelessness. Many have suffered neglect, abandonment, and physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. Often, these young people abuse drugs or alcohol or struggle with mental illness.

Once on the street, youth face many dangers, including the risk of sexual abuse or exploitation at the hands of adults or peers.

FYSB helps these youth and their families through its three **Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Programs**, rated "effective" by the Office of Management and Budget:

1. The **Basic Center Program**;
2. The **Transitional Living Program** for Older Homeless Youth; and
3. The Education and Prevention Services to Reduce Sexual Abuse of the Runaway, Homeless, and Street Youth Program, known as the **Street Outreach Program**.

Authorized by Parts A, B, and E of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, the programs empower local organizations and shelters in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories to serve and protect runaway, homeless, missing, and sexually exploited youth.

These programs provide services to runaway and homeless youth:

1. **The Basic Center Program:** Federally funded basic centers provide youth, up to age 18, with emergency shelter, food, clothing, counseling, and health care referrals. Centers seek to reunite young people with their families, whenever possible, or to locate appropriate alternative placements.

A total of 44,536 youth were admitted to basic center programs in FY 2008, and 40,102 were admitted in FY 2009. Approximately 85 percent entered shelters. The rest received preventative services to resolve crises and avert the need for sheltering.

One explanation for the decrease in admissions to the Basic Center Program over time is that grantees also made a total of 195,934 “brief service contacts” with youth (94,921 in FY 2008 and 101,013 in FY 2009). During such a contact, youth drop in or call a youth center and receive help without necessarily being admitted to the program. Often, grantee staff can counsel youth while they still live at home and thus can prevent them from running away or engaging in other risky behavior.

2. **The Transitional Living Program for Older Homeless Youth:** Federally funded transitional living programs provide long-term, supportive assistance to older homeless youth, ages 16 to 21, who cannot return to their families but are not yet equipped to live on their own. The programs ease the transition to adulthood for these young people, offering them housing, life skills training, counseling, and support for education and employment. A total of 3,946 youth were admitted to transitional living programs in FY 2008, and 3,930 were admitted in FY 2009. While the number of youth admitted has remained flat over the last several years, wait lists at transitional living programs continue to grow, indicating that the Program has reached its capacity.

Within the Transitional Living Program, maternity group homes allow pregnant and parenting homeless young people, who are vulnerable to abuse, neglect, and poverty, to live with their children in community-based, adult-supervised environments. In addition to the services that youth receive in all transitional living programs, young people in maternity group homes receive child care assistance, parenting skills and education, and training in child development.

3. **The Street Outreach Program:** Street outreach programs make contact with runaway and homeless young people at risk of sexual abuse or exploitation. Outreach teams go to the places frequented by youth, educate them about services available to them, and provide them with basic necessities such as food, clothing, access to emergency shelter, and health care referrals, as well as referrals to other services, including mental health and substance abuse counseling. Youth workers made contact with 766,817 youth in FY 2008 and 812,418 youth in FY 2009.

Chapters 1–3 provide more information on each of the three RHY programs.

FYSB complements its RHY grant programs with a network of support services:

- A **national communications system**, or hotline, that connects young people to programs, services, and transportation back home;
- A **national clearinghouse** that collects material on at-risk youth and disseminates information to the public;
- **Training and technical assistance providers** with expert knowledge of issues related to at-risk youth and families, nonprofit management, and best practices in community-based service delivery;
- A **monitoring system** that ensures the quality of basic centers and transitional living and street outreach programs;
- A **management information system** that collects data on services provided to runaway and homeless youth by Federal grantees and provides key information for Federal reviews of FYSB's RHY Programs; and
- A **research and demonstration program** that explores ways to improve collaborations, services, and outcomes and to increase positive opportunities for young people.

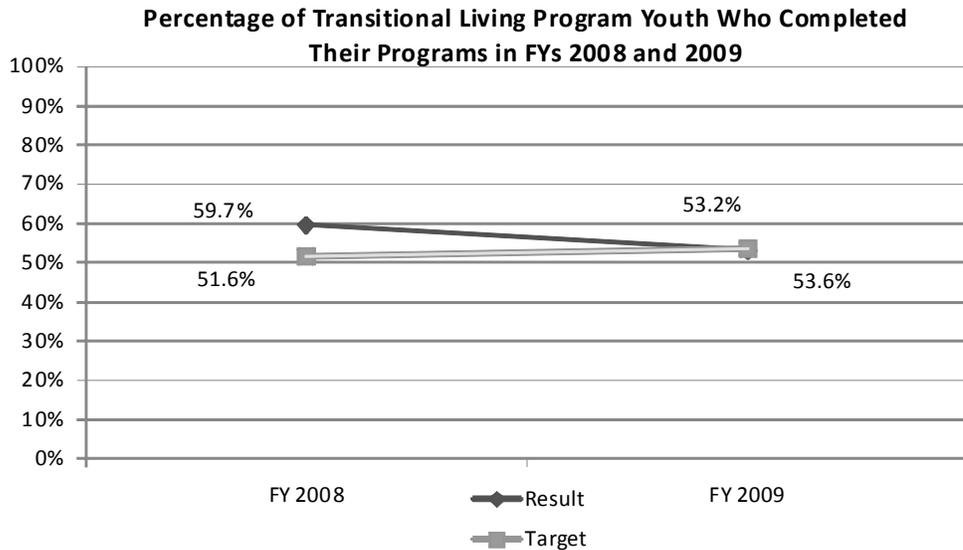
Chapters 4–9 provide more information on each of the above support services.

## **Demonstrating Effective Results**

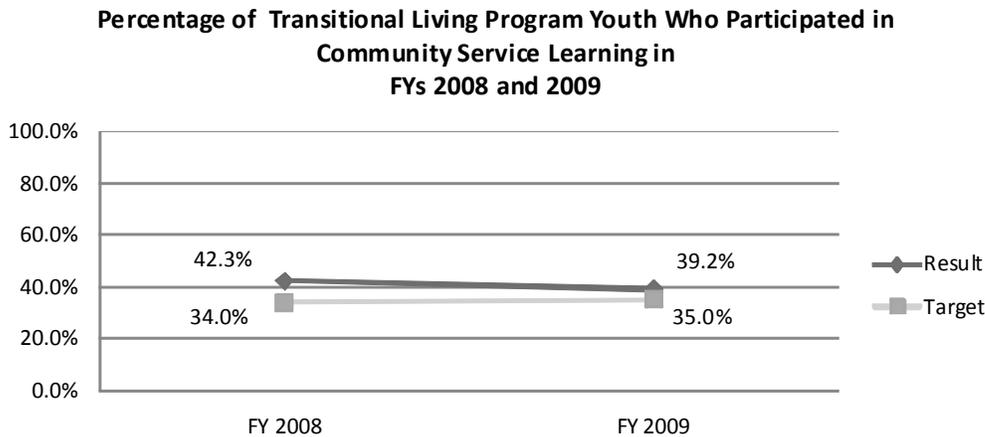
The Office of Management and Budget rated FYSB's RHY Programs as effective in FYs 2008 and 2009. The rating is based on meeting three fundamental goals: safety, success, and the development of character.

**Safety.** The "Safe and Appropriate Exits" goal means that, upon discharge from a basic center or transitional living program, a youth has been helped to find a living situation suitable for his or her further development, security, and success. In FYs 2008 and 2009, 86 percent of young people leaving transitional living programs exited safely, exceeding FYSB's goal by 1 percent.

**Success.** The "Program Completion" goal measures the degree to which youth complete the individual transitional living program plans that help them gain the life skills necessary for independent living. Completing their own plans and the activities required by their transitional living programs shows them how to stand by their commitments, plan for the future, and seek opportunities for training, education, employment, and other developmental experiences.



**Development of character.** The “Community Service Learning” goal measures the extent to which young people in transitional living programs engage in voluntary activities that can benefit others as well as themselves and connect them with their communities. While FYSB encourages programs to involve young people in community service learning, it may not be appropriate for every young person, leading to fluctuations in participation from year to year.



In FYs 2008 and 2009, transitional living programs exceeded FYSB’s targets for safe exits and development of character and came very close to the target for program completion. The minor decline in program completion in FY 2009 was accompanied by a 6.7 percent increase in youth with mental health issues from the previous year. In other words, the caseload of transitional living programs consisted of a somewhat higher risk group of youth, which may have made it difficult for youth to focus on completing transitional living plans. FYSB is continuing to study this phenomenon to determine the impact of the economic downturn.

## Promoting Positive Youth Development

Meeting the basic needs of at-risk young people is an ACF priority. ACF endorses a comprehensive approach to working with young people, especially those growing up in difficult circumstances, and helping them to become healthy, happy, contributing adults.

To that end, ACF encourages Positive Youth Development (PYD). This approach to working with young people suggests that helping them achieve their full potential is the best way to prevent them from engaging in risky behaviors. Within ACF, FYSB leads the effort to promote PYD.

RHY programs that employ PYD give youth the chance to exercise leadership, build skills, get involved, and make a difference in their communities. Young people gain self-confidence, trust, and practical knowledge that help them grow into healthy, happy, self-sufficient adults.

“Youth development is about providing meaningful opportunities for success,” says the executive director of one RHY grantee organization. “The more successful an experience youth have, the more likely they’ll be successful.”

RHY grantees also have given youth opportunities to succeed by inviting them to join the organization’s board of directors, giving them experience in self-governance, and employing them as peer advisors and educators.

ACF also promotes PYD in the Federal government and in communities across the nation. In FYs 2008 and 2009, FYSB reached out to thousands of youth workers, policymakers, and others by speaking at conferences, holding special meetings, and distributing materials.

Over the past two years, RHY programs have collaborated with FYSB’s other programs to promote PYD in the following ways:

- **Teaching youth to make healthy choices.** The Abstinence Education, Mentoring Children of Prisoners, and Transitional Living Programs all focus on building character, teaching youth how to develop and maintain healthy relationships, and providing them with life skills and competencies that enable them to grow into healthy, happy, self-sufficient adults.
- **Working together to end abuse.** Dating violence is all too common among today’s adolescents, but seldom discussed. Especially at risk are those young people already in the most precarious of life’s situations—runaway and homeless youth. With the aim of developing services and solutions to better protect already at-risk youth, FYSB combined the efforts of its RHY Programs and its Family Violence Prevention and Services Program into a joint demonstration project. Eight organizations were awarded demonstration grants to engage in efforts to reduce adolescent dating violence. They implemented community awareness activities and education and prevention programs and worked to increase the capacity of youth programs to address domestic violence and of domestic violence programs to serve youth experiencing dating violence. They also

worked on developing training materials and curricula and developing protocols for effective prevention and intervention strategies that should lead to improved service delivery patterns.

- **Supporting State and local collaboration on youth development.** For 5 years, FYSB's Positive Youth Development State and Local Collaboration Demonstration Projects explored how local communities could increase opportunities for young people to learn and grow, feel useful and connected, and make successful transitions to adulthood. In FY 2008, the last year of the demonstration, FYSB evaluated how this grant program promoted innovative youth development strategies in the nine grantee States. In FY 2009, FYSB initiated another collaborative State and local demonstration project, Support Systems for Rural Homeless Youth, and funded three States. (See pages 57–59 for more information about demonstration projects.)

In FYs 2008 and 2009, FYSB also collaborated within ACF and across other Federal agencies in a variety of ways to promote PYD:

- **Collaborated with the Children's Bureau to support transitioning youth.** For more than a decade, FYSB and the Children's Bureau have worked together to promote the PYD approach in services for homeless and foster youth. Much of the collaboration involves facilitating communication among grantees of FYSB's Transitional Living Program and of the Children's Bureau's Independent Living Program, a State grant program aimed at improving the transition to adulthood for youth aging out of foster care. Each year, the two Bureaus co-host the Pathways to Adulthood conference for independent living and transitional living providers. Support for the conference, which typically includes site visits, keynote addresses, and workshops, crosses ACF and other Federal agencies, as well as nonprofit organizations. The 14<sup>th</sup> annual Pathways to Adulthood conference took place May 14–16, 2008, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The 616 attendees came from all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Guam. The 15<sup>th</sup> annual conference took place June 1–5, 2009, in San Diego, California. The 435 attendees came from 45 States, the District of Columbia, and Guam.
- **Collaborated with ACF's Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to support unaccompanied alien children.** FYSB worked with ORR to provide a safe and appropriate environment for minors during the interim period between their transfer into an Unaccompanied Alien Children's program and their release from custody or removal from the United States by the Department of Homeland Security. When the Office of Refugee Resettlement's facilities became full, FYSB helped to place unaccompanied alien minors in nearby RHY shelters.
- **Supported Helping America's Youth.** This national initiative raised awareness about the challenges facing American youth and worked to motivate caring adults to connect with youth in three key areas: family, school, and community. In FYs 2008 and 2009, FYSB supported the Web site connected to this initiative, an online resource offering information about existing youth programs, promising program approaches, and sources of financial support, as well as a tool for mapping youth resources in a local community.

- **Served on the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice Task Force of the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.** An independent organization in the Executive Branch, the Council coordinates all Federal juvenile programs that work to prevent delinquency, detain or care for unaccompanied juveniles, and relate to missing and exploited children. In FYs 2008 and 2009, FYSB assisted the Council in developing a Web-based toolkit to help Federal managers fund Comprehensive Community Initiatives. These are projects that move beyond fragmented service delivery to undertake fundamental systems change in their efforts to promote child, youth, family, and community well-being.
- **Served on the Federal Mentoring Council.** Spearheaded by the Corporation for National and Community Service, this interagency group was formed in May 2006 to better coordinate the Federal government's mentoring programs. Its goal is engaging three million new mentors by 2010.
- **Participated in the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs.** The Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs was established in February 2008 by Executive Order to promote achievement of positive results for at-risk youth. It does this by creating and supporting a new Federal interagency Web site on youth (FindYouthInfo.gov) to help interested citizens and decision makers plan, implement, and participate in effective programs for at-risk youth; identifying and disseminating promising and effective strategies and practices that support youth; promoting enhanced collaboration at the Federal, State, and local level, as well as with faith-based and community organizations, schools, families, and communities; and engaging government and private organizations in improving the coordination and effectiveness of programs serving and engaging youth.
- **Participated in Shared Youth Vision.** This interagency working group focuses on the following objectives outlined in the 2003 *White House Task Force Report on Disadvantaged Youth*: developing and coordinating policy, within existing policy structures, to address the needs of disadvantaged youth; maximizing interagency collaborations to utilize the significant expertise within specific Federal agencies; coordinating Federal research so the government can fund programs that produce results that help disadvantaged youth; promoting models of "what works" and helping replicate them nationwide; and developing innovative model strategies that efficiently and effectively respond to the needs of disadvantaged youth.
- **Participated in the Federal Interagency Forum on School Health and Safety.** Formed in February 2008, this group aims to improve communication, coordination, planning, and collaboration among Federal agencies in order to enhance the effectiveness of Federal efforts aimed at improving the education, health, safety, nutrition and physical fitness, and overall well-being of school-aged children and youth.

This report provides information on FYSB's RHY Programs in FYs 2008 and 2009. Part I describes the three grant programs in greater detail and provides statistical information on the youth served by the programs in FYs 2008 and 2009, the services they received, and their outcomes. Part II details activities of the network of support created to help grantees provide the best service possible. Part III reports on research and evaluation efforts over the past two years.

## **Part I**

### **Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs**

The Federal government responds to the plight of runaway and homeless youth with a comprehensive set of programs. Three grant programs authorized by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, as last amended by the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 (P.L. 110–378), empower local organizations and shelters in all 50 States, the U.S. Territories, and the District of Columbia to serve and protect runaway, homeless, missing, and sexually exploited youth.

Chapters 1–3 describe the Basic Center Program, the Transitional Living Program for Older Homeless Youth (which includes maternity group homes), and the Education and Prevention Services to Reduce Sexual Abuse of Runaway, Homeless, and Street Youth Program (known as the Street Outreach Program). Each chapter includes an example of how that program helped a particular youth, and each provides information about FY 2008 and 2009 funding levels.

# Chapter 1

## The Basic Center Program

When young people run away, are asked to leave home, or find themselves alone and without stable housing, they face a crisis. They do not know where to turn or how to receive help. They need a temporary place to stay where they can eat, shower, sleep, and receive counseling and medical services or referrals. In many cases, youth need an adult who can step in and bridge the gap between them and their parents.

Young people find that emergency shelter and assistance at **basic centers**. These programs, run by community- and faith-based public and private agencies, meet the immediate needs of runaway and homeless youth up to age 18 while staff attempt to reunite them with their families or, if that is not an option, find other appropriate places for them to live.

Located in areas that youth can get to easily, shelters provide services 24 hours a day. Prior to September 2008, youth could stay in basic centers for up to 15 days. The maximum stay was subsequently increased to 21 days. In addition to temporary shelter and family reunification services, basic centers provide in-home and prevention programs, outreach, crisis intervention, counseling, and follow-up (aftercare) services, such as continued counseling and health care referrals.

The **Basic Center Program** was created by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, Title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1973 (P.L. 98-415). In October 2008, the program was reauthorized through FY 2013 by the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act (P.L. 110-378).

In FY 2008, \$52.9 million was available for the Basic Center Program. Of this amount, ACF awarded \$45.8 million to 371 grantees (231 continuations and 140 new starts) and used \$7.1 million for administrative expenses, logistics, support systems and collaboration with other Federal entities. The average annual grant to basic centers was approximately \$123,181 in FY 2008.

In FY 2009, \$53.5 million was available for the Basic Center Program. Of this amount, ACF awarded \$48.6 million to 371 grantees (263 continuations and 108 new starts) and used \$4.9 million for administrative expenses, logistics, support systems and collaboration with other Federal entities. The average annual grant to basic centers was approximately \$130,997 in FY 2009.

### How Does FYSB Award Funding for Basic Centers?

FYSB solicits grant applications for the Basic Center Program through announcements on its website ([www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb)) and on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Peer panels review the applications.

Agencies compete within their State for Basic Center Program grants. Each State receives Basic Center Program funds according to a formula based on the State's population of youth under age 18 as a proportion of the national population. Since the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008, each State receives not less than \$200,000 per fiscal year. The Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands receive not less than \$70,000 each.

Grantees must match 10 percent of their grant amount using non-Federal funds. Grants are for three years, with funding in the second and third years based on the availability of funding and the project's satisfactory progress.

### Meeting Young People's Basic Needs

Basic centers must offer youth adequate support in a home-like atmosphere. Centers must have an adequate ratio of staff to youth, with at least one adult on the premises at all times when youth are present.

Top Critical Issues Identified And Services Rendered, FYs 2008-2009*					
Critical Issues	2008	2009	Services Rendered	2008	2009
Family dynamics	38,646	35,807	Basic support	38,496	35,838
School/educational	21,232	19,883	Counseling/therapy	38,140	35,567
Mental health	14,474	13,798	Planned aftercare	34,050	31,222
Abuse/neglect	12,064	11,019	Life skills training	24,990	24,688
Alcohol/drugs	11,985	11,118	Recreational activities	23,485	22,707
Housing	11,405	10,606	Educational	14,208	14,132
Unemployment	6,637	6,801	Substance abuse prevention	11,105	9,834
Health	4,547	3,848	Peer counseling	7,734	8,931
Insufficient income	2,640	2,575	Physical health care	7,350	6,307
Sexual orientation/gender identity	2,179	2,181	Substance abuse assessment	5,281	4,599
			Preventative services (home- or shelter-based)**		5,439

\*Youth may have multiple issues.

\*\*Data collection for preventative services (home- or shelter-based) began in June 2008.

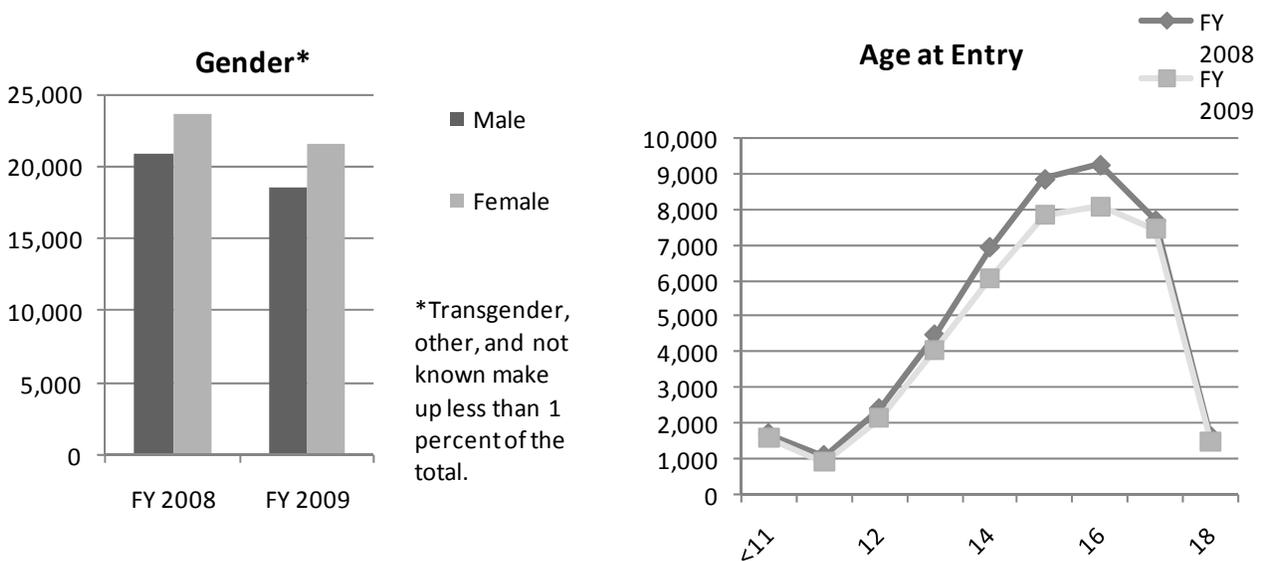
Shelters meet basic and immediate needs: temporary housing, at least two meals per day, clothing, medical assistance, and individual and group counseling. When young people need psychological or psychiatric care, shelters provide it either directly or by referral.

When a youth arrives, staff assess his or her needs, explain shelter services, ask for the young person's voluntary agreement to participate, and record basic background information. Managers assign a staff member to oversee the young person's treatment plan.

Where Youth Lived Prior to Entry	FY 2008		FY 2009	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Private residence	37,226	83.6%	33,693	84.0%
Street	3,100	7.0%	2,843	7.1%
Shelter	1,519	3.4%	1,006	2.5%
Residential program	936	2.1%	844	2.1%
Juvenile justice facility	576	1.3%	634	1.6%
Do not know	351	0.8%	397	1.0%
Another living situation	534	1.2%	428	1.1%
Mental hospital	282	0.6%	249	0.6%
Military	12	0.0%	8	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44,536</b>		<b>40,102</b>	

In keeping with FYSB’s focus on Positive Youth Development, or PYD, shelters are required to actively involve youth in the ongoing planning and delivery of services. Shelters can, for example, invite young people to serve on their boards of directors or provide opportunities for them to work as peer counselors. Shelters also can establish mechanisms for obtaining feedback from young people about the quality of services in the shelter. Do youth have opportunities for personal, organizational, and community leadership? Young people’s answers to this question can help determine how well shelters encourage PYD.

Slightly more than half of young people entering BCPs are female, and youth are most likely to be between the ages of 15 and 17. While the programs serve young people of all races and ethnicities and the majority of youth served are white (just over half of all youth), African American youth are overrepresented (nearly one-third of youth) compared to their representation in the general population. Native American youth are also overrepresented.



Race	FY 2008		FY 2009	
	Number	Percentage		Number
White	22,912	51.4%	20,755	51.8%
Black or African American	14,058	31.6%	12,760	31.8%
Not provided	3,948	8.9%	3,340	8.3%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1,578	3.5%	1,340	3.3%
More than one	1,440	3.2%	1,320	3.3%
Asian	322	0.7%	356	0.9%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	278	0.6%	231	0.6%

About 17 percent of youth served identified as Hispanic or Latino in FY 2008 and in FY 2009. (Hispanic and Latino are not racial designations; youth with these identities may be of any race.)

## Reaching Out to At-Risk Youth

Aiming to reach a broad range of youth, programs market their services in a variety of ways. They develop announcements and publications, media campaigns, and partnerships with local school systems and other public or private agencies that work with youth; make presentations to community groups; and conduct street outreach.

FYSB asks shelters to network with law enforcement agencies, the juvenile justice system, school systems, and other community agencies to ensure that:

- Staff from juvenile justice and law enforcement agencies are aware of and will use shelter services rather than detention or incarceration when assisting runaway and homeless youth who cannot immediately be reunited with their parents;
- School systems allow shelters to coordinate with schools to which runaway and homeless youth return and help young people stay current with their studies; and
- Community agencies give youth access to services not provided directly by the shelter.

How Youth Were Referred	FY 2008		FY 2009	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Individual	11,841	26.6%	11,550	28.8%
Other agency or program	8,044	18.1%	7,030	17.5%
Law enforcement/police	7,646	17.2%	6,186	15.4%
Self-referral	5,945	13.3%	4,565	11.4%
School	3,493	7.8%	3,168	7.9%
Juvenile justice	2,676	6.0%	3,568	8.9%
Other organization	1,373	3.1%	891	2.2%
Temporary shelter	965	2.2%	799	2.0%
Do not know	852	1.9%	451	1.1%
Street outreach program	523	1.2%	671	1.7%
Mental hospital	438	1.0%	429	1.1%
Residential program	402	0.9%	446	1.1%
Hotline	296	0.7%	296	0.7%
Religious organization	42	0.1%	44	0.1%

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act requires basic centers to coordinate with school district liaisons responsible for advocating on behalf of homeless youth. The appointment of a liaison by school districts is a requirement of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which mandates immediate access to public schools for homeless young people.

School Status at Entry	FY 2008		FY 2009	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Attending regularly	26,923	60.5%	24,972	62.3%
Attending irregularly	9,149	20.5%	7,612	19.0%
Dropped out	3,096	7.0%	2,767	6.9%
Do not know	2,807	6.3%	2,555	6.4%
Suspended	1,048	2.4%	775	1.9%
Graduated high school	610	1.4%	546	1.4%
Expelled	456	1.0%	412	1.0%
Obtained GED	447	1.0%	463	1.2%

### Reuniting Families, When Possible and Appropriate

Reuniting youth with their families, when appropriate, is the central goal of the Basic Center Program. Shelter staff must contact young people’s parents within the time frame established by State law. If no State requirement exists, shelter staff must contact the youth’s parents within 72 hours (and preferably 24 hours) of the youth’s arrival.

During their stay at a basic center, youth receive services that help reunite them with their families, including family counseling when appropriate or requested. Shelter staff help the young person to either return home or find placement in an appropriate alternative living situation, such as a transitional living program or a relative’s care. More than three-quarters of young people leaving BCPs go to a private residence. About one-sixth go to another institution, such as a shelter, residential program, mental hospital, or juvenile justice facility.

Where Youth Go After Exiting	FY 2008		FY 2009	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Private residence	33,847	78.7%	31,489	79.8%
Residential program	2,488	5.8%	2,310	5.9%
Street	2,327	5.4%	1,694	4.3%
Do not know	1,324	3.1%	1,207	3.1%
Shelter	1,199	2.8%	968	2.5%
Another living situation	746	1.7%	744	1.9%
Juvenile justice facility	614	1.4%	600	1.5%
Mental hospital	461	1.1%	446	1.1%
Military	18	0.0%	7	0.0%

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act specifies that shelters also must provide youth and their families or legal guardians with aftercare services and counseling after departure from the

shelter. Programs can offer these services either directly or by referral to other agencies and individuals.

(See Appendix A, pages 61–62, for a full description of legislative requirements.)

Though most youth return home to their families, in some cases that is not possible. Basic centers help them determine what to do next.

### **The Basic Center Program in Action**

Michael was 14 years old when he found himself alone on the streets. Michael's family had been troubled by homelessness and substance abuse, and Michael himself had been physically abused by a family member. He had not been to school in a year at the time he entered the basic center.

The basic center provided Michael shelter, helped him enroll in school, and offered other services to help address his experiences of abuse. Michael now is living in a foster home, finishing high school, and offering peer support to other youth from troubled situations.

## Chapter 2

### The Transitional Living Program for Older Homeless Youth

Many homeless and runaway youth are the victims of neglect, abandonment, or severe family conflict. They cannot return to their families, but they are not yet equipped to live on their own. They have to work to support themselves, often without having even a high school diploma. If they want to go to college, they have no one to help them pay for it or help fill out financial aid forms. They have to learn to cook for themselves instead of eating at home or in the university cafeteria. They have to seek their own role models, rather than leaning on their parents.

Through the **Transitional Living Program**, these youth find someone to guide them on their path to self-sufficient adulthood. Created by a 1988 amendment to the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, the program supports agencies that provide longer term residential services to older, homeless youth ages 16 through 21 for up to 21 months. (Underage youth may stay in the program longer, until they reach their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.) In October 2008, the Transitional Living Program was reauthorized through FY 2013 by P.L. 110–378, the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008.

In FY 2008, \$43.3 million was available for the Transitional Living Program. Of this amount, ACF awarded \$41 million to 218 grantees (all continuations) and used \$2.3 million for administrative expenses, logistics, support systems and collaboration with other Federal entities. In FY 2009, \$43.8 million was available for the Transitional Living Program. Of this amount, ACF awarded \$39.7 million to 208 grantees (177 continuations and 31 new starts) and used \$4.1 million for administrative expenses, logistics, support systems and collaboration with other Federal entities. The average annual grant to transitional living programs was approximately \$188,073 in FY 2008 and \$189,904 in FY 2009.

Reauthorization of the Transitional Living Program explicitly included maternity group homes—which had been funded as transitional living programs in the past—in its definition. In FY 2008, \$7 million in grants was awarded to 37 transitional living programs that also served as maternity group homes. In FY 2009, \$7.2 million in grants was awarded to 39 transitional living programs that also served as maternity group homes. The average annual grant to maternity group home programs was \$189,189 in FY 2008 and \$184,615 in FY 2009.

**How Does FYSB Award Funding for Transitional Living Programs?**

FYSB solicits grant applications for the Transitional Living Program through announcements on its website ([www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb)) and on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Peer panels review the applications.

Agencies compete nationally for Transitional Living Program funding. Grantees must match 10 percent of their grant amount using non-Federal funds.

FYSB awards a maximum of \$200,000 per fiscal year for a Transitional Living Program grant. Grants are for five years, with funding for the second through fifth years based on the availability of funding and the project's satisfactory progress.

**A Place of Their Own**

Transitional Living Program grantees are required to provide youth with stable, safe living accommodations and services that help them develop the skills necessary to move to independence. About half of young people entering a transitional living program have recently run away from or been asked to leave a private residence. About one quarter have come from a shelter or another residential program, and about one-tenth were living on the street.

Where Youth Lived Upon Entry	FY 2008		FY 2009	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Private residence	2,133	54.1%	2,232	56.8%
Shelter	774	19.6%	724	18.4%
Street	431	10.9%	457	11.6%
Residential program	347	8.8%	244	6.2%
Another living situation	157	4.0%	194	4.9%
Juvenile justice facility	68	1.7%	52	1.3%
Do not know	22	0.6%	14	0.4%
Mental hospital	13	0.3%	13	0.3%
Military	1	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,946</b>		<b>3,930</b>	

In providing youth with a place to live, programs use one or more of the following three models:

1. **Group homes** give youth the opportunity to move toward independence in a structured environment while living with other young people. The group is responsible for planning menus, preparing food, doing housekeeping tasks, and resolving issues that naturally arise in a shared-housing arrangement. Staff continuously supervise youth in the home and regularly check up on each young person's progress in the program.
2. In the **host-home approach**, youth live in the community with families who have volunteered to house them, make sure that their basic needs are met, and provide support and supervision with assistance from program staff.

3. Programs also house young people in **supervised apartments**, which can take several forms. For example, a grantee may own an apartment building and house youth in individual units. A staff person stays on the premises to assist youth as needed. Other programs use “scattered-site” apartments: single-occupancy apartments rented directly by young people, with the sponsorship of a transitional living program. Youth rent apartments in locations that they choose and, depending on program policies, are responsible for all or part of the rent. Staff visit these young people periodically, generally more often when they first move in and less often as they progress toward independence. Some programs allow youth to keep the apartments upon completing program services.

In all three program models, transitional living facilities must provide support and structure and may not house more than 20 youth at one time. Program staff do not have to live on site, but they must stay in regular contact with youth, for instance by calling them daily or making weekly visits to the home or apartment.

Many programs combine the three models, using a phased system that moves youth from more supervised to less supervised surroundings as they learn to live on their own. Upon entering a transitional living program, participants might, for example, live in group homes with other youth and a staff person. As they hone their decision-making skills, take on more responsibility, and learn to set goals for themselves, young people move into apartment buildings on grantee property before finally moving into individual scattered-site apartments.

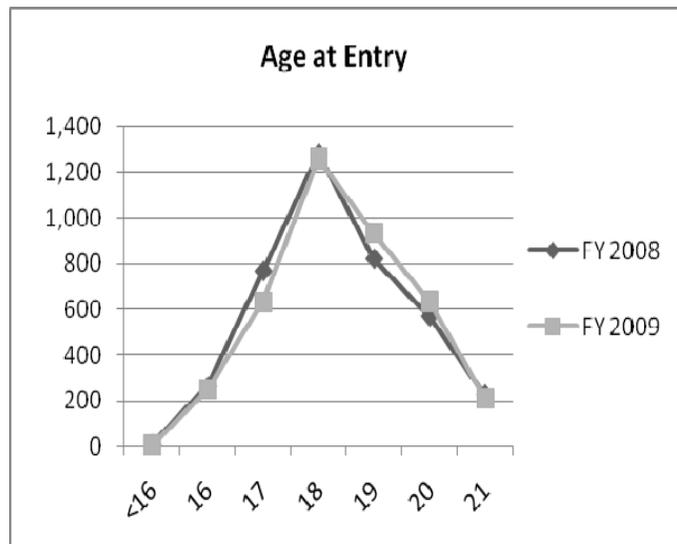
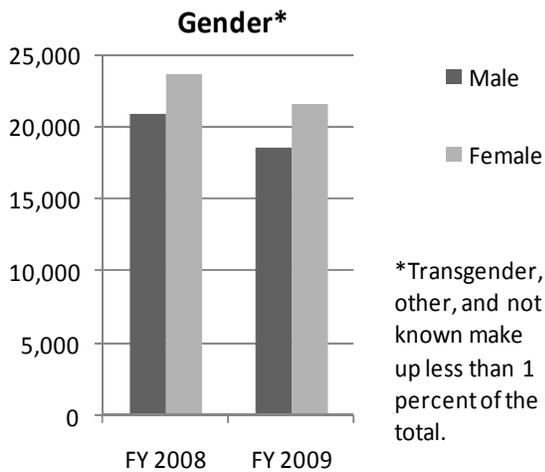
How Youth Were Referred	FY 2008		FY 2009	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Self-referral	866	21.9%	802	20.4%
Other agency or program	779	19.7%	743	18.9%
Individual	773	19.6%	894	22.7%
Temporary shelter	408	10.3%	444	11.3%
Residential program	274	6.9%	240	6.1%
Street outreach program	233	5.9%	246	6.3%
School	211	5.3%	237	6.0%
Other organization	152	3.9%	119	3.0%
Juvenile justice	140	3.5%	121	3.1%
Do not know	43	1.1%	30	0.8%
Hotline	22	0.6%	20	0.5%
Law enforcement/police	17	0.4%	12	0.3%
Religious organization	17	0.4%	7	0.2%
Mental hospital	11	0.3%	15	0.4%

Top Critical Issues Identified and Services Rendered, FYs 2008-2009*					
Critical Issues	2008	2009	Services Rendered	2008	2009
Housing	2,611	2,606	Basic support	3,180	3,051
Family dynamics	2,506	2,480	Life skills training	2,996	2,853
Unemployment	2,199	2,204	Planned aftercare	2,963	2,969
School/educational	1,998	1,933	Counseling/therapy	2,709	2,737
Mental health	1,314	1,394	Employment services	2,528	2,428
Alcohol/drugs	1,225	1,224	Educational	2,198	2,016
Abuse/neglect	1,108	994	Program connection services	2,195	2,164
Insufficient income	988	1,129	Recreational activities	1,917	1,823
Pregnant teen or teen parent	774	887	Physical health care	1,478	1,331
Health	720	630	Community service learning	1,382	1,282
			Services to nonresident or pre-resident youth**		2,046

\*Youth may have multiple issues.

\*\*Data collection for services to nonresident or pre-resident youth began in June 2008.

Slightly more than half of young people entering transitional living programs are female, and youth are most likely to be between the ages of 17 and 20. While the programs serve young people of all races and ethnicities and largest group of youth served are white (about forty-five percent of all youth), African American youth are overrepresented (more than one-third of youth) compared to their representation in the general population. Native American youth also are overrepresented.



Race/Ethnicity	FY 2008		FY 2009	
	Number	Percentage		Number
White	1,830	46.38%	1,781	45.32%
Black or African American	1,390	35.23%	1,455	37.02%
Hispanic/Latino*	593	15.03%	542	13.79%
Not provided	291	7.37%	302	7.68%
American Indian or Alaska Native	206	5.22%	193	4.91%
More than one	151	3.83%	149	3.79%
Asian	31	0.79%	23	0.59%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	47	1.19%	27	0.69%

\*Youth who identify as Hispanic or Latino may be of any race.

## Skills for Life

Youth work or go to school while participating in transitional living programs. As youth progress through their program, staff help them develop the skills they need to move to full independence. In their daily lives, youth learn by doing; with guidance from staff, they gain practice in budgeting and saving money, maintaining a house or apartment, paying the rent on time, planning menus, cooking, and building constructive relationships.

To complement these hands-on experiences, grantees also offer, directly or by referral, programs and workshops providing more formal, structured opportunities for learning, as well as services that meet the basic needs of young people, including pregnant and parenting homeless youth.

For instance, transitional living programs provide formal or informal instruction in the following:

- **Basic life skills**, such as budgeting, using credit, housekeeping, menu planning, cooking, and becoming an educated consumer;
- **Interpersonal skills**, such as establishing positive relationships with peers and adults, making decisions, and managing stress; and
- **Parenting skills**, including education in child rearing and child development for the young parent.

Programs also offer an array of other services, such as:

**Individualized planning:** Programs work with each youth to develop an individual transitional living plan and decide what services the young person needs.

**Educational advancement:** Grantees help youth to graduate from high school or give them opportunities to attain a General Educational Development (GED) credential, postsecondary training, or vocational education. In addition, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act requires transitional living programs to coordinate with school district liaisons responsible for advocating on behalf of homeless youth according to the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, which mandates immediate access to public schools for homeless youth.

Upon their exit from a transitional living program, most youth have graduated high school or obtained a GED, or they are attending school regularly.

School Status at Exit	2008		2009	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Attending regularly	850	25.5%	836	25.6%
Graduated high school	798	23.9%	784	24.0%
Dropped out	583	17.5%	619	18.9%
Attending irregularly	438	13.1%	474	14.5%
Obtained GED	402	12.1%	359	11.0%
Do not know	240	7.2%	173	5.3%
Expelled	15	0.4%	17	0.5%
Suspended	10	0.3%	5	0.2%

**Job preparation and attainment:** Programs work to increase youth’s employability, offering them opportunities to build workplace skills, as well as providing career counseling, guidance on dress and grooming, and information about workplace etiquette. Programs also help match youth with jobs that fit their skills, financial needs, and career aspirations.

In FY 2008, close to half of young people leaving transitional living programs were employed; that percentage dropped to about one-third of youth in FY 2009. More young people were looking for work in FY 2009 than in FY 2008.

Employment Status at Exit	2008		2009	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Employed	1,512	45.3%	1,194	36.5%
Unemployed, looking for work	841	25.2%	1,003	30.7%
Unemployed, in school	294	8.8%	385	11.8%
Unemployed, not looking	290	8.7%	318	9.7%
Unknown	197	5.9%	133	4.1%
Seasonal/ sporadic	104	3.1%	95	2.9%
Unemployed, unable to work	98	2.9%	139	4.3%

**Mental health care:** Programs offer, either on site or by referral, individual and group counseling, which can include drug abuse education and prevention services.

**Physical health care:** Youth are able to receive routine physicals, health assessments, and emergency treatment. Pregnant youth receive prenatal care.

**Child care:** Programs help parenting youth access reliable child care, early childhood education services, and pediatric medical services if necessary.

(See Appendix B, pages 63–64, for a full description of legislative requirements.)

## Graduating to Independence

All of the services transitional living programs provide have one goal: to prepare youth to live on their own and support themselves. Even after leaving a transitional living program, many youth will struggle with finding appropriate housing, paying rent, affording college or technical education, or holding a job. But transitional living programs give them the life skills and problem-solving ability to deal with such obstacles.

Where Youth Go After Exiting	2008		2009	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Private residence	2,489	74.6%	2,388	73.1%
Do not know	264	7.9%	271	8.3%
Residential program	203	6.1%	164	5.0%
Shelter	110	3.3%	127	3.9%
Another living situation	106	3.2%	146	4.5%
Street	75	2.2%	59	1.8%
Juvenile justice facility	59	1.8%	77	2.4%
Military	17	0.5%	21	0.6%
Mental hospital	13	0.4%	14	0.4%

About three-quarters of young people leaving TLPs go to a private residence. About one-sixth go to another institution, such as a shelter, residential program, mental hospital, or juvenile justice facility.

Program staff help young people prepare a plan for transitioning to life on their own. Then, after youth exit the program, staff members check in with them at regular intervals to see how they are doing and provide them with any services they may need. Staff members report that many graduates turn to them for advice, assistance in lining up temporary financial aid if they need it, and continuing services such as mental health counseling.

### The Transitional Living Program in Action

Tracy entered a transitional living program at age 16 after she and her sister relocated to the Dallas area and found themselves homeless. She completed the program, which gave her the skills she needed to live on her own. The program required her to pay a modest rent, half of which was later returned to her to use in establishing permanent housing.

Tracy applied her funds to a down payment on a home. Today, at age 19, she is a valued employee at a local hotel and a student at the local community college.

## Chapter 3

### The Street Outreach Program

Young people who live on the streets or in unstable living situations, such as their friends' homes or overcrowded apartments, do not have the security that many of their peers take for granted. Without the adult protection of parents, guardians, or relatives, youth risk being sexually exploited or abused by adults. According to the National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children, one out of every three adolescents on the street will be lured toward prostitution within 48 hours of leaving home. Youth also may engage in "survival sex" as a way to get money or food.

FYSB's **Street Outreach Program**—formally known as the **Education and Prevention Services to Reduce Sexual Abuse of Runaway, Homeless, and Street Youth Program**—aims to defend youth against such harm by building relationships between street youth and program outreach staff. Grantee programs attempt to reach runaway, homeless, and street youth who have been subjected to or are at risk of sexual exploitation or abuse and other dangers. Each program's staff members provide youth on the street with support, advice, and referrals to emergency shelter programs, health care, and other services. The goal: keep youth safe and help them leave the streets.

The Street Outreach Program was created as part of the Violence Against Women Act of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-322), and funding was made available in July 1996. In October 2008, P.L. 110-378 reauthorized the program through FY 2013 as part of the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008.

A total of \$17.2 million was available for SOP in FY 2008. ACF awarded \$15.6 million to 161 grantees (140 continuations and 21 new starts) and used \$1.6 million for administrative expenses, logistics, support systems and collaboration with other Federal entities. The average annual grant to street outreach programs was \$96,894.

A total of \$17.7 million was available for SOP in FY 2009. ACF awarded \$16.2 million to 164 grantees (110 continuations and 54 new starts) and used \$1.5 million for administrative expenses, logistics, support systems and collaboration with other Federal entities. The average annual grant to street outreach programs was \$98,780.

### **How Does FYSB Award Funding for Street Outreach?**

FYSB solicits grant applications for the Street Outreach Program through announcements on its website ([www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb)) or [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). Peer panels review the applications.

Agencies compete nationally for Street Outreach Program funding. Grantees must match 10 percent of their grant amount using non-Federal funds.

FYSB awards an individual grantee approximately \$100,000 per fiscal year, with a ceiling of \$200,000 per fiscal year. Grants are for three years, with funding in the second and third years based on the availability of funding and the project's satisfactory progress.

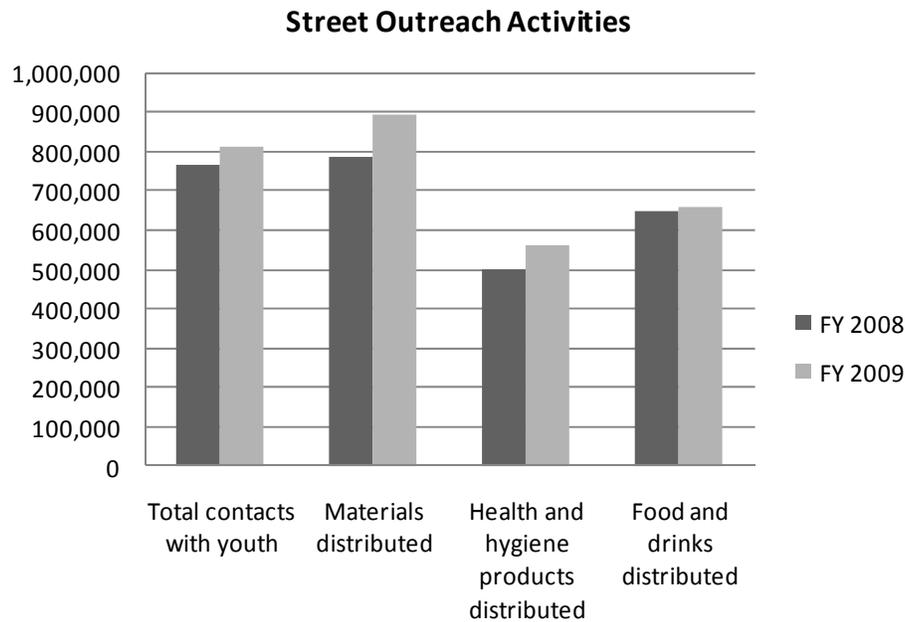
### **Intense Connections**

Street outreach programs are funded across the country, in urban and rural areas. Programs may send workers to find youth by foot, van, or both. Outreach workers in a particular city or area know the best places to locate young people on the streets. They often find youth in social spaces, such as coffee shops or 24-hour restaurants, in the parts of town where services for homeless people cluster, at places that serve free meals, or in public parks and basketball courts.

Street outreach grantees are required to offer services on the street during the hours that young people tend to be out, including late afternoons, evenings, nights, and weekends. Some programs collaborate with local school districts, which allow them to stand or park outside schools at the end of the day and tell young people about their services.

Programs are encouraged to employ staff whose gender, ethnicity, and life experiences are similar to those of the young people being served. Many programs use paid or volunteer peer outreach workers who team up with adults on their shifts. Some agencies favor peer workers who have been homeless or on the brink of homelessness. Programs find that peers sometimes have an easier time than adults forming connections with street youth and giving them advice and hope.

By hiring young people, agencies can overcome one of the biggest obstacles to reaching homeless adolescents: the difficulty of forming trusting relationships with youth who, time and again, have been hurt and victimized by adults in their lives. Youth and adults agree that there is really no substitute for peer-to-peer interaction.



### **Adequate Training, Coordinated Services**

For both youth and adult outreach workers, the pressures of the job can become intense. Often, outreach workers walk streets where fights, gunfire, prostitution, and drug exchanges form a regular backdrop and where many inhabitants view them as outsiders.

Every day, outreach workers try to intervene in the life of a young person who is hungry, cold, lonely, afraid, abused, or sick. Each youth has many needs: housing, food, clothing, and health care, as well as assistance applying for food stamps, finding mental health or substance abuse counseling, getting an education, locating work, and accessing other services.

Given the intensity of street work, FYSB requires grantees to train staff on issues relevant to street life, such as on-the-job safety and health problems prevalent among homeless youth. Training must prepare staff to effectively work with youth of diverse cultural backgrounds, show gender and cultural sensitivity, and use appropriate language. Programs also must supervise staff on the street, for instance by guiding staff as they navigate the boundaries of their job responsibilities and by providing them with practical strategies for helping youth who are survivors of sexual abuse, and they must provide back-up personnel for on-street staff.

Each program is required to have 24-hour access to local emergency shelter space that is appropriate for youth. Once outreach staff have placed a youth there, they must be able to stay in contact with the young person.

Because FYSB believes in empowering youth to take responsibility and make decisions, staff must take a PYD perspective, involving youth in designing, operating, and evaluating the program. Peer outreach is one way that programs accomplish this.

Finally, grantees must develop a plan for coordinating services funded under the program with their State or local sexual assault coalitions or other agencies providing services to youth who have been, or who are at risk of being, sexually abused or exploited.

(See Appendix C, pages 65–66, for a full description of legislative requirements.)

### **The Street Outreach Program in Action**

A street outreach worker met 16-year-old Jamal at a mobile soup kitchen. Jamal had been sporadically homeless and absent from school because of congenital health problems. Perhaps because of his health condition and experiences, at first he was withdrawn and unwilling to engage in conversation with the outreach worker.

After several weeks of repeated contact, however, he gained enough trust to allow the outreach worker to link him with medical services. In addition, the outreach worker helped him enroll in a program that could help him earn a GED.

## **Part II**

### **Family and Youth Services Bureau Support System**

FYSB complements its youth grant programs with a national support system that connects runaway youth and their families to emergency services and information and helps youth-serving agencies give clients the best possible care.

Chapters 4–6 describe the congressionally authorized National Communications System, a hotline run by the National Runaway Switchboard in Chicago, which gives runaway and homeless youth across the country somewhere to turn for help; the National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth, which collects and shares information about at-risk young people and families; and the Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center, which gives grantees the tools they need to serve youth effectively.

## Chapter 4

### National Communications System

“National Runaway Switchboard.”

“Hi, I’m having some problems at home. I don’t know what to do. Can you help me?”

“I’m glad you called. We’re here to help. Can you tell me a little bit about your situation?”

“Well, I live at home with my mom and stepdad. My stepdad is always yelling at me. It’s like I can’t do anything right. Yesterday, I came home from school a little late, and he got so angry that I was afraid he was going to hurt me. I just turned right around and left the house. I’m at my friend’s house right now because I’m scared to go home.”

“It sounds like a really tough situation. Can you think of anyone who can help you talk with your stepdad? Maybe your mom? Are there any family members you can go to who’ll help you make sure you’re safe?”

“I think my mom is pretty mad right now too. My friend’s mom is here, so I’ve been talking to her, but she says that I can’t stay the night. I really just want to find a place to stay tonight so that maybe my stepdad will cool off.”

Like most callers to the National Runaway Switchboard (NRS), the caller sounded tentative, but her need was immediate. She wanted a safe place to be for a while, but she did not want to return home. After talking with the youth about her options and finding out her location, the NRS volunteer located a local youth shelter and helped the youth develop a plan for her friend’s mom to take her there for the night.

NRS responds to calls like this every day. Its mission is to keep America’s runaway and at-risk youth safe and off the streets.

#### A National Hotline and More

In 1980, Congress authorized funding to establish a “national communication system to assist runaway and homeless youth in making contact with their families and service providers.” The system was originally authorized in Part C, Section 331 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and was reauthorized by the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-378).



NRS has served as that communication system since the beginning, working closely with FYSB to ensure that young people in crisis have a central place to go for assistance and information on where to get help. NRS links runaway, homeless, and at-risk youth and their families to crisis

counseling, programs and resources, and each other, when appropriate. It does so using a multipronged approach that combines a 24-hour hotline, a Web site, public service announcements, outreach activities, and collaborative relationships with local and national partners.

## 1-800-RUNAWAY

The central element of the communications system, the NRS toll-free hotline (1-800-RUNAWAY or 1-800-786-2929), operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. A frontline team of staff and volunteers, each trained in solution-focused crisis intervention, answers the calls. Those volunteers, along with others giving their time in supportive roles, provided 11,705 hours of service in FY 2008 and 14,012 hours in FY 2009. There were 225 individuals in FY 2008 who volunteered on site at the NRS Chicago location, and in FY 2009, the number grew by over 15 percent to 259.

The frontline team handled 118,067 calls in FY 2008 and 126,714 calls in FY 2009, a 7 percent increase. The increase in the number of calls in FY 2009 resulted from strategic efforts of FYSB and NRS to enhance outreach to young people. The daily average was 324 calls in FY 2008 and 348 calls in FY 2009. Some days there were many more calls than the average. Call volume typically peaked on Monday and decreased slowly throughout the week.

The table below summarizes callers who were served by NRS during FYs 2008 and 2009.

<b>Crisis Calls to the National Runaway Switchboard in FYs 2008-2009 (Percentages of Callers)</b>					
	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>		<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Status of youth crisis callers</b>		
Female	74%	72%	Runaway	42%	44%
Male	26%	28%	Youth in crisis	36%	32%
<b>Age</b>			Contemplating running away	13%	11%
18–21	29%	38%	Homeless	4%	7%
12–17	70%	61%	Thrownaway	4%	5%
<12	1%	1%	Suspected missing	1%	1%
<b>Caller relationship</b>			<b>Time youth on the street before calling NRS</b>		
Youth	49%	49%	1–3 days	40%	36%
Parent	30%	32%	4–7 days	16%	16%
Adult	8%	7%	1–4 weeks	23%	24%
Relative	7%	7%	1–2 months	9%	10%
Youth's friend	4%	4%	2–6 months	8%	9%
Police	1%	0%	Over 6 months	4%	5%
Agency	1%	1%			

In the middle of FY 2008, NRS began collecting some new data that enrich the profile of youth it serves. Of all youth crisis logs in FY 2008, 4 percent were regarding youth who were either currently or formerly wards of the State. The percentage increased to 5 percent in FY 2009.

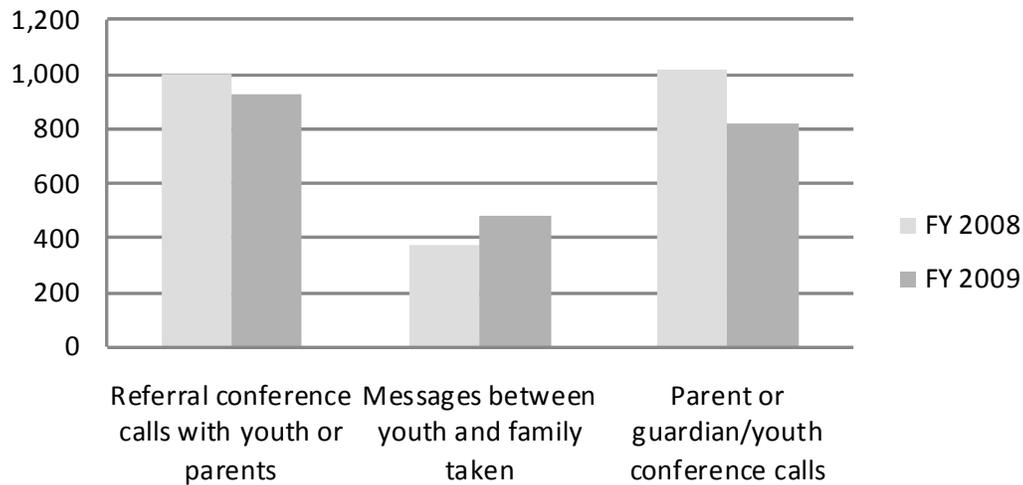
Further new data that NRS began collecting in late FY 2008 document service needs that went unmet during the course of crisis calls. Categories of unmet needs are health care services, inpatient and outpatient drug/alcohol treatment, inpatient and outpatient mental health services, and shelter.

NRS Callers' Unmet Needs FYs 2008-2009		
	2008	2009
Shelter	370	335
Health care	46	43
Outpatient mental health care	7	18
Inpatient mental health care	14	19
Inpatient alcohol/drug treatment	9	14
Outpatient alcohol/drug treatment	5	2
Total unmet needs	451	431

In both FYs 2008 and 2009, the greatest unmet need was the need for shelter (82 percent of unmet needs in FY 2008 and 78 percent in FY 2009). In both years, health care was the second greatest unmet need at 10 percent. There are five reasons why each type of need may have gone unmet: waiting list/program full, lack of funds, lack of transportation, unable to locate services, and caller not eligible for services.

To make its services available to all young people, NRS has a dedicated phone line for hearing-impaired youth. To reach callers whose first language is not English, NRS uses bilingual staff and volunteers as well as translation services for 144 different languages.

### Calls Placed on Behalf of Youth



NRS offers a message relay service for runaway youth and their families. A youth can leave a message for a parent, and staff delivers the message to the parent. Often this is the first step toward relationship repair; sometimes a youth uses this service for days or weeks before feeling ready to talk directly with family.

A completed message from a youth to family might sound like this: “I am fine. I am in a safe place. I called Aunt Ellen from a restricted number, so she doesn't know how to contact me, but I did tell her that I am going away. Again, I am safe and I am fine. I love you and I will contact you soon.”

Additionally, parents leave messages for their youth. The NRS generally advises parents of a child on the run to call their child's friends to let the friends know, if they have any contact with the runaway, that a message is waiting for him or her at NRS. A sample parent message: "Just wanted to let you know that you can always come home. We love you. If you can't or don't wish to come home, please just call and let us know that you are safe!" NRS offered the message relay service 887 times in FY 2008 and 1,347 times in FY 2009. It took 372 messages from runaway youth in FY 2008 and 480 messages in FY 2009.

Youth call the hotline for many reasons. The most frequently reported issues in FY 2008 were family dynamics, followed by peer and social issues, school-related issues, mental health issues, physical abuse, alcohol and drug issues, transportation issues, and youth services issues. In FY 2009, the most frequently reported issues were family dynamics, followed by peer and social issues, school-related issues, mental health issues, substance abuse, transportation, physical abuse, economics, judicial system issues, and youth services issues. These data may underreport the incidence of highly sensitive issues such as physical, sexual, or emotional abuse because youth may be reluctant to share such information with someone they do not know.

Caller Issues	FY 2008	FY 2009
Family dynamics	29%	29%
Peer or social	14%	14%
School or education	8%	8%
Mental health	8%	7%
Physical abuse	6%	5%
Alcohol or drug use	6%	6%
Transportation	5%	6%
Youth services	4%	4%
Economics	4%	5%
Emotional or verbal abuse	4%	3%
Judicial System	4%	5%
Neglect	3%	2%
Health	3%	3%
Sexual abuse or assault	1%	2%
Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender	1%	1%

Hotline staff and volunteers do more than just listen, though that is an important part of what they do. Using a crisis intervention model that focuses on finding appropriate solutions, they connect callers to services they need, referring them to community- and faith-based programs and public agencies. NRS maintains a comprehensive up-to-date database with detailed service information on 13,156 youth-related agencies nationwide. In addition, staff and volunteers have information about more than 100,000 organizations through hard-copy and online resource directories. NRS provided 14,962 referrals in FY 2008 and 15,559 referrals in FY 2009, a 4 percent increase.

NRS also has memoranda of understanding with over 1,135 local youth organizations. The affiliated agencies commit to communicating with NRS on an ongoing basis and to providing services to youth and families referred to them by NRS.

To connect youth who are away from their communities with appropriate services, hotline staffers mediate conference calls between young people and community agencies that can assist them. They also mediate calls between runaway youth and their parents to facilitate communication and initiate the process of family reunification.

### **www.1800RUNAWAY.org**

With FYSB's guidance and support, in FYs 2008 and 2009 NRS has continued to focus on innovation and content on its Web site, [www.1800RUNAWAY.org](http://www.1800RUNAWAY.org). Youth-centric initiatives have been developed, including the electronic magazine *Switched-On* and a blog created and managed by the NRS Youth Task Force. The NRS Web site's media section has been redesigned to serve as a user-friendly source of information that includes caller statistics, NRS trends analysis, and third-party research. The newest NRS service, *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum*, has a comprehensive section on the Web site where educators and other youth service providers can access English and Spanish classroom modules and tools.

On the NRS Web site, youth and adults can anonymously seek information about a range of issues, including family conflict, peer relationships, problems with school, personal and family mental health, and abuse and neglect. The site was visited by 97,599 people in FY 2008 and 100,830 people in FY 2009.

In the multifaceted youth section, young people can share thoughts on an NRS bulletin board, access service information, read the youth-centric magazine *Switched-On*, and comment on the magazine blog. *Switched-On* magazine attracted 24,947 unique visitors between October 1, 2007, and September 30, 2009. The *Switched-On* blog had 1,364 unique visitors June 5, 2008, through September 30, 2009.



NRS also is utilizing social media vehicles to connect with youth. During FYs 2008 and 2009, its MySpace page secured 851 friends, and on Facebook it attracted 249 fans, 209 group page members, and 559 cause page members. (Cause pages are tools nonprofit organizations can use to leverage their network to effect positive change.)

Staff members respond to e-mail messages and bulletin board postings generated by the Web site. Postings on the message boards address family issues, legal issues, parenting, peer pressure, and relationships. NRS responded to 491 bulletin postings in FY 2008 and 582 in FY 2009, a 19 percent increase. Staff members respond to information requests, whether via e-mail or the bulletin boards, within four hours.

**From the National Runaway Switchboard's  
Online Message Boards**

My mom, she has like anger management problems. She is consistently yelling. If you tell her that she needs to just calm down, she will just start yelling more. I can never talk to her about anything because then she goes against everything I say. I can't run away, obviously (I wish I could), but I would like to be out of the house as much as possible. Is there anywhere a 14-year-old can get a job or anything that I can do just to get away? Thanks.

The NRS Web site is an important source of information for members of the general public looking to access NRS materials and statistics on runaway and homeless youth. The following portions of the Web site were the most popular destinations in FYs 2008 and 2009:

- The 2008 public service announcement, featuring hip-hop entertainer Ludacris, promoting the Home Free program (more information about this resource below)
- NRS caller statistics broken down into numbers by State and area code
- NRS youth section with youth-centric magazine *Switched-On*, blogs, and connections to youth social media vehicles like MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter
- NRS media section with audiovisual materials to assist reporters in communicating the plight of runaways
- NRS Street Team section to help visitors become ambassadors and promote 1-800-RUNAWAY
- *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum* in English and Spanish
- "Green Light Project" resources (see below for more information about this project promoting National Runaway Prevention Month)
- A research section featuring statistics on runaway, homeless, and at-risk youth
- The redesigned message board, or bulletin board, where youth and staff post messages
- The catalogue of NRS promotional and educational materials

## **Getting the Word Out**

In addition to offering free information and materials on the Web, NRS gets the word out in more traditional ways. In FY 2008, it distributed 461,350 brochures and prevention materials through the mail and at conferences. In FY 2009, to increase cost-effectiveness, more information was provided via download from [www.1800RUNAWAY.org](http://www.1800RUNAWAY.org). Due to the cost-saving efforts, 185,911 hard copy materials were distributed in FY 2009.

In FYs 2008 and 2009, NRS also spread its message by collaborating with media outlets and entertainment professionals. Continuing its partnership with award-winning hip-hop entertainer Ludacris, who promoted runaway prevention through his 2007 hit, "Runaway Love," NRS created a new television public service announcement featuring Ludacris to promote the Home Free program. The announcement had 1,173 broadcasts on 25 networks or stations and a total of 49,872,500 media impressions (the number of people who may have seen the announcement). NRS also continued discussions with the management team of Ludacris for National Runaway Prevention Month 2009 opportunities and with the management of country singer Jason Michael

Carroll to include the NRS logo and 1-800-RUNAWAY in his new music video, "Hurry Home," and to explore various ways he might serve as an ambassador for NRS. NRS worked with One Spark Films to include [www.1800RUNAWAY.org](http://www.1800RUNAWAY.org) on the Web site promoting its new film "Guest Room" in the [www.doorpost.com](http://www.doorpost.com) contest, where the film won the Filmmaker's Choice Award.

NRS is a sponsor of National Runaway Prevention Month each November, which publicizes the problems runaways face and ways to prevent them from running away. Among NRS's initiatives in November is the Green Light Project. Community members are encouraged to show their support of runaway and at-risk youth by lighting a green-colored light bulb on their porch. The project was started by Huckleberry House, a Runaway and Homeless Youth Program grantee in Columbus, OH, and has expanded nationally with the support of NRS.

NRS uses a communication consultant to cultivate the media, generate press releases, and build exposure. Through an Associated Press wire exclusive, [www.1800RUNAWAY.org](http://www.1800RUNAWAY.org) had 10,432 visitors on April 7, 2008, and the wire story prompted the most page views ever (3,539 views). NRS has been featured in major media outlets, including *USA Today*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Boston Herald*, *Kansas City Star*, *Dallas Morning News*, and *Houston Chronicle*. National, regional, and local media outreach efforts reached more than 138,450,922 readers, viewers, and listeners in FY 2008 and 112,938,905 in FY 2009. NRS also worked with *New York Times* reporter Ian Urbina on his series "Running in the Shadows." Urbina's articles and videos about the plight of runaways appeared October 25 and 26, 2009. (The series is available at: [www.nytimes.com/2009/10/26/us/26runaway.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/26/us/26runaway.html).)

In FY 2008, NRS contracted the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) to conduct a comprehensive research project on runaway and at-risk youth. To gather information on each of these groups, NORC will pursue four complementary strategies. Information from those who go to friends' or relatives' homes, or couch-surf, will be obtained from each strategy. The study will take place in Chicago and Los Angeles, with samples derived from schools, shelters, the street, and child welfare agencies. Samples from these locations will represent different types of adolescents, some having experienced a runaway episode, some having never experienced a runaway episode, and some having run away from foster care.

NRS will utilize the results of the research study to develop service and marketing strategies to better serve runaway and at-risk youth. The results will also be available to youth agencies to help them develop programming to better communicate services and meet the needs of today's youth. In addition, NRS will publicize the results through the media to bring national attention to the plight of runaway and at-risk youth. The target date for announcement of the results is April 2010.

## **Street Team**

In May of 2008, NRS launched the Street Team initiative to give people all over the country a way to help runaway, homeless, and at-risk youth and their families in their communities. This grassroots community outreach program aims to increase awareness of the issues runaway and homeless youth face and the services NRS offers.

Once registered as a Street Team member, a person receives a starter kit with materials to be distributed in his or her community. After distributing those materials, the Street Team member can request more and continue to work on an ongoing basis.

The Street Team allows caring individuals to be creative in the ways they contribute. Activities can range from creating a YouTube video to promote awareness to getting 1-800-RUNAWAY printed on the back of school IDs, presenting the *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum*, or simply wearing a 1-800-RUNAWAY T-shirt.



Following are a few highlights of the Street Team since its inception:

- A secure Web site allows Street Team members to review the list of suggested activities, track the activities they have completed and points earned by completing the activities, and redeem the points for awards.
- From May to September 2008, 27 people from seven States became registered Street Team members. By September 2009, the total had grown to 117 registered Street Team participants from 14 States.
- On November 6, 2008, street teams in two cities (Chicago, Illinois, and Berlin, Maryland) hosted events to promote awareness and education as part of National Runaway Prevention Month. During the month, community members are encouraged to show their support of runaway and at-risk youth by lighting a green-colored light bulb on their porch. In Chicago, registered participants passed out 450 green-colored light bulbs to passers-by at a downtown plaza. In Maryland, street team members hosted a youth summit to spread the word to youth and families.
- A motorcycle club registered as Street Team members—an exciting, mobile way to let people know about 1-800-RUNAWAY.

## **Family Reunification Through Home Free**

Since 1995, NRS has worked with transportation company Greyhound Lines, Inc., to administer the Home Free program. Counting more than 13,000 rides home since its inception, the program reunites runaway youth ages 12 to 20 with their families by giving them free bus tickets to return home. When returning home is not an option, runaway youth ages 18 to 20 may receive free tickets to alternative placements, such as transitional living facilities near their homes.

Of the 1,789 young people with whom NRS discussed family reunification in FY 2008, 509 completed the steps of the Home Free process and received free bus tickets to return home or go to an alternative program. In FY 2009, NRS discussed family reunification services with 2,551 young people and issued a free bus ticket to 417 of them.

## Reaching Out Across the Country and the World

FYSB and NRS share an important mission: serving runaway and homeless youth and helping them to get off the streets. NRS advances that mission through strategic partnerships with national, international, and community-based organizations. The following partnerships were active in FYs 2008 and 2009:

**National Runaway Prevention Month.** In FYs 2008 and 2009, National Runaway Prevention Month partners included Boys and Girls Clubs of America, American School Health Association, National Network for Youth, National Safe Place, National Association of School Nurses, National Center for Homeless Education, National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth, Girls Inc., National Resource Center for Youth Services, Circle of Parents, National Association of School-based Health Care, and National Association of School Psychologists. The groups posted Web spotlights and links to each others' Web sites.

**National Safe Place.** By collaborating with this national program of the YMCA of Greater Louisville, Kentucky, NRS can easily find a "safe place" that young people in crisis can go. Safe Place coordinates with businesses and schools around the country to provide safe locations where youth can get help or referrals to service agencies. Safe Place coordinators implement the *Let's Talk: Runaway Education and Prevention Curriculum* with youth in their shelter sites and in their school-based outreach presentations.

**Covenant House Ninline Crisis Line.** Due to a lack of funding, this nationwide youth hotline slashed its 24-hour operations and is now open from 2:00 p.m. to midnight Eastern Time. During the hours that the Ninline is not staffed, callers are redirected to 1-800-RUNAWAY.

**California Coalition for Youth.** NRS handles overflow crisis calls for the coalition's California Youth Crisis Line.

**Child Helpline International.** NRS is a member of this United Nations-affiliated organization, which is working to develop youth hotlines in all countries worldwide. NRS provides technical assistance on crisis intervention training, volunteer recruitment and management, and program evaluation, and it contributes crisis contact data for inclusion in an annual international report. Child Helpline International also sponsored NRS participation in training for hotline service providers in Mexico on the commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking of children in the United States.

**Children's Human Rights Center of Albania/Defense for Children, Albanian Section.** NRS provided onsite crisis intervention training and operations consultation for the launch of the newly created national youth helpline in Tirana, Albania.

**National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).** NRS provided critical training on runaway youth issues for the NCMEC Team HOPE (Help Offering Parents Empowerment) program and participated in the NCMEC Victims of Child Prostitution Roundtable.

## **Documenting the Switchboard's Work**

NRS uses its customized management information system (MIS) to collect data about the young people and families it serves on the crisis line. The NRS MIS is integrated with the referral agency database to ensure quick response to callers' needs.

Crisis line staff and volunteers document each crisis call in the NRS MIS. They record the caller's age and gender, his or her issues, the focus of the call, referrals offered, and follow-up that may be needed.

NRS also can identify incoming and outgoing calls by area code and State, which helps it conduct community outreach. By understanding who calls the hotline and why, NRS can continue to respond effectively to the unique and changing needs of the young people and families it serves.

## **Disaster Preparedness**

NRS has partnered with the HHS funded National Domestic Violence Hotline on a business continuity plan to ensure continued crisis line service in the event either organization's crisis call center is not operational due to natural or manmade disaster. The plan includes procedures for transferring and handling crisis calls, providing access to critical referral agency databases, training staff, collecting data, and conducting an annual review.

## **Runaway Education and Prevention**

With DePaul University's Center for Community and Organization Development, NRS developed a first-of-its-kind resource, the *Let's Talk: Runaway Prevention Curriculum*. This interactive, 14-module curriculum is intended to address interpersonal and coping skills, increase knowledge about runaway resources and prevention, educate about alternatives to running away, and encourage youth to seek and access help from trusted community members.

The curriculum is available free of charge in CD format or by download from [www.1800runaway.org](http://www.1800runaway.org). Via download, NRS distributed 13,586 copies in FY 2008 and 9,563 in FY 2009. It also fulfilled 777 CD orders in FY 2008 and 365 in FY 2009.

*Let's Talk* was used in 13 States in FY 2008 and in 20 States in FY 2009, a 53 percent increase. In FY 2008, more than 5,100 youth participated, and in FY 2009, 3,300 participated. Of 370 classes or groups participating, 99 were in high schools, 87 in middle schools, 51 in afterschool programs, 27 in mentoring programs, 26 in youth shelters, 24 in mental health settings, and the rest in a variety of other settings.

The NRS staff is building ongoing partnerships to promote the use of the curriculum. In FY 2008, partners included Girls Scouts of Greater Chicago, Child Find America, School Social Worker Association of America, and a number of middle and high schools in the Chicago area. In FY 2009, NRS also partnered with the National Parent Teacher Association, Children's Home and Aid Society, Nevada Partnership for Youth, the United South Eastern Tribes, the New Orleans Recovery School District, and school districts in four cities.

## Chapter 5

### The National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth

A pastor wants to know what kinds of programs his church might be able to offer to give local youth an alternative to hanging out on the street corner.

A new program director at a basic center wants to know how other shelter programs take care of young residents' educational needs.

Staff at an afterschool program are interested in developing ways to get young people more involved in community service, to promote Positive Youth Development.

All three turn to the National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth (NCFY), which helps people with questions like these every day.



NCFY conducts research, shares information, develops publications, and reaches out to others in the youth services field at meetings and conferences. Through these activities, the clearinghouse links youth service professionals, policymakers, and the general public with the resources they need to develop new and effective strategies for supporting young people, families, and communities.

#### Free Information Source

FYSB established the clearinghouse in 1992 as a free information source for those interested in youth issues and as a tool in FYSB's efforts to improve services for families and youth.

People such as teachers, counselors, and employees of shelters, residential youth programs, street outreach programs, and afterschool programs ask NCFY for facts and resources on a variety of youth-related topics. NCFY staff help them find answers to their questions and guide them toward government and nonprofit agencies, both local and national, that specialize in their particular areas of interest—from afterschool programming to mentoring to the education rights of homeless children and youth.

NCFY receives requests for information by phone, e-mail, and the Web, but over the past few years has transitioned to disseminating information to the public primarily through its Web site ([ncfy.acf.hhs.gov](http://ncfy.acf.hhs.gov)). NCFY staff responded to 772 requests for customized research in FY 2008 and 821 requests in FY 2009. The NCFY Web site was visited between 250,000 and 350,000 times a month, on average.

With FYSB's encouragement, NCFY redesigned its Web site during FYs 2008 and 2009 to increase its user-friendliness and highlight current activities and new resources. In addition, the clearinghouse worked with FYSB to improve its Web marketing, expand its electronic mailing list, and release award-winning new print and online products.

**National Clearinghouse on Families & Youth**  
A Resource of the Family and Youth Services Bureau

Home | About NCFY | Calendar of Events | Contact Us | Free Publications | Search

**Native American Heritage Month**  
NOVEMBER IS Native American Heritage Month  
The spirit, courage & joy of our diverse tribes.

Linking you to the information and resources you need to serve young people and their families in new and effective ways.

- LITERATURE DATABASE**  
Search NCFY's collection of publications related to youth development.  
**NCFY Podcast**  
Youth Speak Out About Positive Youth Development
- ASK NCFY**
  - How can I become a mentor?
  - How can I find free Positive Youth Development training?
  - Where can I find services for victims of domestic violence?
  - What is abstinence education?
- FEATURED ARTICLE**  
**Experts' Picks: Positive Youth Development**  
The leaders of America's Promise Alliance, Youth Service America, and other national youth organizations share books and articles that promote a positive approach to working with young people.
- WHAT WE SUPPORT**
  - Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs
  - Mentoring Children of Prisoners
  - Family Violence Prevention
  - Abstinence Education
- NEWS AND FUNDING INFO**
  - Current Funding
  - Breaking News
  - Youth Initiatives Update
  - NCFP Support Center eMessages
  - Abstinence Education E-Update

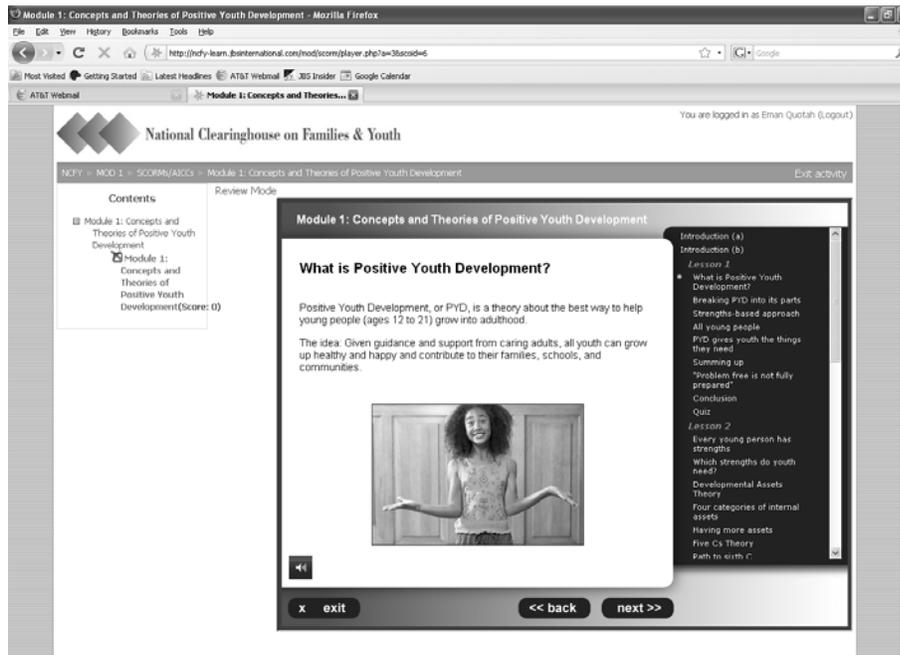
NCFY is sponsored by the Family and Youth Services Bureau, an agency within the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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[Quick Guide to Family and Youth Issues](#) | [Guide to Starting a Youth Program](#)  
[FYSB](#) | [ACYF](#) | [ACE](#) | [HHS](#) | [ACE Privacy Notice](#) | [HHS Kid's Privacy Notice](#)

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To further reach out and enhance its accessibility, NCFY undertook a major rebranding effort in FY 2009 to achieve a friendly, consistently approachable look in its Web site and publications (more about this initiative below). In addition to launching a new logo and a streamlined home page, NCFY reviewed every aspect of its Web site to ensure complete compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It also prepared English and Spanish “video book” versions of its popular *Keep in Touch* brochure, which encourages safe exits from FYSB shelter programs, to make that publication more accessible via the Web.



NCFY took advantage of audio technology on the Web by producing a series of podcasts, online audio programs available individually or by free subscription. Subscribers can sign up to automatically download podcasts each time a new episode is released. NCFY developed four podcasts for FYSB in FY 2008 and six in FY 2009.

Responding to a need among youth services professionals for on-demand training, NCFY designed for FYSB an online introductory course on Positive Youth Development. The course had more than 1,500 registered users in its first six weeks after launch.

To keep FYSB and its grantees up to date on the youth services field, NCFY creates and sends out a monthly electronic newsletter called *Youth Initiatives Update*. The e-newsletter goes to FYSB grantees and staff, ACF regional office staff, FYSB's training and technical assistance providers, and others in the youth services field. It includes the latest information on new youth-related initiatives, grants and funding sources, and online resources for youth workers.

At FYSB's request, NCFY also wrote and sent out a twice-monthly e-newsletter in FYs 2008 and 2009, *Abstinence Education E-Update*. This electronic publication was sent to all of FYSB's Abstinence Education Program grantees and to RHY grantees who subscribed to it.

Both NCFY e-newsletters for grantees were redesigned in FY 2009. Three original columns were developed for *Youth Initiatives Update*: Bright Idea, about innovative and promising practices; Primary Sources, summarizing recent research; and Right on the Money, about "how to keep the doors of nonprofit organizations open in good times and bad." Also, a new NCFY Recommends feature highlights resources from others.

Since its inception, NCFY has helped FYSB build a comprehensive collection of publications on youth-related issues. In FYs 2008 and 2009, NCFY gathered 2,100 items, bringing the collection to more than 17,000 publications on youth and family issues. NCFY makes these resources accessible to a wide audience via the NCFY Web site, which includes a literature database with

an abstract of every publication in the NCFY collection. In addition, the NCFY reading room is open daily to members of the public interested in reviewing materials in the collection.

On FYSB's behalf, NCFY exhibits at conferences and forums to inform youth service providers, policymakers, and young people about FYSB programs and about the information services the clearinghouse provides. NCFY exhibited at eight national conferences in FY 2008 and eight more in FY 2009. In FY 2008, NCFY sent print materials to be distributed at an additional 28 events. To maximize cost-effectiveness, those who requested materials for distribution at other events in FY 2009 were encouraged to download and print them from the NCFY Web site.

NCFY staff also disseminate information by giving presentations on topics related to runaway, homeless, and at-risk youth at conferences where they exhibit on behalf of FYSB. NCFY made two such presentations in FY 2008 and three in FY 2009.

## Free Publications and Products

Through NCFY, FYSB offers a range of free publications and products for youth, parents, youth workers, and the general public. In FY 2009, NCFY adopted two broad goals for its information products: (1) "brand" materials NCFY produces for FYSB by creating a more uniform look for them, while further reinforcing the idea that NCFY is a service of FYSB, and (2) prepare for and embrace electronic information dissemination, making NCFY publications attractive and reader-friendly to view online and easy to download for printing.

### Selected New Products Offered by FYSB and NCFY in FYs 2008 and 2009

***Speak Up! Using What You've Got to Get What You Want*** (in English and Spanish), a booklet for youth on self-advocacy

***Keep in Touch*** (in English and Spanish), a multimedia program reminding youth to stay connected to their FYSB programs after they leave

**National Mentoring Month campaign materials**, print and electronic postcards and posters to help FYSB grantees recruit mentors

**Podcasts** on peer outreach, youth leadership, mentoring, summer programs, community service, acquaintance rape, abstinence, disaster preparedness, adolescent parenthood, and street outreach

**Introduction to Positive Youth Development**, a self-paced, online training course for youth and family service professionals

***Ready for Anything!*** A disaster planning manual for runaway and homeless youth programs

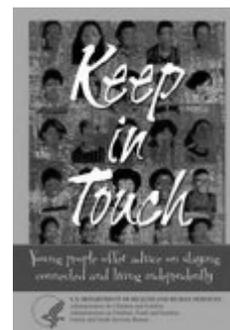
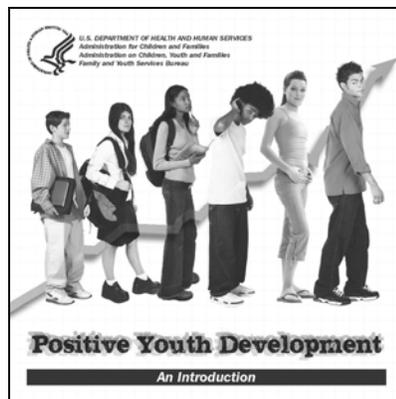
NCFY produced two FYSB periodicals aimed directly at RHY Program grantees and other youth workers in FYs 2008 and 2009. *The FYSB Update* produced in FY 2008 focused on RHYMIS, reporting on services to runaway and homeless youth. This periodical was discontinued after FY 2008 in favor of providing FYSB update information via the FYSB Web site.

The other periodical, *The Exchange*, spotlights news from the youth services field. Since more and more people look for information first online rather than in print, *The Exchange* format changed in FYs 2008 and 2009. Instead of being distributed as a fairly lengthy print newsletter sent to just one person in each FYSB program, it became published in a series of shorter, more frequent installments that were available electronically to any grantee staff member or other subscriber who wanted it. This format increased its accessibility to busy youth workers while also increasing cost-effectiveness.

The three print issues of *The Exchange* in FY 2008 were about street outreach, runaway and homeless youth and relationship violence, and collaboration between independent living and transitional living programs. Electronic issues of *The Exchange* in FYs 2008 and 2009 focused on sustainability (fundraising strategies to ensure continuation of youth service programs), Positive Youth Development (PYD) today, and youth homelessness.

In FYs 2008 and 2009, NCFY developed three in-depth how-to resources for youth and family service program staff: manuals on emergency preparedness and cultural competency and a two-part online training course on PYD theory and practice. NCFY collaborated with other organizations in the RHY Network of Support to develop manuals on monitoring and on using the newest version of RHYMIS. It also produced five community education fact sheets—succinct how-to guides for youth and family service providers—on PYD resources, successful outreach, and Federal collaborators to maternity group home grantees, as well as on incorporating youth in master-planning and counting homeless youth.

The clearinghouse sent 60 special outreach mailings in FY 2008 and 52 in FY 2009. These included mailings through which NCFY sent FYSB’s newest publications—or links to Web pages where they could be downloaded—to FYSB grantees and national organizations working on youth and family issues.



**FYSB Products Developed by NCFY  
Selected Awards in FYs 2008-2009**

***The Exchange: Street Outreach Programs Reach Out to Youth With Diverse Needs*** – Grand Award (highest) in the 2008 Apex Awards for Publication Excellence

***Keep in Touch: Young People Offer Advice on Staying Connected and Living Independently*** – Platinum Award (the highest) in the 2008 Hermes Creative Awards

***Ready for Anything! A Disaster Planning Manual for Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs*** – Platinum Award (Publications/Manual category) in 2009 Hermes Creative Awards

**“Leading the Way” podcast** – Award of Excellence in the 2009 Communicator Awards

**“Youth Speak Out About Positive Youth Development Programs” podcast series** – First Place in the 2009 National Association of Government Communicators Gold Screen Competition

## **Behind the Scenes**

NCFY provides behind-the-scenes support in many ways for FYSB’s national leadership on youth and family issues. For instance, the clearinghouse provides FYSB staff with background information and briefing materials on topics of particular relevance to their work. In FYs 2008 and 2009, NCFY briefed FYSB on a State’s licensing requirements applicable to Basic Center and Transitional Living Program shelters, school-to-work issues relevant to a meeting with Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development representatives, and other topics.

The clearinghouse developed materials about FYSB and its programs to both educate new staff and give FYSB staff the tools to educate others. They included a FYSB Briefing Book, updated several times in this two-year period, and a PowerPoint presentation about the agency and its programs that FYSB staff could easily adapt to present to different audiences. NCFY also prepared packets of print materials for FYSB to distribute and regularly updated fact sheets about all FYSB programs to include in these packets and on the FYSB Web site.

In addition, NCFY supported FYSB’s planning, policy development, and program implementation. Clearinghouse staff participated in all three expert workgroups convened to lay the groundwork for FYSB’s development of new standards for the three RHY programs. NCFY hosted a meeting of FYSB staff with all the RHY Network of Support organizations to encourage collaboration within the network, and this gathering led to a long-term campaign in collaboration with training and technical assistance providers to educate grantees about sustainability. NCFY also hosted a youth blog for the Positive Youth Development State and Local Collaboration Demonstration Projects and took notes at many meetings and conference calls of FYSB staff and grantees.

Finally, NCFY maintained and updated the FYSB Web site regularly. NCFY and FYSB staff worked together on a major redesign of the site in FYs 2008 and 2009 to improve its usability as well as an intensive effort to ensure its complete accessibility to visitors with disabilities.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Training and Technical Assistance Center**

FYSB took a new approach to providing training and technical assistance to Runaway and Homeless Youth Program grantees in FYs 2008 and 2009: a centralized, national Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center (RHYTTAC). Its mission is to enhance and promote the continuous quality improvement of the services provided by RHY grantees through high quality, capacity-building training, technical assistance, and consultation based on FYSB and grantee needs.

This centralized, national training and technical assistance system replaces the former coordinated network of 10 regional training and technical assistance providers. RHYTTAC incorporates the strengths of the previous system by subcontracting with the former regional providers and other consultants to deliver training and technical assistance. At the same time, its centralization improves consistency in the delivery of information, training, and technical assistance to grantees across the country. This approach allows the center to address the universal needs of grantees while still meeting the specific needs of individual programs or regions.

In its first year of operations, RHYTTAC hired staff, developed marketing strategies, contacted new and existing grantees, provided grantees access to center services, conducted an initial assessment of programmatic needs of grantees, and began providing training and technical assistance. Of particular significance, RHYTTAC formed an advisory board with representation from the three RHY programs, FYSB, national organizations, topical experts, and youth. The board met four times over the two-year period and supported and advised RHYTTAC on start-up activities and ongoing implementation of the training and technical assistance program.

RHYTTAC employs diverse strategies to meet the multiple training and technical assistance needs of grantees. By providing information, training, technical assistance, and consultation, the center helps grantees address both service delivery and administrative aspects of running a FYSB-funded RHY program.

#### **Information Services**

RHYTTAC offers resources, information, and guidance on service provision and best practices. The universal needs of organizations that serve runaway and homeless youth are met through an interactive Web site, tip sheets, a quarterly newsletter, toolkits, sample policies and procedures, and other resources. The Web site enables grantee agencies and the general public to easily get timely information on runaway and homeless youth issues and to request services from RHYTTAC.

As a result of frequent requests for information on PYD, RHYTTAC collected and reviewed multiple resources related to youth development philosophy and framework and collaborated with the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development and the National Child

Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement to publish a *Positive Youth Development Toolkit*. The toolkit is being disseminated, along with other resources, through the Web site and at training and technical assistance events. Additionally, RHYTTAC is offering sample forms, policies, and procedures collected from existing programs as resources for other grantees. Tip sheets on aftercare and technical assistance were published and disseminated to grantees in FY 2009, along with two issues of the electronic *RHYTTAC e-news*, which focused on an overview of RHYTTAC and aftercare.

RHYTTAC has developed and facilitates a community of practice to encourage networking and collaboration among RHY Program grantees. Grantees can post questions, share knowledge about topical areas, and collaborate with their peers. By the end of FY 2009, 174 grantee staff members were networking with their colleagues in the community of practice.

In FYs 2008 and 2009, RHYTTAC received and provided support to RHY grantees through 2,127 calls to its toll-free telephone number.

In addition, through the RHYTTAC Web site, [www.rhyttac.ou.edu](http://www.rhyttac.ou.edu), RHY grantees have direct access to on-demand training, resources, opportunities to register for training events, and timely announcements about issues impacting the provision of RHY services. RHYTTAC uses e-blasts to disseminate announcements about new resources, programs, and services available from the center. RHYTTAC began tracking Web site data in May 2008 and documented 3,108 Web site visits in the remainder of FY 2008. In FY 2009, the site had a total of 9,181 visits.

#### **RHYTTAC in Action**

When manufacturing plants in a Michigan community reduced their workforce by three-fourths, a basic center program there lost its core constituency. As a result, shelter occupancy dropped to 30 to 40 percent, even though the need for shelter services was still great in many of the surrounding neighborhoods.

RHYTTAC consultants provided technical assistance to help this grantee evaluate and adapt its outreach strategy. They suggested creating an outreach calendar to track community education events and determine which ones led to an increase in youth served. RHYTTAC recommended working with the State's McKinney-Vento Liaison to arrange to make educational presentations directly to students, teachers, and counselors in local schools. Another suggestion was meeting quarterly with other local FYSB grantees to discuss trends in the area and promising outreach approaches. The basic center is now successfully serving more youth as a result of new outreach strategies.

## Types of Training and Technical Assistance

RHYTTAC’s training and technical assistance delivery system is designed to address universal needs of all RHY grantees, targeted needs of groups of grantees, and intensive needs of individual grantees. RHYTTAC assists grantees through several media to ensure accessibility and accommodate the varying skill levels of grantee staff. Skill-based training, trainer certification, distance learning, on-demand training, and technical assistance clinics, along with a national RHY Grantee Conference and a Transitional Living Program grantee meeting, are all being used to address the diverse needs of FYSB grantees.

RHYTTAC’s integrated calendar allows the center to address existing training and technical assistance needs while maintaining the flexibility to focus on other needs later identified through monitoring visits, surveys of grantees and FYSB staff, and grantee self-assessments. Training and technical assistance clinics are held across the country to provide access for all grantees.

E-blasts to RHY grantees are used to encourage registration. Topics addressed by training and technical assistance events have included youth care work, aftercare, outreach, cultural competence, supervision, disaster preparedness, management of aggressive behavior, and life skills assessment, among others. In FYs 2008 and 2009, 96 training and technical events were conducted, serving 2,383 participants.

Ongoing evaluation of RHYTTAC training and technical assistance services has provided consistent positive feedback on their quality and relevance. All feedback received is used to improve and modify training services to address the needs of RHY service providers.

Training and Technical Assistance Events	Number of Events		Number of Participants	
	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2008	FY 2009
<b>Skill-based training</b>	3	10	55	181
<b>Trainer certification</b>	4	7	62	96
<b>Technical assistance clinics</b>	10	41	86	552
<b>Webinars</b>	10	11	877	474

## Grantee Meeting and National Conference

RHYTTAC plans and coordinates an annual meeting of Transitional Living Program grantees, held in conjunction with the Pathways to Adulthood conference. This meeting provides an important forum for FYSB and grantees to discuss current issues and trends in transitional living programming. The annual meeting has enhanced collaboration among programs and improved communication between transitional living grantees and FYSB. The Transitional Living Program grantee meeting convened on May 14, 2008, in Pittsburgh was attended by 269 participants representing 47 States, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. The meeting held on June 3, 2009, in San Diego was attended by 197 participants representing 43 States, the District of Columbia, and Guam.

In FY 2009, RHYTTAC worked closely with FYSB to convene the first annual RHY Grantee Conference, held in St. Louis on November 19–21, 2008. It was attended by 442 participants from 252 grantees representing 45 States, the District of Columbia, and Guam. The conference brought together grantees from all three FYSB-funded RHY programs to share ideas, promising approaches, and best practices, and it provided a structured learning environment for program staff, from direct care workers to executive directors. The conference planning committee included members of the RHYTTAC advisory board in addition to grantees and FYSB staff.

Using information gathered in surveys, phone calls, trainings, and clinics, RHYTTAC planned 30 different workshops to address the universal needs of RHY grantees. An additional four workshops focused specifically on the programmatic needs of Basic Center, Transitional Living, and Street Outreach Program grantees. These sessions reviewed changes in the legislation pertaining to each program and included presentations by professionals from the field with significant experience specific to the particular program.

The conference also offered inspiring messages from former runaway and homeless youth, information from FYSB officials, and a chance to network with peers and experts. FYSB and RHYTTAC staff were available to address grantees' questions, needs, or concerns. An evening reception encouraged informal networking among grantees. Regional meetings gave participants a chance to meet fellow grantees from their areas and hear from FYSB staff. Materials from 20 workshops and recordings of keynote speeches were posted on the RHYTTAC Web site after the conference.

Evaluations from this inaugural conference indicated that grantees were very pleased. One participant wrote, "Wonderful conference! I learned so much as a person new in the social work field."

### **Playing a Role in FYSB's Monitoring System**

RHYTTAC supports the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program Monitoring System (see Chapter 9) by working with grantees to fix problems and address areas for improvement identified by monitors. In this way, it played an important role in ensuring the overall quality of FYSB's RHY programs in FYs 2008 and 2009.

RHYTTAC provides intensive technical assistance to individual RHY grantees directed at specific concerns about compliance identified during monitoring visits. The Center does this by providing written materials (e.g., sample policies and procedures), conference calls, and online meetings with individual grantees as well as onsite and offsite consultation with extensive follow-up. Comprehensive assessment, thorough design and delivery, and regular, targeted follow-up ensure intensive technical assistance services facilitate continuous service improvement and capacity building within individual grantee agencies. Monitoring reports, RHYMIS data, corrective action reports, and other program-specific materials are used to design the targeted technical assistance response for each grantee.

In addition, RHYTTAC makes peer-to-peer links between experienced and less experienced grantees, enabling grantees to learn from successful programs and share their expertise.

Grantees have been enthusiastic about providing other programs with guidance, suggestions, and materials, including policy and procedure manuals, resident handbooks, case file packets, and outreach materials.

In 2009, RHYTTAC received and responded to 75 monitoring reports, either congratulating grantees on their monitoring outcomes or offering technical assistance to address compliance and nonbinding issues noted on their reports. RHYTTAC provided intensive technical assistance to 136 organizations operating 234 runaway and homeless youth programs. Each organization received multiple types of support: 135 received telephone technical assistance, 40 received tangible resources, 15 received peer-to-peer connections, and 45 received onsite technical assistance. The top five areas in which RHYTTAC assisted these agencies to improve service delivery were outreach and community, management of individual client files, individual intake and case planning, safe and appropriate housing, and youth participation.

RHYTTAC also worked with the 19 Rural Host Home Demonstration Project grantees to provide support and to evaluate the effectiveness of the project. Consultants visited all the grantees, performing strengths and needs assessments, delivering intensive onsite technical assistance, and discussing all aspects of providing quality services in rural areas. Many of the rural programs faced challenges related to securing licenses from their State agencies, recruiting and retaining host homes, and penetrating close-knit communities. The consultants helped the grantees to solve problems, recognize community partnerships they could leverage, and find ways they could conduct outreach, engage community support, and support host home families.

#### **RHYTTAC Monitoring Follow-up in Action**

On a monitoring visit, a FYSB staff member discovered that a Transitional Living Program grantee was not serving 16- and 17-year-olds, as required by Federal legislation and regulations. Grantee staff had concerns about the appropriateness of placing youth this young in scattered-site apartments.

RHYTTAC followed up on this finding by discussing with the grantee ways they might appropriately serve 16- and 17-year-olds. They considered options such as reorganizing staff shifts to provide greater supervision of youth, rearranging housing options to place younger youth in the fully supervised facility and older youth in scattered-site apartments, and providing referrals to agencies that had greater bed capacity. As a result of this assistance, the grantee has adapted its program to meet the needs of this target age group.

## **Part III**

### **Research and Evaluation**

To ensure the quality of federally funded runaway and homeless youth programs, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act authorizes the Secretary to collect information about grantees and evaluate their programs. The Secretary also has the authority to make grants for research, evaluation, demonstration, and service projects that increase knowledge about runaway and homeless youth and improve services for them.

Chapters 7–9 describe FYSB’s Runaway and Homeless Youth Monitoring System, through which FYSB staff and runaway and homeless youth professionals assess programs; the Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System (RHYMIS), a computerized method of collecting demographic and other information about youth served by FYSB grantees; and FYSB’s research and demonstration activities.

## Chapter 7

# Runaway and Homeless Youth Program Monitoring System

To a young person in need, the services provided by runaway and homeless youth programs should, ideally, appear seamless. To properly serve young people, providers must offer a host of interconnected services. Depending on what programs they run, grantees act as a kind of housing agency, education and mental health counseling service, employment agency, financial consultant, and life coach—all rolled into one. They must identify and reach out to potential clients. They must conform to State and local licensing requirements. They must properly supervise the young people in their care, keep them from landing back out on the street, and provide many other kinds of support.

Most programs accomplish all of the above as expected. A few need help to reach the program's high standards.

### The Monitoring System

To ensure that the local programs it funds are meeting the needs of runaway and homeless youth, FYSB assesses each program's services and offers program administrators the opportunity to improve, if necessary. The assessment is carried out through the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program Monitoring System. Every FYSB Basic Center, Transitional Living, or Street Outreach Program grantee is required to have an onsite review at least once within a three-year period.

Onsite reviews are done to ensure:

- Compliance with grant requirements—determining whether Federal grants are being used for the purposes for which they are made;
- Program evaluation—collecting additional information on the status, activities, and accomplishments of grantees for the biennial reports that the HHS Secretary delivers to Congress; and
- Assistance to grantees—providing information and assistance to grantees to enable them to improve RHY facilities, services, and activities.

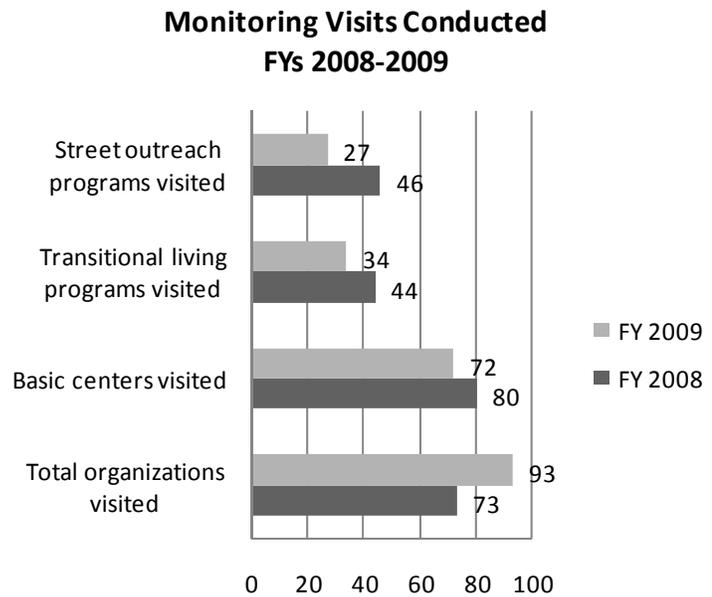
Monitoring teams made up of FYSB staff and trained peer monitors (most from high-performance FYSB grantee agencies in other parts of the United States) conduct the assessments by visiting programs, reviewing documents, and meeting with administrators, direct service staff, staff from coordinating agencies, and sometimes youth and parents. Systematic monitoring ensures the best possible service for runaway and homeless youth across the nation, intervening methodically if performance falls short of statutory and programmatic requirements.

In FY 2008, a new monitoring protocol was implemented to promote consistent practices by all onsite review teams and consistent criteria for determining grantee compliance with Federal grant requirements. The protocol also provides guidance on how to prepare for and conduct each phase of a monitoring review and how to report the results accurately.

FYSB monitoring teams visited 73 agencies operating 170 runaway and homeless youth programs in FY 2008. They visited 93 agencies operating 133 programs in FY 2009.

### The Peer Monitors

Peer monitors play an important role in the monitoring system. Selected because of their experience and knowledge as managers of well-functioning FYSB-funded programs, they bring an expert perspective to the process. This background enables them to evaluate project performance against their own programmatic and administrative experiences and to share with grantees successful approaches to working with runaway and homeless youth.



Every other year, new peer monitors attend a two-day National Peer Monitor Training. They learn what their roles and responsibilities are as peer monitors, as well as how to collect findings and document them in the monitoring instrument. To practice monitoring skills before going out into the field, each trainee completes a monitoring visit at a local FYSB grantee organization.

During monitoring visits, Federal staff on the review team address financial and compliance issues. Peer monitors address program issues, provide technical assistance, and share best practices. They might suggest ways to increase the number of youth a program serves or train staff on how to take cultural differences, language, and disability into account when working with clients. They also might share tips on keeping thorough client records or explain how to involve youth in updating rules and policies, such as curfews.

### The Visit

Prior to the meeting, an onsite review protocol is sent to the grantee. Reviewers become familiar with the program in advance, leaving time during the site review for interaction, observation, and interviews.

Monitoring visits typically include the following activities:

- **Entrance conference:** Reviewers meet with project staff to introduce themselves, explain the monitoring process, and identify programmatic areas that staff want to strengthen.
- **Interviews:** Over several days, reviewers meet with the executive director, supervisors, administrators, frontline staff, and clients to discuss each FYSB program's direct services, project development, resource coordination (including the extent to which the project provides opportunities for youth participation), and administrative issues.
- **Observation:** Reviewers inspect facilities to determine safety. They also observe interactions among youth and staff and determine how well staff plan and supervise activities for young people.
- **Document review:** Monitors examine documents including policy and procedures manuals, financial reports, data on the demographic makeup of the client population and on the services they receive, annual reports, staffing charts, job descriptions, board notes, client files, and case notes.
- **Exit conference:** The monitoring team meets with project staff to give feedback and discuss project strengths and areas that would benefit from improvement or that are out of compliance. Grantee staff can, if they wish, comment on the monitoring process and clarify issues that have arisen during the visit.

## **After the Visit**

The monitoring team prepares a written report that identifies strengths and areas that require corrective action within a specified time frame.

Grantees have the opportunity to review and respond to draft monitoring reports. RHYTTAC offers assistance to grantees whose programs do not comply with requirements. (See pages 49–50 for examples of how training and technical assistance providers helped grantees improve in response to monitoring visit reports.)

## Chapter 8

### **The Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System**

The local organizations awarded Runaway and Homeless Youth Act grants serve thousands of young people each year. Who are these young people? What are their demographics and other characteristics? Do they attend school? What critical issues do they face? What services do they receive from FYSB grantees? Where do they go when they leave FYSB-funded programs?

The answers to these questions come from FYSB's Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System, known as RHYMIS. FYSB uses RHYMIS to keep track of how many young people grantees serve, the types of services they receive, and the issues they face. Even more important, FYSB uses data collected via RHYMIS to determine how many youth exit programs safely, rather than returning to the streets. RHYMIS data are also analyzed to indicate ways to improve services and outcomes.

The graphs that illustrate Chapters 1–3 of this report use data collected in RHYMIS. Grantees submit data twice a year, in the spring and fall.

#### **Near-Perfect Reporting Compliance and Continual Improvements**

Congress created RHYMIS in 1992 when it first authorized funding—through the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act amendments of 1992 (P.L. 102-586)—to implement a national reporting system for programs receiving Federal runaway and homeless youth funds. Refining and streamlining the RHYMIS data reporting system in the years since then has enabled FYSB grantees to report on the youth served and services provided more and more efficiently.

The result is an impressively high response rate of nearly 99 percent maintained fairly consistently since FY 2002, when a major simplification and reengineering effort created “RHYMIS-Lite.” In FY 2004, FYSB released the National Extranet Optimized Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System, or NEORHYMIS, with a public data access site at: [extranet.acf.hhs.gov/rhymis](http://extranet.acf.hhs.gov/rhymis).

The extranet allows grantees and others to access and analyze information about youth served by FYSB programs through a variety of standard and custom reports. A few months after the end of each year, FYSB uploads the national RHYMIS data for that year to the NEORHYMIS Web site. Youth service providers and the general public can review and cite information on the site. Many grantees use the data in their efforts to attract non-Federal funding or to evaluate the successes of their programs.

FYSB continues to refine RHYMIS, endeavoring to maintain its reputation among grantees for simplicity, usefulness, and ease of operation. FYSB trains the staff of new grantees and educates continuing grantees (which have staff turnover) about how to input data so that program achievements are accurately recorded. In FYs 2008 and 2009, the RHYMIS toll-free technical support hotline and e-mail help desk responded to numerous requests for assistance every day.

NEORHYMIS version 2.1 was released in FY 2008. The updated version included a new section in which Basic Center Program grantees could report more easily on “preventive services,” such as family counseling or mediation, meant to prevent youth from running away or facing other crises. The section also allows grantees to report on other services, provided in the home or through various community resources, that are used as an alternative to taking youth into shelters, when using such services is in the best interest of the youth. In addition to the changes to Basic Center reports, an element was added to Transitional Living Program reports to track services to youth prior to residency (such as while on waiting lists or during assessment) or to record “respite” periods when youth might need a time-out from a rigorous, structured transitional living program curriculum in order to return with renewed commitment.

## **Chapter 9**

### **Research and Demonstration Program**

FYs 2008 and 2009 were exciting years for FYSB's Research and Demonstration Program, with a major project coming to completion, an evaluation of the Transitional Living Program in progress, and two new initiatives being launched. The five-year Positive Youth Development (PYD) State and Local Collaboration Demonstration Project was evaluated in FY 2008, and new projects on Rural Host Homes for the Basic Center Program and Support Systems for Rural Homeless Youth began in FYs 2008 and 2009.

#### **Ten Years of Research on Collaborative Approaches to Youth Development**

FYSB has long funded research and demonstration projects that enhance knowledge about how to best provide services for youth, especially those in at-risk situations. FYSB's Research and Demonstration Program was authorized through FY 2013 under Part D, Section 343, of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.

Activities supported by the program aim to enhance knowledge about runaway and homeless youth and increase the efficacy of government and nonprofit services targeted at the most at-risk young people.

#### **PYD State and Local Collaboration Demonstration Project**

FYSB's PYD State and Local Collaboration Demonstration Project, a five-year effort involving nine States, was evaluated in FY 2008. The project evolved out of FYSB's role as the Federal agency that promotes PYD. Youth programs are thought to be more effective when they are based on PYD and coordinated to address multiple issues, choices, and opportunities that young people face. FYSB set out to test the impact this approach would have if promoted within a State and across State agencies that serve youth. State-level agencies collaborated with community organizations—including local FYSB runaway and homeless youth service providers, local government agencies, nonprofits, and schools—and, of course, young people, to plan and implement youth development strategies appropriate for their particular targeted communities.

Though the States and their collaborating local communities all pursued different approaches, they all had common goals: to increase opportunities for youth, to involve community members in the planning and development of programs for young people, to garner community support for PYD, to enhance partnerships among youth-serving agencies at the State and local levels, and to impact youth policy.

The evaluation documented that, among other achievements, the State and Local Collaboration Demonstration Project grantees:

- Hosted community meetings, an intertribal powwow, career fairs, summer activities fairs, and other events;
- Worked to improve health and human services provided to Native American and other youth;
- Developed or improved afterschool programs for youth at risk of failing or dropping out;
- Supported or coordinated neighborhood-, local-, and State-level youth advisory councils;
- Provided training and technical assistance in youth development to communities and youth-serving organizations;
- Worked to improve interactions between youth and police;
- Encouraged youth participation in local and State public policy and government;
- Opened neighborhood youth centers, providing a safe place for youth, as well as a range of social and educational programs;
- Organized camping retreats, where youth facilitated discussions and led activities;
- Solidified youth and adult partnerships, giving adults increased confidence in the young people's abilities and allowing them to view youth as leaders in the community;
- Developed an asset-based youth development model touted as a best practice for enhancing curricula in school systems and for workforce development efforts;
- Supported court-based youth development efforts, including the identification of alternatives to secure detention for court-involved youth;
- Provided housing vouchers for youth aging out of the child protective services and juvenile justice systems;
- Supported collaborative efforts to better meet the educational needs of youth in State care and helped foster youth attend college; and
- Sustained strong partnerships in their communities and expanded their work to additional communities or throughout their States.

Since the start of this demonstration project, Federal funding from FYSB enabled the nine communities to leverage resources from State and local partners (in the form of financial support, volunteers, and donations of space and materials) and further expand the PYD movement. A staff member in the Kentucky project describes the demonstration's impact in this way: "Through the FYSB grant, we've created opportunities for young people to really be involved in creating positive change. If young people are the future, we need to give them these opportunities today so they can be prepared."

### **Rural Host Homes for Basic Center Program**

In FYs 2008 and 2009, the Rural Host Homes Demonstration Project was initiated to expand Basic Center Program shelter and support services to runaway and homeless youth who live in rural areas not served by shelter facilities. Organizations funded through this project recruit, screen, train, and provide ongoing support to host home families, who provide services to youth in their homes.

While in the program, youth under age 18 can receive shelter (for up to 21 days), transportation, and individual, family, and group counseling services. They also get help staying connected with their schools or staying current with the curricula, as called for by the McKinney-Vento

Homeless Assistance Act. An aftercare plan ensures that each youth receives continuing support after he or she leaves the program.

FYSB awarded a total of \$1.9 million in FY 2008 and \$1.8 million in FY 2009 to 19 grantees under this project. Through the demonstration, FYSB will attempt to assess the gap in services to rural runaway and homeless youth. It will evaluate whether host homes were utilized and whether the youth were able to receive the same services received by their peers in large metropolitan areas.

### **Support System for Rural Homeless Youth: A Collaborative State and Local Demonstration**

FYSB also undertook another new initiative in FYs 2008 and 2009, to help young people in rural areas, including Tribal lands and other rural native communities, who are approaching young adulthood and independence but have few or no connections to a supportive family or community resources.

FYSB awarded grants to three States—Colorado, Iowa, and Minnesota—to collaborate with local, community-based agencies to influence policies, programs, and practices that affect services to runaway and homeless youth, ages 16–21, in transitional living programs, as well as youth aging out of State child welfare systems and into independent living programs. Grants awarded in this program in FY 2008 totaled \$600,000, and those awarded in FY 2009 totaled \$1.2 million.

Specifically, the demonstration focuses on improving coordination of services and creating additional supports for rural youth in three areas:

- Survival support services—housing, health care, substance abuse, and/or mental health;
- Community—community services, youth and adult partnerships, mentoring, peer support groups, and/or PYD activities; and
- Education and employment—high school/GED completion, postsecondary education, employment training, and/or jobs.

The demonstration has two phases: planning and implementation. In FY 2009, grantees were in the planning phase, identifying, convening, and consulting with local FYSB-funded agencies providing services to youth in transitional living and independent living programs in rural communities.

Youth participation is fundamental to the success of these projects. Each project will emphasize youth participation and leadership development in the planning and implementation of project strategies and activities.

## **Evaluation of Long-term Outcomes of Youth in Transitional Living Programs**

Starting in FY 2007, an independent research firm with considerable experience in studying homelessness began to design an evaluation of long-term housing and other outcomes for youth in transitional living programs. This study was requested in Section 119 of the Runaway, Homeless Youth and Missing Children's Assistance Act (P.L. 108-96), which reauthorized the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act in 2003.

Survey instruments have been developed and are in the process of being finalized. The evaluation will be implemented through in-depth surveys of youth at multiple sites over the next several years. The study will provide information about how youth fare during program residency and for six and twelve months after they exit from transitional living programs. It should suggest which housing, services, and program models benefit long-term well-being and maturation.

## Appendix A

### Requirements of Basic Center Program Grantees

Part A, Section 312(b) of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, as last amended by the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 (P.L. 110–378), requires that Basic Center Program grantees:

- (1) shall operate a runaway and homeless youth center located in an area which is demonstrably frequented by or easily reachable by runaway and homeless youth;
- (2) shall use such assistance to establish, to strengthen, or to fund a runaway and homeless youth center, or a locally controlled facility providing temporary shelter, that has—
  - (A) a maximum capacity of not more than 20 youth, except where the applicant assures that the State where the center or locally controlled facility is located has a State or local law or regulation that requires a higher maximum to comply with licensure requirements for child and youth serving facilities; and
  - (B) a ratio of staff to youth that is sufficient to ensure adequate supervision and treatment;
- (3) shall develop adequate plans for contacting the parents or other relatives of the youth and ensuring the safe return of the youth according to the best interests of the youth, for contacting local government officials pursuant to informal arrangements established with such officials by the runaway and homeless youth center, and for providing for other appropriate alternative living arrangements;
- (4) shall develop an adequate plan for ensuring—
  - (A) proper relations with law enforcement personnel, health and mental health care personnel, social service personnel, school system personnel, and welfare personnel;
  - (B) coordination with McKinney-Vento school district liaisons, designated under section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii)), to assure that runaway and homeless youth are provided information about the educational services available to such youth under Subtitle B of Title VII of that Act; and
  - (C) the return of runaway and homeless youth from correctional institutions;
- (5) shall develop an adequate plan for providing counseling and aftercare services to such youth, for encouraging the involvement of their parents or legal guardians in counseling, and for

ensuring, as possible, that aftercare services will be provided to those youth who are returned beyond the State in which the runaway and homeless youth center is located;

(6) shall develop an adequate plan for establishing or coordinating with outreach programs designed to attract persons (including, where applicable, persons who are members of a cultural minority and persons with limited ability to speak English) who are eligible to receive services for which a grant under subsection (a) may be expended;

(7) shall keep adequate statistical records profiling the youth and family members whom it serves (including youth who are not referred to out-of-home shelter services), except that records maintained on individual runaway and homeless youth shall not be disclosed without the consent of the individual youth and parent or legal guardian to anyone other than another agency compiling statistical records or a government agency involved in the disposition of criminal charges against an individual runaway and homeless youth, and reports or other documents based on such statistical records shall not disclose the identity of individual runaway and homeless youth;

(8) shall submit annual reports to the Secretary detailing how the center has been able to meet the goals of its plans and reporting the statistical summaries required by paragraph (7);

(9) shall demonstrate its ability to operate under accounting procedures and fiscal control devices as required by the Secretary;

(10) shall submit a budget estimate with respect to the plan submitted by such center under this subsection;

(11) shall supply such other information as the Secretary reasonably deems necessary;

(12) shall submit to the Secretary an annual report that includes, with respect to the year for which the report is submitted—

(A) information regarding the activities carried out under this part;

(B) the achievements of the project under this part carried out by the applicant; and

(C) statistical summaries describing—

(i) the number and the characteristics of the runaway and homeless youth, and youth at risk of family separation, who participate in the project; and

(ii) the services provided to such youth by the project; and

(13) shall develop an adequate emergency preparedness and management plan.

## **Appendix B**

### **Requirements of Transitional Living Program Grantees**

Part B, Section 322(a) of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, as last amended by the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 (P.L. 110–378), requires Transitional Living Program grantees:

(1) to provide, by grant, agreement, or contract, shelter (such as group homes, including maternity group homes, host family homes, and supervised apartments) and provide, by grant, agreement, or contract, services (including information and counseling services in basic life skills which shall include money management, budgeting, consumer education, and use of credit, parenting skills (as appropriate), interpersonal skill building, educational advancement, job attainment skills, and mental and physical health care) to homeless youth;

(2) to provide such shelter and such services to individual homeless youth throughout a continuous period not to exceed 540 days, or in exceptional circumstances 635 days, except that a youth in a program under this part who has not reached 18 years of age on the last day of the 635-day period may, in exceptional circumstances and if otherwise qualified for the program, remain in the program until the youth's 18th birthday;

(3) to provide, directly or indirectly, onsite supervision at each shelter facility that is not a family home;

(4) that such shelter facility used to carry out such project shall have the capacity to accommodate not more than 20 individuals (excluding staff);

(5) to provide a number of staff sufficient to ensure that all homeless youth participating in such project receive adequate supervision and services;

(6) to provide a written transitional living plan to each youth based on an assessment of such youth's needs, designed to help the transition from supervised participation in such project to independent living or another appropriate living arrangement;

(7) to develop an adequate plan to ensure proper referral of homeless youth to social service, law enforcement, educational (including post-secondary education), vocational, training (including services and programs for youth available under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998), welfare (including programs under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996), legal service, and health care programs and to help integrate and coordinate such services for youths;

(8) to provide for the establishment of outreach programs designed to attract individuals who are eligible to participate in the project;

(9) to submit to the Secretary an annual report that includes information regarding the activities carried out with funds under this part, the achievements of the project under this part carried out by the applicant and statistical summaries describing the number and the characteristics of the homeless youth who participate in such project, and the services provided to such youth by such project, in the year for which the report is submitted;

(10) to implement such accounting procedures and fiscal control devices as the Secretary may require;

(11) to submit to the Secretary an annual budget that estimates the itemized costs to be incurred in the year for which the applicant requests a grant under this part;

(12) to keep adequate statistical records profiling homeless youth which it serves and not to disclose the identity of individual homeless youth in reports or other documents based on such statistical records;

(13) not to disclose records maintained on individual homeless youth without the informed consent of the individual youth to anyone other than an agency compiling statistical records;

(14) to provide to the Secretary such other information as the Secretary may reasonably require;

(15) to coordinate services with McKinney-Vento school district liaison, designated under section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11432 (g)(1)(J)(ii)), to assure that runaway and homeless youth are provided information about the educational services available to such youth under Subtitle B of Title VII of that Act; and

(16) to develop an adequate emergency preparedness and management plan.

In addition to conforming to Transitional Living Program requirements as defined by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, maternity group homes must offer services to help pregnant and parenting youth learn parenting skills, including child development, family budgeting, health and nutrition, and other skills to promote their long-term economic independence in order to ensure the well-being of their children.

## **Appendix C**

### **Requirements of Street Outreach Program Grantees**

Part E, Section 351 of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, as last amended by the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 (P.L. 110–378), provides the Secretary of HHS the authority to make grants for the purpose of providing street-based services to runaway and homeless and street youth who have been subjected to, or are at risk of being subjected to, sexual abuse, prostitution, or sexual exploitation. FYSB requires Street Outreach Program grantees to:

- (1) assist runaway, homeless, and street youth in making personal choices regarding where they live and how they behave by building trusting relationships between grantee staff and these youth through the provision of services in their environment and through diverse modes of communication that will encourage trust;
- (2) provide services for these youth that address their behavioral and physical health, employment and educational support, and reunification with family or alternative, safe placements;
- (3) conduct outreach activities that encourage runaway, homeless, and street youth to leave the streets and make other healthy personal choices regarding how they live and behave—at a minimum, street-based outreach and education, access to emergency shelter, survival aid, individual assessments, treatment and counseling, prevention and education activities, information and referrals, crisis intervention, and follow-up support;
- (4) guarantee 24-hour access to age-appropriate emergency shelter services, either directly or by referral, for those youth willing to come in off the street, and maintain interaction with youth while they are in placement;
- (5) provide staff supervision and training, including on-street supervision by appropriately trained staff, back-up personnel for on-street staff, and initial and periodic training of staff to conduct outreach activities for runaway and homeless street youth, to provide street-based services to youth of diverse cultural backgrounds that reflects gender and cultural sensitivity and language appropriateness, and to integrate PYD in the services delivered to youth and their families;
- (6) practice a PYD approach by ensuring each young person served a sense of safety and structure, belonging and membership, self-worth and social contribution, independence and control over one's life, and closeness in interpersonal relationships, and through strategies such as youth leadership and opportunities for decision making, service learning, and job preparation and work shadowing;
- (7) keep adequate statistical records for profiling the youth and families served;

(8) receive and participate in technical assistance efforts as recommended by Federal staff;

(9) develop and document an emergency preparedness and management plan that addresses steps to be taken in case of a local or national situation that poses risk to the health and safety of staff and youth and, at a minimum, includes prevention, preparedness, response and recovery efforts; contains strategies for addressing evacuation, security, food, medical supplies, and notification of youth's families; designates an alternative location should evaluation be necessary due to specific facility issues; and specifies immediate notification of FYSB when evacuation plans are executed; and

(10) develop a plan for continued service delivery at the culmination of the grant funding period, identifying specific services and organizational resources based on future projected needs of the target population, goals of the organization, and available resources.