



Basic Center Program

ISSUE HISTORY

Widespread concern emerged in the early 1970s about youth who were away from home and in at-risk situations, often through no fault of their own. At the time, efforts to help these young people were primarily local; few Federal resources existed to shelter runaway and homeless youth or reunite them with their families.

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, passed in 1974, authorized the Basic Center Program, which enabled community-based organizations to operate short-term shelters to provide emergency care to runaway and homeless youth not already receiving services from the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. In 1975, the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) funded the first 66 basic centers with \$5 million. Today, FYSB funds the Basic Center Program under provisions of the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-378).

PROGRAM HISTORY



FYSB's **Basic Center Program** (BCP) works to establish or strengthen community-based programs that meet the immediate needs of runaway and homeless youth and their families. The programs provide youth up to age 18 with emergency shelter, food, clothing, counseling, and referrals for health care. BCPs can provide 21 days of shelter for up to 20 youth and seek to reunite young people with their families, whenever possible, or to locate appropriate alternative placements.

In addition to emergency shelter, many BCP grantees provide out-of-shelter services, including street-based services and home-based services for families with youth at risk of separation from their families. There are exceptions for jurisdictions that have different standards for licensing. Basic centers provided emergency shelter for more than 31,000 youth on the streets in FY 2016.

SERVICES

Although slight differences exist from one program to the next, all basic centers must offer the following types of assistance to young people and their families:

- Food, clothing, medical care and other services that youth need (offered either directly or by referral)
- Trauma-informed individual, group, and family counseling



FYSB Mission

To support the organizations and communities that work every day to put an end to youth homelessness, adolescent pregnancy, and domestic violence.

FYSB Vision

A future in which all our nation's youth, individuals, and families — no matter what challenges they may face — can live healthy, productive, violence-free lives.

- Recreation programs
- Outreach to youth who may need assistance as well as to public and private agencies that work with youth and families
- Aftercare services for youth after they leave the shelter

In addition, FYSB requires grantees to incorporate elements of the [Positive Youth Development](#) (PYD) approach into their programs. PYD suggests that the best way to prevent risky behavior is to help young people achieve their full potential. Youth development strategies focus on giving young people the chance to exercise leadership, build skills, and become involved in their communities.



GRANT AWARD PROCESS

FYSB funds the Basic Center Program under the provisions of the [Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008](#) (Public Law 110-378). The Basic Center Program currently funds 280 grantees receiving \$48.75 million.

FYSB solicits applications for the Basic Center Program by posting funding announcements on the [Grants.gov](#) website. Applications are competitively reviewed by peer panels, and successful applicants receive three-year grants. Basic Center Program funds are allocated to states using a formula based on the state's population of youth younger than age 18, according to the latest census data.

LEARN MORE

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