Basic Center Program

FACT SHEET

Family and Youth Services Bureau

The mission of the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) is to promote safety, stability and well-being for people who have experienced or been exposed to violence, neglect or trauma. FYSB achieves this through supporting programs that provide shelter, community services and prevention education for youth, adults and families.

PURPOSE

FYSB's **Basic Center Program** 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. Most basic centers can provide 21 days of shelter for up to 20 youth. There are exceptions for jurisdictions that have different standards for licensing. Basic centers seek to reunite young people with their families, whenever possible, or to locate appropriate alternative placements.

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)
- Individual, group and family counseling
- 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**, or 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.

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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 1974 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (Public Law 93-415) changed all that. Through Title III, the **Runaway and Homeless Youth Act**, Congress provided for the creation of community shelters called basic centers that would provide emergency care to runaway young people who weren't already receiving services from the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. In 1975, FYSB funded the first 66 basic centers with $5 million.

GRANT AWARD PROCESS

FYSB funds the Basic Center Program under the provisions of the **Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008** (Public Law 110-378). In FY 2013, 97 programs received a total of $15.2 million.

FYSB solicits applications for the Basic Center Program by posting funding announcements on the Grants.gov Web site. 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.

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