



THE RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH PROGRAM PROPOSED RULE: OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Program (RHY) is a federal program that provides approximately \$115 million to public and non-profit organizations or a combination of such entities to provide runaway and homeless program services. These services are delivered through three major grant programs administered by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, in the Department of Health and Human Services.

The Basic Center Program funds grants to community-based public and private agencies for the provision of outreach, crisis intervention, temporary shelter, counseling, family unification, and aftercare services to runaway and homeless youth and their families. Basic Center projects generally serve youth under 18 years of age and can provide up to 21 days of shelter.

The Transitional Living Program provides grants to public and private organizations for community-based shelter including group homes, host family homes, and supervised apartments for youth, ages 16 to under 22, who cannot safely live with their own families. Transitional Living projects provide a long-term, safe, stable, and nurturing environment for up to 21 months. Young people who have not yet reached their 18th birthday at the end of the 21-month period may continue to receive services until they turn 18. Services include counseling in basic life skills, interpersonal skill building, educational advancement, job attainment skills, and physical and mental health care. These services are designed to help youth who are homeless develop the skills necessary to make a successful transition to self-sufficient living. The Transitional Living Program also funds Maternity Group Homes, which are specifically designed to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting youth.

The Education and Prevention Services to Reduce Sexual Abuse of Runaway, Homeless and Street Youth Program (SOP) provides grants to public and private organizations for street-based outreach and education, including treatment, counseling, provision of information, and referrals for runaway, homeless, and street youth 21 years and younger who have been subjected to or are at risk of being subjected to sexual abuse or exploitation.

The new proposed rule would provide the first comprehensive update of the RHY regulation since 1978. The changes proposed in the RHY Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) are designed to minimize burden and provide flexibility to grantees, the NPRM, focuses on the following three priority areas: (1) strengthening performance measures and standards; (2) updating program requirements; and (3) changing existing program rules to conform to current law and correcting outdated provisions.



We hope you find this overview helpful, but it is only intended to provide summary information on some key points. For complete context and understanding, we encourage everyone to read the entire NPRM which was published in the Federal Register on April 14, 2014 <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/04/14/2014-08178/runaway-and-homeless-youth> during the public comment period, which is open until June 13, 2014. Comments about the NPRM can be submitted to <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/04/14/2014-08178/runaway-and-homeless-youth>.

KEY PROVISIONS OF THE PROPOSED RULE

1. Strengthening Performance Measures and Standards

To help assess the quality and effectiveness of the RHY Program, the NPRM provides indicators of successful outcomes for youth. The performance standards will be used to monitor individual project performance in achieving the purposes of the Act.

Further, we believe the performance standards can best be organized by building upon four core outcomes based on research which indicates that improvements on risk and protective factors can serve as pathways to get to better outcomes in 1) social and emotional well-being, 2) permanent connections, 3) education or employment, and 4) stable housing.

2. Updating Program Requirements

We propose to continue the requirement that grantees coordinate their activities with the 24-hour National Toll-free Communication System and that grantees submit statistical reports. We also propose to include in the text of the regulation a number of statutory requirements that are currently used in program administration. They include the following:

- Continue the implementation of a statutory requirement that Basic Center grantees have an intake procedure that is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to all youth seeking services.
- Underscore the importance of grantees coordinating with and working with other providers of services to homeless youth.
- Encourage grantees to collaborate with their local Continuum of Care, with the goal of ending youth homelessness.
- Create a profession in the field of youth work that requires RHY youth workers to demonstrate skills in six core competency areas.



3. Changing Existing Program Rules to Conform to Current Law and Correcting Outdated Provisions

We propose revisions to program rule that will align with current law. These include the following:

- Revise the title of the purpose of the program to reflect the growth of the program over time such as emphasizing the TLP services and other services added in recent years and increase emphasis on prevention and the vulnerability of these youth.
- Change the eligibility requirements of the program to conform the regulatory language to the current statute.
- Raise the priority award level on the amounts available for award.
- Change the regulatory language regarding matching share which conflicts with statute on the amount of funding required by grantees to satisfy the match requirement.