

Runaway and Homeless Youth Program: Street Outreach Program



The **STREET OUTREACH PROGRAM**—formally known as the *Education and Prevention Services to Reduce Sexual Abuse of Runaway, Homeless, and Street Youth Program*—connects homeless youth back to the caring, supportive adults who can get them off the streets and back on track. Street outreach workers reached out to young people **more than 650,000** times last year.

Dangers of Youth Homelessness

Without the adult protection of parents, guardians, or relatives, youth risk being sexually exploited or trafficked. Youth also may engage in “survival sex” as a way to get money or food.

Street outreach programs work to promote young people’s social and emotional well-being, keep youth safe, and help them leave the streets.

Reaching Out

Street outreach programs funded by the Family & Youth Services Bureau operate across the country, in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Programs may send workers to find youth by foot, van, or both, during the hours that young people tend to be out, including late afternoons, evenings, nights, and weekends.

Staff members build relationships with youth gradually and respectfully. They provide youth on the street with basic supplies, support, advice, and referrals to emergency shelter programs, health care, and other services.

**EACH STREET
OUTREACH PROGRAM
GOT AN AVERAGE OF
144 YOUTH OFF THE
STREETS AND INTO
SHELTER FOR
AT LEAST ONE NIGHT
IN 2013.**

What’s in an Outreach Worker’s Bag?

Some things outreach workers provide to youth include:

- Food
- Water
- Blankets
- Backpacks
- Socks
- Toothpaste and toothbrushes
- Feminine hygiene products
- First-aid kits
- Bus tokens
- Hand sanitizer
- Laundry detergent
- Referral cards (for shelter, health care, STD testing, substance abuse and mental health counseling)

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Street Outreach in Action: Brian's Story

At 17 years old, Brian found himself sleeping in an empty garage. He had run away from home to escape the screaming and fighting that went on there. He liked school, but he found it too hard so he dropped out and spent his days hanging out at a nearby park instead. At the time, Brian says, he thought of himself as a nobody.

All that changed when Brian began talking to counselors from a FYSB-funded street outreach program in Bridgewater, NJ. Brian began opening up about himself and his troubles at home. Staff learned that he liked sports and had happy memories of baseball camp.

Over time, the outreach team persuaded Brian that he needed a safe place to sleep. Staff took him to their short-term residential program for young people in crisis. There, Brian got a hot shower, clean clothes and a good meal.

The next day, case managers began working with Brian on creating a long-term housing plan. They determined he needed treatment for severe emotional trauma and found a residential program where he would get help.

Somerset Home didn't send Brian off empty-handed. He left with a duffel bag full of clothes, toiletries and even a baseball glove to help him reconnect with the sport he loved. Brian also left Somerset with a team that cared about him and continued to check on his progress.

Distributed in a Year

More than **600,000** health and hygiene products

More than **700,000** food and drink packages were given out

More than **98,000** printed resources to connect youth with essential community resources.

FYSB has just completed a research study that should shed light on the population that programs serve, their needs, and how programs best encourage youth to leave the streets. The final report will be available in 2014.



ONLINE

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb>