



Street Outreach Program

ISSUE HISTORY

Tens of thousands of young people experience homelessness each year. On the streets, they face serious dangers. Young people often resort to sex work to make money for food; and many turn to drugs or alcohol as a way to deal with the trauma or abuse they have experienced at home.

A first-of-its-kind, FYSB-funded study in 2013 focused on 656 young people between the ages of 14–21 in 11 cities.

- More than half of homeless youth became homeless for the first time because they were asked to leave home by a parent or caregiver.
- On average, the youth became homeless for the first time at age 15.
- The average youth spent nearly two years living on the streets.
- Fifty-three percent of youth were unable to access a shelter because it was full.
- The types of service needs youth identified focused on meeting basic needs — access and challenges related to safe shelter (55.3%), education (54.6%), and employment (71.3%) — and basic supports like transportation (66.6%), clothing (60.4%), and laundry facilities (54.0%).
- While homeless, 78.6% of participants had slept in an emergency shelter or transitional living program.
- More than 60% of youth in the study were raped, beaten up, robbed, or otherwise assaulted while homeless; 14.5% of participants had been sexually assaulted or raped; 32.3% had been beaten up; 18.3% had been assaulted with a weapon; 40.5% had been threatened with a weapon; and 40.8% had been robbed.
- Almost two-thirds of participants (61.8%) reported symptoms associated with depression and were at risk for experiencing clinical depression. Nearly 72% reported having experienced major trauma, such as physical or sexual abuse or witnessing or being a victim of violence, at some point in their lives.
- In the sample group, 41.1% identified as Black or African American, 33.3% as white only, 25.7% identified as Hispanic or Latino/Latina, 21.7% identified as being two or more races, 3% identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, 0.5% identified as Asian, and 0.2% identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.
- 54% percent identified as male and 45.6% identified as female.
- Nearly 30 percent of participants identified as part of a vulnerable population.
- At the time of the interview, 14.2% of the participants reported caring for children and 9.0% reported being pregnant.
- Only 29.5% of respondents reported that they had the option of returning home.

PROGRAM HISTORY



To prevent the sexual abuse and exploitation of young people who are surviving on the streets and to provide them with services that help

them leave the streets, Congress established the Education and Prevention Services to Reduce Sexual Abuse of Runaway, Homeless, and Street Youth Program, through the Violence Against Women Act of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-322). The legislation funds street-based outreach and education for runaway and homeless youth. The Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) has funded the Street Outreach Program since 1996.

The **Street Outreach Program** enables organizations around the country to help young people get off the streets. To that end, the program promotes efforts by its grantees to build relationships between street outreach workers and runaway, homeless, and street youth. Grantees also provide support services that aim to move youth into stable housing and prepare them for independence. The program's ultimate goal is to prevent the sexual abuse or exploitation of young people living on the streets or in unstable housing.

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.

SERVICES

Street outreach programs provide services directly or by collaborating with other agencies. In particular, street outreach programs work closely with other organizations that work to protect and treat young people who have been or are at risk of sexual abuse or exploitation. Street outreach services include the following:

- Street-based education and outreach
- Access to emergency shelter
- Survival aid
- Individual assessments
- Trauma-informed treatment and counseling
- Prevention and education activities
- Information and referrals
- Crisis intervention
- Follow-up support



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

Today, FYSB funds the Street Outreach Program under the provisions of the [Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008](#) (Public Law 110-378). The Street Outreach Program currently funds 93 grantees receiving \$15.89 million.

FYSB solicits applications for the Street Outreach Program by posting an annual funding opportunity announcement on the [Grants.gov](#) website. Applications are competitively reviewed by peer panels and successful applicants receive three-year grants.

LEARN MORE

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