



# Youth Homelessness Policy Landscape and Trends

June 28, 2022

Seattle, WA

# Faculty: Youth Homelessness Policy Landscape and Trends



---

**Katie Meyer Scott**,  
senior youth attorney,  
National Homelessness  
Law Center



---

**Patricia Julianelle**,  
senior strategist for  
program advancement  
and legal affairs,  
SchoolHouse Connection



---

**Rodd Monts**, director of  
state policy, SchoolHouse  
Connection



N A T I O N A L  
H O M E L E S S N E S S  
L A W C E N T E R

# Federal Policy Landscape: Youth Homelessness

Katie Meyer Scott

*Senior Youth Attorney*

June 28, 2022

# Overview

- **Major federal policies addressing youth homelessness**
- **Understanding the federal definitions**
- **Identifying programs and funding streams**
- **Trends**

# Federal Policy Addressing Youth Homelessness

- [Runaway and Homeless Youth Act](#): Signed into law in 1974 and reauthorized five times. Administered by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) within HHS. Focuses on unaccompanied homeless youth.
- [McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987](#): Provisions ensure enrollment, attendance and success of homeless children and youth in school by eliminating transportation and other barriers to attending school. Schools required to appoint a liaison to work with homeless students and their families.
- [Chaffee Foster Care Independence Program](#): Authorizes funding to support youth aging out/aged out of foster care. Funds can be used for housing, educational services and independent living services. Later legislation ([Fostering Connections Act of 2008](#)) allows states to provide foster care to youth until age 21 if the youth is in school, working or medically exempt.

**These laws operate across multiple systems – federal, state, local, & even private organizations. This is a simple summary but the reach and application of these laws is complex!**

# Federal Definitions of Homelessness

- **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)(RHYA):** Individuals who are “not more than 21 years of age...for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative and who have no other safe alternative living arrangement.”
- **U.S. Department of Education (DOE):** Individuals “who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence”. Includes: doubling up, couch surfing, living in motels, hotels, campsites, emergency/transitional shelters, cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus/train stations, etc.
- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) – 4 Categories**
  - Individuals and families who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence (does NOT include doubling up/couch surfing);
  - Individuals and families who will imminently lose their primary nighttime residence;
  - Unaccompanied youth/families with children defined as homeless under other federal statutes; and
  - Individuals and families who are fleeing, or are attempting to flee, domestic violence.

See [Federal Definitions | Youth.gov](#)

# Federal Definitions of Homelessness

## **Why are these definitions so important for state policy makers?**

- Understanding the definitions will help you maximize usage of federal funds available to cover homeless youth/young adults identified by the federal definitions through the various program/funding streams
- Then states can fill in the gaps with state programs and funding that have a more expansive/flexible definition of youth and young adult homelessness.

# Federal Programs

## NEW/TIME LIMITED PROGRAMS

### [American Rescue Plan-Homeless Children and Youth \(ARP-HCY\):](#)

- Provides states with funding to support youth experiencing homelessness. \$800,000,000 is to be used for the identification, enrollment and school participation of youth experiencing homelessness.
- \$100,000,000 is designated to address learning loss among homeless children and youth in foster care during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Also allows homeless youth and foster youth to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit for tax year 2021, even if they are full-time students.



# Federal Programs

## RHYA GRANT PROGRAMS

### [Basic Center Program \(BCP\)](#)

Community-based programs that meet the immediate needs of runaway/homeless youth under 18 “by providing up to 21 days of shelter, food, clothing, and medical care; individual, group, and family counseling; crisis intervention, recreation programs, and aftercare services.”

### [Transitional Living Program \(TLP\)](#)

Long-term residential services for youth experiencing homelessness between the ages of 16 and 22. TLP utilizes “host families, group homes, maternity group homes, and supervised apartments owned or rented by the program” as well as provides educational, career, and medical supports.

### [Maternity Group Homes for Pregnant and Parenting Youth Program \(MGH\)](#)

Similar services to TLP, as well as services that “incorporate positive youth development and teach parenting skills, child development, family budgeting, and health and nutrition.”

### [Street Outreach Program \(SOP\)](#)

SOP services include “street-based education and outreach, access to emergency shelter, survival aid, treatment and counseling, crisis intervention, and follow-up support.”

# Federal Programs

## DOE GRANT PROGRAMS

### [McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children & Youth Program/Grants](#)

Grants for 50 states, DC, and PR, to provide coordination of the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness in each state to ensure that they have equal access to “free and appropriate public education”

## HUD PROGRAMS

[Continuum of Care \(CoC\)](#) Homeless Assistance Programs include:

- [Supportive Housing Program](#): Competitive grant process for construction, acquisition, rehab, or lease of buildings to provide transitional or permanent housing, as well as supportive services
- [Shelter Plus Care Program](#): Grants for rental assistance and supportive services to assist hard-to-serve homeless persons with disabilities.
- [Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation for Single Room Occupancy Program](#): Assists very low-income, single, homeless individuals in obtaining housing in privately owned, rehabilitated buildings.

[Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program](#): Competitive grants to develop and implement a community plan to prevent and end youth homelessness; can serve youth up to age 24. Map of grantees [here](#).

# Federal Programs

## HHS (Children's Bureau) PROGRAMS

### [John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program \(CFCIP\)](#)

Grants are offered to states and Tribes for “help with education, employment, financial management, housing, emotional support, and assured connections to caring adults for older youth in foster care” (up to age 21).

### [Education and Training Vouchers Program for Youths Aging out of Foster Care \(ETV\)](#)

This program provides vouchers of up to \$5,000 per year per youth for post-secondary education and training for eligible youth.

## OTHER PROGRAMS

- [Department of Justice \(DOJ\) grants](#)
- [Department of Labor \(DOL\) grants](#)
- And many [more!](#)

# Federal Programs

## Who is eligible to apply for these grants?

Depends on the program – sometimes states and local governments are eligible, sometimes Housing Authorities and private nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply. States and local governments that receive funding will often subcontract with nonprofit organizations to implement programs.

## How do you apply?

Agencies will put out a NOFO (notice of funding opportunity) that explains who is eligible, how to apply, deadlines, etc. There are ways to sign up for alerts of these opportunities ([here](#) are the HUD mailing lists) but [youth.gov](http://youth.gov) serves as a hub for most of this information. Almost all grant application and reporting are done through various online portals and the agencies offer trainings on how to use them.

# Federal Trends

- 1. Housing First/Housing as a Human Right – also connected with housing affordability, need to increase housing stock**
- 2. Coordination of Programs – e.g., Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program**
- 3. Documentation – demographic data and outcomes**

Keep in touch:



NATIONAL  
**HOMELESSNESS**  
LAW CENTER

[www.homelesslaw.org](http://www.homelesslaw.org)

Katie Meyer Scott, Senior Youth Attorney  
[kmeyerscott@homelesslaw.org](mailto:kmeyerscott@homelesslaw.org)



@homeless\_law



National Homelessness  
Law Center



SchoolHouse  
Connection

A background image showing a group of diverse students in a classroom setting. A young woman in the foreground is smiling and holding a green notebook. Other students are visible in the background, some looking down at their work.

# 2022 NCSL Youth Homelessness Fellows State Policy Landscape

# About SchoolHouse Connection

SchoolHouse Connection works to overcome homelessness through education. We provide strategic advocacy and practical assistance in partnership with schools, early childhood programs, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth.

- Website:  
<https://www.schoolhouseconnection.org>
- Non-partisan State Policy:  
<https://schoolhouseconnection.org/policy-advocacy/state-policy/>
- COVID resources
- Webinars and implementation tools
- Youth leadership and scholarships



SchoolHouse  
Connection



---

## Key Areas for State Policy

Many of the policies most important for preventing and addressing youth homelessness fall under state law.

State early care and education policy

Health and mental health insurance and access

Child welfare

Access to vital documents

Funding for services

Minor consent for shelter/housing

Employment programs

---

# Recent State Policy Trends Include:

## #1

Promoting high school graduation

- Partial credits
- Alternative diplomas
- Positive school discipline

## #2

Promoting higher education completion

- Housing priority
- Tuition/fee waivers
- On-campus supports

## #3

Empowering unaccompanied minors to consent

- Health care
- Mental health care
- Housing and services

## #4

Promoting employment

- Child care
- Vital records access
- Car insurance
- Tax credits

## #5

Funding services

- Transitional housing
- Permanent housing
- Employment
- Education
- Family support

## **Promoting High School Graduation SB 354 (2021)**

- Prevents removal of students from school when their behavior is substantially caused by homelessness.
- Increases positive behavioral interventions and trauma-informed supports.
- Ensures the involvement of McKinney-Vento liaisons in discipline of students who may be experiencing homelessness.



## **Promoting College Completion SB 1708 (2022)**

- Provides higher education campus liaisons.
- Expands and streamlines the state homeless tuition/fee waiver.



## **Minor Consent for Health Care SB 2265 (2021)**

- Allows unaccompanied homeless youth age 14 and older to consent for their own medical, dental and behavioral health care.
- Allows unaccompanied parents to consent for their children's medical, dental and behavioral health care.



## **Promoting Employment SB 1708 (2022)**

- Extends the Keys to Independence program (previously only for foster youth) to unaccompanied homeless youth (paying driver education, license, and insurance costs).
- Waives birth certificate fees for youth experiencing homelessness.





## Funding for Youth Housing

### State Bond Commission, 2019

- \$2.6 million to convert a building into 11 apartments for homeless and low-income youth.
- \$2.5 million to renovate and add 20 beds at a youth shelter.

### State Legislature, 2022 ARPA funds

- \$1 million for homeless youth transitional housing.
- \$50 million for affordable housing development.
- \$1 million for rental assistance.



<https://schoolhouseconnection.org/policy-advocacy/state-policy/>

Rodd Monts, Director of State Policy

[rodd@schoolhouseconnection.org](mailto:rodd@schoolhouseconnection.org)



Patricia Julianelle, Senior Strategist for  
Program Advancement & Legal Affairs

[patricia@schoolhouseconnection.org](mailto:patricia@schoolhouseconnection.org)



**Thank you!**