

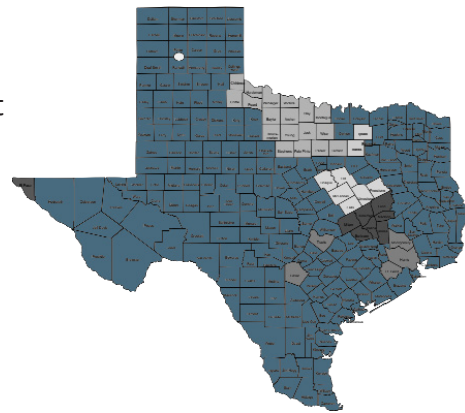
INCREASE STATE INVESTMENT TO END YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT HOMELESSNESS

Background: In 2019, the Texas Legislature took an important step in addressing youth and young adult (YYA) homelessness by including the first-ever dedicated state funding in the state’s budget to support YYA experiencing homelessness. The Homeless Housing Services Program (HHSP) at the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) made \$3 million available for this purpose. This funding is now considered part of the base budget.

TNOYS asks the Legislature to deepen its commitment to preventing and ending YYA homelessness by increasing the general revenue dedicated to serving this vulnerable population to at least \$20 million annually, and making the funding available to communities across Texas through a new “Youth and Young Adult Homeless Housing and Services Program”. Currently, the funding available through HHSP is only accessible in the nine largest cities in Texas, leaving many YYA in need without access.¹

Rural Highlights: In 2022 at least 1,662 YYA were identified as experiencing homelessness in the 215 non-urban Texas counties (out of a total of 254 counties), which are indicated at right in blue.⁵ Relevant data regarding these YYA are as follows:

- 1,108 children between the ages of 0-17
- 32 children without parents or guardians
- 110 children with YYA as their parents
- 554 young adults between the ages of 18-24



Snapshot: Youth and Young Adult Homelessness

- 114,055 students in Texas schools during the 2019 school year were identified as “homeless.”²
- 17,193 students are experiencing homelessness separate from a parent or guardian.²
- 1,408 young adults (ages 18-24) experience homelessness on any given day in Texas.²
- 31-46% of youth who age out of foster care experience homelessness before age 26.³
- 25% of YYA in Texas experiencing homelessness have experienced commercial sexual exploitation/trafficking.⁴

TNOYS asks the Legislature for increased funding to improve access to the following interventions:

- Increasing access to YYA-specific shelter beds
- Increasing permanent housing availability
- Preventing homelessness through rental and utility assistance
- Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth (CSEY) survivor services
- Street outreach and drop-in centers

Increased funding could improve access to the following interventions to end youth and young adult homelessness across Texas:

- **YYA-specific shelter beds:** Although federal funding is available for providers serving runaway and homeless youth under 18 in emergency shelters, that funding is only accessible for 30 days, which is not always sufficient time to find housing or placement for a youth. Moreover, this funding is not available to all providers serving YYA. In general, YYA have reported feeling unsafe in “adult” shelters, and shelters that are specific to YYA often have long waitlists.
- **Permanent housing:** Affordable housing is hard to come by for many Texans. YYA and the providers who serve them struggle to find affordable housing for YYA and landlords who will rent to young adults. Funding is needed to support the development of YYA-specific housing as well as incentives for landlords to accept YYA experiencing homelessness into their housing.
 - For example, the Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) housing voucher - a voucher specifically for youth who have aged out of foster care - is often inadequate because it does not cover the high cost of housing or because landlords are unwilling to accept vouchers.
 - YYA often report that when landlords accept vouchers for YYA, it is for housing that is in “the unsafe neighborhoods we are trying to get away from.”
- **Rental and utility assistance:** YYA experiencing financial instability, including those in school, are at risk of eviction and homelessness. Rental assistance programs can help to keep YYA housed and safe while preventing an eviction, which exacerbates their difficulty in finding future housing.
- **Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth (CSEY) survivor services:** Given that at least 25 percent of YYA experiencing homelessness have also experienced trafficking and sexual exploitation, there is a significant need to provide survivor and mental health services.
- **Street outreach and drop-in centers:** For YYA who are either not yet ready to transition off the street or who are on wait lists for temporary or permanent housing, street outreach and drop-in centers provide critical support like food, internet access, laundry, and other social services.

Sources

1. Cities receiving HHSP funding are: Houston, San Antonio, Dallas, Austin, Fort Worth, El Paso, Arlington, Corpus Christ, and Plano
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3. Amy Dworsky, Laura Napolitano, Mark Courtney, “Homelessness During the Transition From Foster Care to Adulthood”, American Journal of Public Health 103, no. S2 (December 1, 2013): pp. S318-S323.
4. Busch-Armendariz, N. B., et al.. (2016). Human trafficking by the numbers: The initial benchmark of prevalence and economic impact for Texas. Austin: Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault, The University of Texas at Austin.
5. Paredes, A. (2022, July 6). 2022 point-in-time count results. Texas Homeless Network. <https://www.thn.org/2022/07/06/2022-pit/>