

TNOYS

TEXAS NETWORK OF
YOUTH SERVICES

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

FOR

TEXAS HOMELESS YOUTH SURVEY TOOL

Date of Release: Friday, July 10th, 2015

A. BACKGROUND

Youth who are homeless are at heightened risk for a host of negative outcomes, including victimization; criminalization; mental illness, chemical dependency, and other health morbidities; and poor educational outcomes. The number of youth who are homeless and unaccompanied (or “on their own”) in Texas is not clear. Because homeless youth may avoid contact with authorities, move frequently, and opt out of available services, data on the population are lacking. Additionally, there are large variances between estimates, which may result from different definitions of homelessness, different age ranges included, and different periods of time during which data are collected.

The 2014 Point-In-Time (“PIT”) count, which was a count of homeless persons on a single night in January 2014, found that there were 671 households comprised only of minors who were experiencing homelessness in Texas. The same count found that there were also 1,598 households with homeless persons aged 18 to 24 years old in Texas on that particular day. The Texas Education Agency reports that there were 111,759 students experiencing homelessness during school year 2013-2014. In addition, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services reports that there were 2,639 youth runaways referred to Juvenile Probation Departments in state fiscal year 2014, although not all youth who were running away would be considered homeless.

The 84th Regular Texas Legislature passed House Bill 679, which was signed by the Governor and calls for the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) to conduct a study on homeless youth, in conjunction with other members of the Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless. In conducting the study, TDHCA shall:

1. Collect data on the number of homeless youth in Texas;
2. Examine the needs of homeless youth and the degree to which current programs are meeting those needs;
3. Identify any sources of funding that might be available to provide services to homeless youth; and

4. Develop a strategic plan establishing steps to be taken and timelines for reducing youth homelessness in Texas.

TDHCA has contracted with Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS) to develop a Homeless Youth Survey Tool to be used for a statewide study on homeless youth. TNOYS is the state association of programs that serve youth who are homeless and in other at-risk situations. TNOYS members provide services including emergency shelter, transitional living services, street outreach, crisis intervention, residential treatment, and more. The mission of TNOYS is to improve, support, and protect critical services for youth in crisis and their families.

TNOYS will develop a Homeless Youth Survey Tool to be used for a statewide count to determine the number of youth experiencing homelessness in Texas and the needs of those youth. It will utilize the definition for homelessness that was established by House Bill 679.

The survey will be designed to be used for the January 2016 Texas PIT count performed by continuum of care agencies. TNOYS will work with continuum of care agencies and stakeholders across Texas to ensure that the survey tool complements, supports, and incorporates lessons learned from existing efforts.

B. PURPOSE OF REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

This Request for Information (RFI) is issued for the purpose of obtaining information relevant to the development of a Homeless Youth Survey Tool to be used to complete a statewide study of youth who are homeless in Texas.

Respondents may comment on the development of the Homeless Youth Survey Tool by providing responses to the questions in this RFI. Alternatively, respondents may comment on the development of the Homeless Youth Survey Tool by submitting relevant materials to TNOYS, including surveys and reports, or by scheduling a phone interview with the TNOYS Homeless Youth Survey Team. To submit materials relevant to this RFI, or to set up a phone interview in regard to this RFI, please contact the TNOYS Homeless Youth Survey Tool team at HYST@tnoys.org.

C. QUESTIONS OF INTEREST

TNOYS would like responders to this RFI to comment on the following questions:

1. Other than the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) PIT Guidance, what survey tool(s) are currently being utilized in Texas to count and/or study youth who are homeless?
2. What plans (including timelines and collaborations) are in the works to count and/or study youth who are homeless in communities across Texas already?
3. What data should the Homeless Youth Survey Tool collect?
4. What concerns, if any, do local continuum of care agencies, school districts, and other stakeholders have regarding the development and implementation of a Homeless Youth Survey Tool to be used statewide?
5. What other information might be relevant or beneficial to TNOYS for the development of the Homeless Youth Survey Tool?

D. INSTRUCTIONS FOR RFI RESPONSE SUBMISSIONS

TNOYS welcomes comments and submissions related to this RFI by Friday, July 24, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. Central Time. Responses can be submitted by email or mailed to the address below.

TNOYS' designated point of contact for this RFI and the delivery point person for all responses and correspondence is:

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This RFI is issued for the purpose of obtaining information to support the development of a Homeless Youth Survey Tool to be used for a statewide study of

homeless youth in Texas. The RFI does not constitute a solicitation of proposals or an offer to contract. TNOYS will not award a contract as a result of this RFI. TNOYS will not be liable for any costs incurred by respondents in preparation and submission of information in response to this RFI. All information received by TNOYS becomes TNOYS' property and will not be returned to sender. There will be no acknowledgement by TNOYS for the receipt of the information. Acceptance of responses to this RFI places no obligations of any kind upon TNOYS.