



Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless

Working to ensure everyone has a safe, decent, affordable place to call home.

E
F
F
E
C
T
I
V
E

P
O
L
I
C
Y

C
A
R
I
N
G

C
O
M
M
U
N
I
T
Y

E
M
P
O
W
E
R
E
D

I
N
D
I
V
I
D
U
A
L

Homelessness:
It's a situation
Not a person.

Effective public policy and caring communities will create an environment where homelessness is rare and dealt with quickly when it occurs.

Public policy should promote wide-ranging prevention strategies while ensuring a seamless continuum of housing and service options.

We advocate for comprehensive, flexible, and appropriate community responses that are congruous with the needs of those experiencing homelessness.

We can end homelessness.

Policy Brief: Helping Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

In the state of Minnesota there are an estimated 22,410 unaccompanied youth who runaway or experience homeless every year. **Of these 22,410 youth Wilder estimates that 39% or 8,740 of them are homeless for at least six months or longer.**

Why Youth are Homeless:

- 63% of homeless youth cannot live with their families because of severe conflict or abuse
- 15% cannot live with their families because of lack of adequate housing
- 15% are homeless because their parent or guardian cannot provide housing for them at all because of their own situation of homelessness, and
- 7% have been kicked out by their families due to their sexual orientation or gender identity
- 71% of the homeless youth have been in a county referred out-of-home placement (foster care, group home or corrections placement) with 53% having been a part of the foster care system.

State funds and policies are needed to support a continuum of care to support youth to independence and self-sufficiency.

Past Successes in the Minnesota Legislature

2006: The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act re-defined homeless youth to include young people up to 21 years old and "couch hoppers," assured a report on the state of runaway and homeless youth and existing services in Minnesota, and defined the continuum of care to serve and support youth - street outreach, drop in centers, emergency shelter and transitional living programs.

2007: The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act received **\$1 million** to fund services for homeless youth in 2007 and 2008, and to evaluate the success of those services.

2008: Ready to Launch mandated accountability for foster care youth's Independent Living Plans through a court review prior to aging out.

Support the Runaway and Homeless Youth:

Secure sustained funds to support a continuum of services to support youth.

Support the Ready to Launch Act:

- **Provide automatic Medical Assistance coverage for youth aging out of foster care up to age 21.** Over 40% of states have opted to expand Medical Assistance to cover youth up to 21, as allowed under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act.
- **Allow youth to remain in foster care or return for care or assistance up to age 21.** Compared to youth who are required to leave care at 18, youth who remain in care past their 18th birthday have a decreased risk of economic hardship, criminal activity and pregnancy.



Box City Vigil 2006



Youth Day on the Hill 2007