

Report to the Legislature:

**Runaway and Homeless Youth in
Minnesota**

**Prepared by the Minnesota Department of Human Services
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Executive Summary

Overview

An estimated 22,410 unaccompanied youth are runaway or homeless each year in Minnesota. In the 2003 Wilder Research Center report *Homeless Youth in Minnesota: 2003 Statewide Survey of People without Permanent Shelter*; 39 percent of homeless youth surveyed had been homeless for six months or longer.

There are many reasons why youth run away or end up homeless. The most common reasons have to do with poverty, family conflict, child abuse and mental illness and/or chemical dependency issues of the youth or their family members. Most homeless youth, 63 percent, cannot live with their families because of conflict or abuse; 15 percent cannot live with their families because of lack of adequate housing or space; seven percent have been kicked out by their families because of their sexual orientation or gender identity; and another 15 percent have a parent or guardian that cannot provide housing for them because of their own homelessness. These are youth who are not receiving adequate support from their families or the county child welfare systems.

The majority of homeless youth (71 percent), have been in a county referred out-of-home placement (foster care, group home or corrections placement), with 53 percent having experienced a foster care placement. Figures are from the Wilder Research Center's Report: *Homeless Youth in Minnesota: 2003 Statewide Survey of People without Permanent Shelter* (2005).

Racial, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Disparities

There are racial disparities among runaway and homeless youth. While African Americans constitute five percent of Minnesota's general youth population they represent 31 percent of runaway and homeless youth. Similarly, American Indians constitute two percent of the general youth population but are 22 percent of runaway and homeless youth. Figures are from the Wilder Research Center's Report: *Homeless Youth in Minnesota: 2003 Statewide Survey of People without Permanent Shelter* (2005).

Nationwide 42 percent of homeless youth identify as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or Transgender GLBT while two to five percent of the general youth population identifies as GLBT. (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Report, 2005). The Director of District 202, which is the only GLBT specific drop-in center for homeless youth in Minnesota, finds that between 30 and 40 percent of homeless youth identify as GLBT. The Wilder Research Center's 2003 Survey of People without Permanent Shelter found that 16 percent of homeless youth age 18 and younger surveyed identified as GLBT and 13 percent of homeless youth surveyed between the ages of 18 and 20 identified as GLBT.

Capacity of the Existing Continuum to Meet the Need

There is a continuum of services for runaway and homeless youth in Minnesota that are provided by local non-profit agencies or tribal social service departments. These services range from street outreach to permanent supportive housing. During 2005, 3,414 youth benefited from emergency shelter or housing services. The number of youth served in these settings comprises 15 percent of the estimated need in Minnesota for a one year period.

Analysis of Service Need

Although providers differ in their ability to deliver a comprehensive range of services it is believed that the following needs exist throughout the continuum of service in varying degrees.

- Housing including emergency shelter, transitional living programs, and permanent supportive housing for youth with mental illness and/or chemical dependency issues. *This was the largest need for service identified by state agency personnel and homeless youth service providers.*
- Transportation
- Youth employment programs
- Youth chemical dependency programs
- Culturally specific services
- Transition Services for county and state systems
- Health care
- Services for teen parents
- Services for sexually exploited youth

Recommendations for the Coordination of Services to Runaway and Homeless Youth

As a best practice, coordinated services for runaway and homeless youth should occur prior to them becoming a runaway or homeless. Traditionally the public child welfare system has been seen as the system that is the appropriate entity to coordinate services for these youth and preventing them from becoming homeless. However, the public child welfare system does not have the capacity to respond to all of the youth and families that need services. This leads to the question of whether the public child welfare system should be the system to coordinate services for runaway and homeless youth or should coordination be coming from a different place? The following recommendations take into account this issue and also consider coordination in prevention, intervention and systems.

Coordinate the Prevention of Runaways and Youth Homelessness

- Determine the entity that should be responsible to coordinate services to runaway and homeless youth.
- Coordinate services in a way that all youth in need will receive timely screening assessments and supportive services.
- When youth run away from foster care or other systems of care, appropriate efforts should be made to locate them and their cases should not be closed.
- County cases should be re-opened for assessment and intervention if a previously served youth is in need of further services.
- Foster parents have access to training in cultural competency and GLBT issues.
- Assure that youth in foster care receive an administrative case review every six months. (Minnesota Statutes, Section 260C.212).
- Assure that youth in foster care participate in the development of their Transition Plan with their social worker at age 16 or older. (Minnesota Statutes, Section 260C)
- Youth in any type of out-of-home placement should receive transition services.
- Youth in foster care participate in the planning for permanency through family reunification, placement in the transfer of permanent legal and physical custody of a relative or non-relative.
- All youth in foster care or systems of care are should be informed of their benefits, rights and responsibilities.
- Youth should be given the opportunity to remain in care until age 21 as needed.

Coordinate Intervention when Youth Run Away or become Homeless

- Runaway youth have access to family reunification services.
- Homeless youth have access to emergency shelter, housing and supportive services.
- Runaway and homeless youth receive culturally specific and appropriate services.
- Runaway and homeless youth are actively involved in employment and career planning.
- Runaway and homeless youth have access and understand how to use the transportation system.
- When appropriate homeless youth are considered for longer stays in transitional living programs or other housing programs.
- Runaway and homeless youth receive housing and support services in the community they live.
- The systems that serve runaway and homeless youth, as a best practice, will be encouraged to collaborate in service delivery to youth.
- Funding streams that serve homeless youth agencies should be coordinated with one another.

Introduction

During the 2006 legislative session the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 256K.45, was passed. This legislation defined homeless youth, youth at-risk of homelessness, runaway youth and the continuum of services for this population. The act also called for the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services to provide a report on homeless youth, youth at risk of homelessness, runaways, as well as the coordination of services for these youth. This report will provide a needs analysis, give an overview of services currently available, and make recommendations on how to coordinate services for runaway and homeless youth. This document was prepared with existing research, from the 2003 statewide Survey on Homelessness (Wilder Research Center), input from an advisory committee of runaway and homeless youth non-profit service providers, state agency and county staff, two American Indian tribes, information from youth who have experienced homelessness, and program data from the runaway and homeless non-profit service providers.

Definitions and Vocabulary

"Homeless youth" means a person 21 years of age or younger who is unaccompanied by a parent or guardian and is without shelter where appropriate care and supervision are available, whose parent or legal guardian is unable or unwilling to provide shelter and care, or who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The following are not fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residences:

- (1) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;
- (2) an institution or a publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;
- (3) transitional housing;
- (4) a temporary placement with a peer, friend, or family member that has not offered permanent residence, a residential lease, or temporary lodging for more than 30 days; or
- (5) a public or private place not designed for, nor ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings. Homeless youth does not include persons incarcerated or otherwise detained under federal or state law.

"Youth at risk of homelessness" means a person 21 years of age or younger whose status or circumstances indicate a significant danger of experiencing homelessness in the near future.

Status or circumstances that indicate a significant danger may include:

- (1) youth exiting out-of-home placements;
- (2) youth who previously were homeless;
- (3) youth whose parents or primary caregivers are or were previously homeless;
- (4) youth who are exposed to abuse and neglect in their homes;
- (5) youth who experience conflict with parents due to chemical or alcohol dependency, mental health disabilities, or other disabilities; and
- (6) runaways.

"Runaway" means an unmarried child under the age of 18 years who is absent from the home of a parent or guardian or other lawful placement without the consent of the parent, guardian, or lawful custodian. (the above three definitions are from Senate file 2833)

Out-of-home Placement: means 24-hour substitute care for youth placed away from their parents or guardians for whom the local social services agency has supervision and care

responsibility. They must be placed as a result of a court order or Voluntary Placement Agreement.

Aging Out: refers to youth who are turning 18 (or 21 in some situations) which is the age when they are no longer eligible for county services as a child and are expected to transition into adulthood.

State Ward: a child ordered by the court to be under guardianship and legal custody of the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Services as the result of Child in Need of Protection or Services (CHIPS) adjudication and/or a Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) petition or a Consent to Adopt pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 260C.201, subdivision 11 (d) (5).

Prevention Services (youth): are early intervention service implemented at the first sign that a youth is at risk of certain condition (i.e. child abuse, running away, truancy, homelessness, etc.). These services are provided in a variety of ways such as:

- family strengthening programs and a family assessment response,
- counseling,
- mentoring,
- after school programs

The goal of these services is to prevent a youth from having a traumatic or negative life experience.

Intervention Services (youth): are provided during a traumatic life experience (child abuse, homelessness, etc.) with the goal of helping a youth and coming to a resolution that is in the best interest of those involved. Examples of intervention services include family support, emergency shelter program and/or family reunification services, truancy programs, chemical dependency treatment programs, mental health services, etc.

Why are Youth Homeless?

There are thousands of youth who are homeless every year in Minnesota. These youth are not receiving support from their families or other systems. There are many reasons why youth become homelessness. The most common reasons have to do with one or more of the following: poverty, family conflict, child abuse, neglect and chemical or mental health issues of the youth or family members. Many youth are kicked out of their homes due to family conflict or abuse (63 percent), lack of space (15 percent), or because the parents disapprove of their child's sexual orientation or gender identity (seven percent). Often parents or guardians simply cannot provide housing for their children due to their own homelessness or poverty (15 percent), mental illness or chemical dependency (24 percent), or because their parents have been institutionalized (prison, mental health or chemical dependency treatment centers), or have passed away and there are no other family members to care for them. There are a significant number of youth who are aging out of residential out-of-home placements (group homes, foster care or correctional facilities) that end up homeless. According to the Wilder Research Center study, 53 percent of all homeless youth have been in the foster care system, and an additional 18 percent have been in correctional facilities or group homes. Figures are from the Wilder Research Center's Report: *Homeless in Minnesota: A closer look-Youth and Young Adults on their Own* (2005).

Stories of Youth Homelessness

The following are glimpses of youth homelessness shared by homeless-youth workers from the metro area and from greater Minnesota.

Sam is an 18-year-old Caucasian male. As a 9-year-old, he witnessed his older brother shoot and kill his mother. He was placed in a foster home in a metro suburb and graduated from high school. During his high school years Sam and his foster father did not get along, and the foster father became physically abusive. After Sam graduated from high school he was without a foster home and had nowhere to go. He became homeless.

Amanda is a 17-year-old Caucasian from the suburbs who has been living in her car because her parents kicked her out. She has been holding down two part time jobs and trying to get to school as often as possible. She also started using credit cards to buy clothes and other items to re-sell for cash so she could buy groceries and gas. This was reported to the county social service agency but a case was not opened.

Mike is an African American 16-year-old who became homeless when his mother started using again and spent their rent money on drugs. His family was evicted from their apartment because of being several months behind on rent. His mother went to a chemical dependency treatment program and Mike ended up homeless. During this time he attended high school regularly and worked a part time job. He visited his mother weekly at her treatment program. After waiting three months Mike was able to get into a transitional living program with a non-profit. This non-profit reported to the county social service agency but a case was not opened.

James is a 15-year-old African American who was kicked out by his foster parents because he came out and told them he was gay. He became homeless with no where to go. He found his way to a non-profit emergency shelter and the youth workers contacted the county social worker who after two-three weeks got back to the youth worker to say that James foster mother would take him back if he “did not act gay or dress gay in her house”.

Sarah is an 18-year-old American Indian youth in northern Minnesota who was kicked out by her parents. She survived by “couch hopping”- that is, an informal temporary sleeping arrangement. She was physically assaulted outside one of the houses that she had been staying at with a friend. She managed to get her high school diploma and went to college and obtained temporary part-time employment.

Capacity of Existing Continuum to Meet the Need

According to the Wilder Research Center there is an estimated 22,410 youth under the age of 20 who are runaways or homeless in a given year in Minnesota. During 2005, 3,414 youth benefited from emergency shelter or housing services. The numbers of youth served in these settings comprise 15 percent of the estimated need in Minnesota for a one year period.

In the *2003 Wilder Research Center Statewide Survey of People without Permanent Shelter* 39 percent of homeless youth surveyed had been homeless for six months or longer.

Additional statewide data includes:

- A recent report submitted to the U.S. Department of Education on Dec. 1, 2006, the Minnesota Department of Education reported that in 124 of Minnesota’s 382 school districts there were 7,297 homeless students enrolled in school during the 2005-06 school year (this figure includes unaccompanied youth and youth living with their families who are also homeless).

- Social Service Information Systems (SSIS) reported that there were 536 unduplicated youth who ran away from county out-of-home placements and were never found in 2005.
- The National Runaway Youth Switchboard reported that there were 1,011 phone calls from runaway youth or their parents during 2005 in the state of Minnesota.
- There were 104 unduplicated runaway youth between the ages of 11 and 17 served by the Midwest Children’s Resource Center in St. Paul within an 11- month time span (Dec. 1, 2005-Nov. 3, 2006). The majority of these youth were Hmong girls (97 of 104) who had also been sexually abused, sexually exploited or both. These cases were all reported to county child protection and the determinations of those cases vary.

Disparities

Racial Disparities

There are great racial disparities among homeless youth in Minnesota. The greatest disparity exists among African American and American Indian youth. The following table illustrates the racial disparities:

Percent of Homeless Youth by Race Compared to the General Population of Youth by Race		
Race	% of Homeless Youth Population (2003 Survey)	% of General Youth Population (2000 Census)
White	35%	85%
African American	31%	5%
American Indian	22%	2%
Asian	1%	4%
Multiracial	11%	4%
Hispanic	9%	3%

Although the Asian cultures have not been highly represented in the homeless youth population in the past, there are rising numbers of Hmong and Asian runaways, according to the Midwest Children’s Resource Center.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Disparities

Nationwide 42 percent of homeless youth identify as GLBT while two-five percent of the general youth population identifies as GLBT. (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Report, 2005) The Director of District 202 which is the only GLBT specific drop-in center for homeless youth in Minnesota also finds that between 30 and 40 percent of homeless youth identify as GLBT. The Wilder Research Center’s 2003 Survey of People without Permanent Shelter found that 16 percent of homeless youth age 18 and younger surveyed identified as GLBT and 13 percent of homeless youth surveyed between the ages of 18 and 20 identified as GLBT.

Who are These Youth?

- The average age of homeless youth on their own (without parents) is 16 and can be as young as eight. (Wilder, 2003)
- One third of homeless youth are receiving special education services (33 percent). (Wilder, 2003)

- 53 percent of homeless youth have attended two or more schools within one school year. (Wilder, 2003)
- 19 percent of homeless youth are receiving income from steady employment. (Wilder, 2003)
- Nearly half of all homeless youth have been physically or sexually mistreated (46 percent). (Wilder, 2003)
- 42 percent of homeless youth report some type of mental health problem and 15 percent report a chemical dependency problem. (Wilder, 2003)
- One in six homeless youth is a parent. This is 20 times the rate of teen pregnancy in Minnesota's general youth population. (Wilder, 2003)
- The Wilder Research Center's 2003 Survey also found that of the homeless adults surveyed approximately nine percent had first experienced homelessness as a youth.
- A runaway or homeless youth will be approached within 36-48 hours of being on the street by a pimp or someone offering to pay them for sex. (Hofstede Committee Report, 1999 & Data from Breaking Free)
- 80 percent of homeless youth have lived in Minnesota for all or most of their lives. (Wilder, 2003)

Continuum of Homeless and Runaway Youth Services in Minnesota

Minnesota has a continuum of care for runaway and homeless youth. Services are provided through non-profit community agencies. Although it is considered a good continuum of services, gaps exist in services and resources throughout the state. There tend to be more services concentrated in the metro area. This impacts the ability of agencies to respond to the needs of the runaway and homeless youth geographically.

The current continuum of services for runaway and homeless youth includes:
(Definitions are from MN Statutes, Chapter 256K.45)

Street and community outreach and drop-in program. Youth drop-in centers must provide walk-in access to crisis intervention and ongoing supportive services including one-to-one case management services on a self-referral basis. Street and community outreach programs must locate, contact, and provide information, referrals, and services to homeless youth, youth at risk of homelessness, and runaways. Information, referrals, and services provided may include, but are not limited to:

- (1) family reunification services;
- (2) conflict resolution or mediation counseling;
- (3) assistance in obtaining temporary emergency shelter;
- (4) assistance in obtaining food, clothing, medical care, or mental health counseling;
- (5) counseling regarding violence, prostitution, substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy;
- (6) referrals to other agencies that provide support services to homeless youth, youth at risk of homelessness, and runaways;
- (7) assistance with education, employment, and independent living skills;
- (8) aftercare services;
- (9) specialized services for highly vulnerable runaways and homeless youth, including teen parents, emotionally disturbed and mentally ill youth, and sexually exploited youth; and
- (10) homelessness prevention.

Family Reunification Services can vary but typically provide one or more of the following services to families and youth who are in conflict: counseling, conflict resolution skills-building, case management, emergency/respite shelter and referral services.

Case Management: Case management must be a collaborative effort with each household, and must include the following activities:

- (1) Assessment: Identify with a person, their strengths, resources, barriers, and needs in the context of their local environment.
- (2) Plan development: Develop an individualized service plan, with specific outcomes, based on the assessment.
- (3) Connection: Obtain for the person the necessary services, treatments and supports.
- (4) Monitoring: Evaluate with the person the necessary services, treatments and supports.
- (5) Coordination: Bring together all of the service providers in order to integrate services and assure consistency of service plans.
- (6) Monitoring: Evaluate with the person their progress and needs, and adjust the plan as needed.
- (7) Personal advocacy: Intercede on behalf of the person or group to ensure access to timely and appropriate services.

Emergency shelter program.

(a) Emergency shelter programs must provide homeless youth and runaways with referral and walk-in access to emergency, short-term residential care. The program shall provide homeless youth and runaways with safe, dignified shelter, including private shower facilities, beds, and at least one meal each day; and shall assist a runaway with reunification with the family or legal guardian when required or appropriate.

(b) The services provided at emergency shelters may include, but are not limited to:

- (1) family reunification services;
- (2) individual, family, and group counseling;
- (3) assistance obtaining clothing;
- (4) access to medical and dental care and mental health counseling;
- (5) education and employment services;
- (6) recreational activities;
- (7) advocacy and referral services;
- (8) independent living skills training;
- (9) aftercare and follow-up services;
- (10) transportation; and
- (11) homelessness prevention.

Host Home Programs provide temporary shelter or longer term housing for youth by connecting them with adults in the community who can take the youth into their home and care for them. Sometimes these host homes will receive a stipend or per diem for providing a youth with housing.

Transitional living programs (also called Transitional Housing in the Homeless Adult System). Transitional living programs are time limited and must help homeless youth and youth at risk of homelessness to find and maintain safe, dignified housing. The program may also provide rental assistance and related supportive services, or refer youth to other organizations or agencies that provide such services. Services provided may include, but are not limited to:

- (1) educational assessment and referrals to educational programs;
- (2) career planning, employment, work skill training, and independent living skills training;
- (3) job placement;
- (4) budgeting and money management;
- (5) assistance in securing housing appropriate to needs and income;
- (6) counseling regarding violence, prostitution, substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy;
- (7) referral for medical services or chemical dependency treatment;
- (8) parenting skills;
- (9) self-sufficiency support services or life skill training;
- (10) aftercare and follow-up services; and
- (11) homelessness prevention.

Permanent Supportive Housing: Affordable housing linked to supportive services for residents, including employment support, mental health, chemical health, life skills training, and social services. Permanent supportive housing is designed to help those experiencing homelessness or those precariously housed in substandard or high-rent apartments obtain and maintain permanent housing. There is no time limit for permanent supportive housing for tenants. Participants agree to comply with all eligibility criteria and tenancy obligations. Programs must provide or assist in linking to supportive services for tenants. An indefinite rental subsidy is required to be provided by the housing program to tenants. The tenants are required to pay a rental equal to a flat fee or a percentage of their income. Supportive housing covers a wide variety but generally include the following basic services:

- a private space with a lockable door,
- a safe and barrier-free environment,
- monitoring and emergency response, and
- at least one meal a day or cooking/kitchen spaces available to tenants.

Youth Housing Programs are longer term housing for youth that provides some type of rental subsidy and support services.

Permanent Housing: Housing offered to tenants or home owners in the community.

Analysis of Service Need

Although providers differ in their ability to deliver a comprehensive range of services, it is believed that the following needs exist throughout the continuum in varying degrees.

- Housing (emergency shelter, transitional living programs, and permanent supportive housing for youth with mental illness and/or chemical dependency issues) *This was the largest need for service identified by state agency personnel and homeless youth service providers.*
- Transportation
- Youth employment programs
- Youth chemical dependency programs
- Culturally specific services
- Transition Services for county and state systems
- Health care
- Services for teen parents
- Services for sexually exploited youth

Numbers of Runaway and Homeless Youth Served State Wide (Figures are from 2005)

Type of Service	State Wide Capacity	Total Number of Youth Served in 2005*
Street outreach	1 Street outreach collaborative (metro area), 2 street outreach programs in greater Minnesota	28,436
Drop-in centers	3 in the metro area, 1 in greater Minnesota	3,953
Emergency shelter	147 beds (81 in the metro area, 66 in greater Minnesota)	2,708
Transitional living programs/transitional housing	170 beds (124 in the metro area, 46 in greater Minnesota)	507
Youth housing programs and permanent supportive housing	145 units (metro area)	199
Supportive service specific for runaway & homeless youth other than those listed above (i.e. counseling, case management, home visits, etc.)	2 agencies (1 in Hopkins, 1 in St. Paul)	557

* There may be some duplication in the numbers of youth served between agencies and services.

For more detailed information and a complete listing of providers statewide see Appendix A.

How many youth are not receiving services due to lack of capacity of the current continuum of homeless and runaway youth services?

According to the survey of homeless youth serving agencies there were 3,414 youth served with emergency shelter or housing services during a one year period of 2005. The number of youth who did not receive emergency shelter and/or housing services is estimated to be 19,000.

Barriers to Coordinating Services for Runaway and Homeless Youth

The coordination of services for runaway and homeless youth should actually be happening before a youth runs away from home or becomes homeless. There are a number of systems who play a role in providing services to this population of youth but one of the main barriers to coordinating services is that there is no one entity in charge of ensuring that services for runaway and homeless youth are coordinated. In the past, the community has looked to the child welfare system to coordinate services for this population.

Other barriers to the service coordination to homeless and runaway youth include the lack of transitional services for youth in out-of-home placement with mental health and chemical dependency issues. Disparities exist among American Indian and African American youth and a gap in culturally appropriate systems of support and services.

The below table illustrates all of the current state administered investments for homeless populations including youth, adults and families in Minnesota.

Investments on Runaway and Homeless Youth, Adults and Families in Minnesota (FY 2006)			
Name and Origin of Funding Source	State Department/Division	Amount of Funding committed for Runaway & Homeless Youth	Amount of Funding committed for Homeless Adults and/or Families
(State) Housing Trust Fund and other resources.	Minnesota Housing	\$810,000	\$9,007,698
(State) Publicly Owned Supportive Housing		\$0	\$2,960,000
(Federal) Housing tax credits (rounds 1 and 2)	Minnesota Housing	\$0	\$2,400,000
(State) Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program	Minnesota Housing	\$582,540	\$3,608,263
(State) Ending Long-Term Homelessness Supportive Services Funding	Department of Human Services - Adult and Family Services	NA	\$5,000,000
(State) Transitional Housing Program	Department of Human Services - Office of Economic Opportunity	\$274,250	\$1,566,750
(Federal) Emergency Shelter Grant Program	Department of Human Services - Office of Economic Opportunity	\$120,475	\$1,042,650
(State) Emergency Services Program	Department of Human Services - Office of Economic Opportunity	\$52,000	\$298,000
(Federal) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Transitional Housing Program (TANF THP)	Department of Human Services - Office of Economic Opportunity	\$33,750	\$1,293,250
(State) Healthy Transition to Adulthood and Homeless Prevention	Department of Human Services - Child Safety & Permanency	\$700,815	\$0.00

Grant Program			
(Federal) Title VII-B of the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act (No Child Left Behind Initiative)	Department of Education	\$450,000	\$0.00
Totals:		\$3,023,830	\$27,176,611

Recommendations for the Coordination of Services to Runaway and Homeless Youth

Coordinated services should be available for runaway and homeless youth prior to them running away or becoming homeless. Traditionally the child welfare system has been seen as the system that coordinates services for these youth and permanency planning efforts prevent them from becoming homeless. However, the child welfare system does not have the capacity to respond to all of the youth and families that need services. Should this be the system to coordinate services for runaway and homeless youth or should coordination be coming from a different place? The following recommendations take into account this issue and also look at the coordination of two areas - systems of support for prevention and intervention.

Coordinate the Prevention of Runaways and Youth Homelessness

- Determine the entity that should be responsible to coordinate services to runaway and homeless youth.
- Coordinate services in a way that all youth in need will receive timely screening assessments and supportive services.
- When youth run away from foster care or other systems of care, appropriate efforts should be made to locate them and their cases should not be closed.
- County cases should be re-opened for assessment and intervention if a previously served youth is in need of further services.
- Foster parents have access to training in cultural competency and GLBT issues.
- Assure that youth in foster care receive an administrative case review every six months. (Minnesota Statutes, Section 260C.212).
- Assure that youth in foster care participate in the development of their Transition Plan with their social worker at age 16 or older. (Minnesota Statutes, Section 260C)
- Youth in any type of out-of-home placement should receive transition services.
- Youth in foster care participate in the planning for permanency through family reunification, placement in the transfer of permanent legal and physical custody of a relative or non-relative.
- All youth in foster care or systems of care are should be informed of their benefits, rights and responsibilities.
- Youth are given the opportunity to remain in care until age 21 as needed.

Coordinate Intervention when Youth Run Away or become Homeless

- Runaway youth have access to family reunification services.
- Homeless youth should have access to emergency shelter, housing and supportive services.
- Runaway and homeless youth receive culturally specific and appropriate services.

- Runaway and homeless youth are actively involved in employment and career planning.
- Runaway and homeless youth have access and understand how to use the transportation system.
- When appropriate homeless youth are considered for longer stays in transitional living programs or other housing programs.
- Runaway and homeless youth receive housing and support services in the community they live.
- The systems that serve runaway and homeless youth, as a best practice, will be encouraged to collaborate in service delivery to youth during their transition.
- Funding streams that serve homeless youth agencies should be coordinated with one another.

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Appendix A

Numbers of Runaway and Homeless Youth Served State Wide (Figures are from 2005)

Key: SO=Street Outreach, DI=Drop-In Center, ES=Emergency Shelter, TLP=Transitional Living Program, YHP=Youth Housing Program, PH=Permanent Housing

Name of Agency	Type of Service	Location	Number of Youth Served	Number of Youth Turned Away
7 th Landing	Youth housing program (12 units)	St. Paul	19	12
Ain Dah Yung	Emergency shelter (10 beds), transitional living program (6 units)	St. Paul	ES: 93 TLP: 35	TLP: 51
Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Center	Transitional living program (2 units)	Grand Rapids and Virginia	3	3
Avenues for Homeless Youth	Emergency shelter (15 beds), GLBT host home program	Minneapolis	124	150
Booth Brown House (Salvation Army)	Emergency shelter (11 beds), transitional living program (10 units)	St. Paul	ES: 227 TLP: 26	TLP: 324
Breaking Free	Street outreach, Support services, Transitional living program & Permanent Housing (2 Youth units) all for sexually exploited women and girls	St. Paul	SO and Support Services: 35 TLP: 2 PH: 2	NA
Catholic Charities-Hope Street	Emergency shelter (16 beds), transitional living program (8 Units)	Minneapolis	ES: 175 TLP: 33	ES: 285 TLP: NA
Catholic Charities-SHY Program	Transitional living program (8 units)	St. Cloud	37	51
District 202	Drop-in center	Minneapolis	824	0
Evergreen House	Family	Bemidji	387	NA

	reunification, emergency shelter (12 beds)			
Face to Face Counseling- Safezone	Drop-in center	St. Paul	707	NA
Freeport West- Project Solo	Family reunification program, transitional living program (30 units)	Minneapolis	48	NA
Life House	Drop-in center, transitional living programs (1 for teen mothers-10 units and 1 for boys-10 units)	Duluth	DI: 1,122 TLP: 29	NA
Lindquist Apartments	Youth housing program (24 units)	Minneapolis	37	110
Lutheran Social Services, St. Paul	Emergency shelter (6 beds), emergency shelter for teen mothers (6 units), transitional living programs (Rezek House-12 units, TLP-20 units)	St. Paul	ES: 94 ES for teen mothers & their children: 20 TLP: 122	NA
Lutheran Social Services, Willmar	Transitional living program (5 units)	Willmar	TLP: 18	21
Lutheran Social Services- Bethany Crisis Shelter	Emergency shelter (Duluth-12 beds & 7 host homes, Virginia- 10 beds, Cloquet- 10 beds)	Duluth, Virginia, Cloquet	740	NA
Lutheran Social Services-Duluth	Street outreach, transitional living program (6 beds)	Duluth	SO: 6,776 TLP: 32	TLP: 263
Lutheran Social Services-Lakes Area Youth Services	Street outreach, emergency shelter (15 host homes), transitional living program (10 units)	Brainerd	SO: 1,500 ES: 25 TLP: 20	TLP: 34
Midwest Children's	Medical health services &	St. Paul	104	0

Resource Center	therapy for sexually exploited runaway youth Home visits, case management, family reunification		54	
Safe Haven	Transitional living program (12 Units)	Burnsville	31	43
Streetworks	Street outreach	Metro Area	20,125	None
Teens Alone	Counseling and case management	Hopkins	399	0
The Bridge	Family reunification & emergency shelter (17 beds), transitional living program (8 units), youth housing program (24 units)	Minneapolis	ES: 798 TLP: 44 YHP: 24	NA
White Earth Reservation	Emergency shelter (NA)	Mahnomen	25	NA
YMCA Point Northwest	Transitional living program (5 Units)	New Hope	5	NA
Youthlink	Drop-in center, youth housing programs (Archdale-37 units, Barnabus-39 units)	Minneapolis	DI: 1,300 YH: 117	NA
YWCA of Duluth	Transitional living program for teen mothers (6 units)	Duluth	22	0

Note: The following agencies also have street outreach programs but are members of the Streetworks Collaborative; so the number of youth they have served with street outreach are included under the Streetworks numbers: Catholic Charities-Hope Street, District 202, Face to Face/Safezone, Freeport West/Project Solo, Lutheran Social Services-St. Paul, the Bridge, YMCA Point Northwest and Youthlink.

Note: The numbers of youth served are unduplicated within the agencies; however there may be some duplication among shelters or agencies within the same service area.

Note: A number of service providers do not track the number of youth they turned away, so the number of “turn-aways” for services is not an accurate count. Of the agencies that do keep track, there were 1,347 youth turned away from services for lack of capacity; this number does not include the agencies that do not track this information or the number of homeless youth who do not even approach services due to lack of capacity (this number could include

some duplication for example if a youth was turned away from one program and tried to get into another which was also full and turned him or her away.