

Common Definitions

Youth Homelessness Prevention Planning Committee

Unaccompanied youth – an individual between the ages of 12¹ and 24 who is not part of a family with children and who is not accompanied by a parent, legal guardian, or caretaker during their episode of homelessness²; this also includes two or more youth age 24 or younger who are presenting together as a family without children³

Pregnant or parenting youth – individuals age 24 or younger who are pregnant or who are the parents or legal guardians of one or more children who are present with or sleeping in the same place as that youth parent, or who are pregnant, where there is no person over age 24 in the household⁴

Transition age youth – individuals between the ages of 18 and 24 who are transitioning from childhood to adulthood⁵

Runaway/unaccompanied minor – an individual who is less than 18 years of age and who absents themselves from home or a place of legal residence without the permission of a parent or legal guardian⁶

Homeless youth – an unaccompanied youth or pregnant and parenting youth age 24 or younger who is considered homeless under any federal definition, including definitions from the US Department of Health and Human Services (Runaway and Homeless Youth Act), US Department of Education, US Department of Housing and Urban Development; these definitions include:

- youth who are:
 - sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as doubled-up or couch surfing)
 - living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations
 - living in emergency or transitional shelters
 - abandoned in hospitals
 - awaiting foster care placement
- youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; examples include: living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- migratory youth who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above
- youth in shelter, transitional housing settings or residential programs for youth experiencing homelessness

- youth exiting an institution where they temporarily resided for up to 90 days and were homeless immediately prior to entering the institution
- youth who are fleeing or attempting to flee domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions that relate to violence against the individual or a family member⁷

Special homeless youth sub-populations – populations that are especially vulnerable to homelessness and which have been shown to experience homelessness, including pathways to homelessness, in ways that are distinct from the general population of youth; these sub-populations include:

- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth
- minors (under the age of 18)
- pregnant and parenting youth
- youth involved with juvenile justice and foster care systems
- victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation⁸

Precariously housed – temporarily staying with others, but without a permanent home⁹

Crisis housing/shelter – immediately accessible, developmentally appropriate, low-barrier shelters, host homes, or other temporary housing; options are not contingent on school attendance, sobriety, minimum income requirements, absence of a criminal record, or other unnecessary conditions¹⁰

Host home and kinship care – an arrangement between community members who act as volunteer hosts and a youth service provider; hosts provide safe shelter and food and service providers offer program coordination, host support, and case management services; hosts may receive financial assistance to defray the costs of hosting the youth; the residence is in a community-based setting and the youth is without a lease or an occupancy agreement; the family could be related to the youth and the length of stay may be time-limited or without time limits¹¹

Transitional housing – time-limited (up to 21-24 months) supportive housing for youth who are not ready to live independently; this model has a focus on developing life skills and staying in school or securing work; possible housing types include:

- congregate housing with overnight staff
- clustered units with or without a supervisor on-site (sometimes referred to as Single-Room Occupancies/SROs)
- scattered site apartments or shared units in which a youth may hold the lease¹²

Housing First – a model of housing assistance that prioritizes rapid placement and stabilization in permanent housing that does not have service participation requirements or preconditions (such as sobriety or a minimum income threshold)¹³

Rapid re-housing – a housing model with up to 24 months of rental assistance; a Housing First approach that provides immediate access to stable housing, low-barriers to entry and to keep assistance, and voluntary but persistent services with high expectations and high levels of engagement¹⁴

Non-time-limited supportive housing – a specialized age- and service-appropriate version of permanent supportive housing for youth with complex needs¹⁵

Shared housing – a model of housing assistance where rental assistance is provided for a youth to reside with a family; the youth leases from the property owner and shares the unit with the family; the unit may be a house or an apartment¹⁶

¹ *minimum age (12) determined by eligibility for federal RHY programs*

² *USICH's Criteria and Benchmarks for Achieving the Goal of Ending Youth Homelessness*, p.1

https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Youth_Criteria_Benchmarks_FINAL.pdf

³ *HUD Youth Homeless Demonstration Project (YHDP) NOFA Appendix A*, p. 7

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/YHDP-NOFA-Appendix-A.pdf>

⁴ *HUD Youth Homeless Demonstration Project (YHDP) NOFA Appendix A*, p. 6

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/YHDP-NOFA-Appendix-A.pdf>

⁵ *HUD YHDP NOFA*, p. 11, <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/YHDP-NOFA.pdf>

⁶ *Runaway and Homeless Youth Act §387(a)(4) Definitions*

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/fysb/resource/rhy-act>

⁷ *definition is a compilation from USICH's Criteria and Benchmarks for Achieving the Goal of Ending Youth Homelessness*, p. 1, *HUD HEARTH Act definition of homelessness and the U.S. Department of Education's Non-Regulatory Guidance on Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act*, p. 5

https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Youth_Criteria_Benchmarks_FINAL.pdf

<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/160240ehcyguidance072716.pdf>

⁸ *HUD YHDP NOFA*, p. 18, <https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/YHDP-NOFA.pdf>

⁹ *Vermont's Plan to End Homelessness (2012)*, p. 3

¹⁰ *USICH's Criteria and Benchmarks for Achieving the Goal of Ending Youth Homelessness*

https://www.usich.gov/resources/uploads/asset_library/Youth_Criteria_Benchmarks_FINAL.pdf

¹¹ *HUD's Ending Youth Homelessness Guidebook Series: Promising Program Models*, p. 8 and the *HUD YHDP NOFA Appendix A*, p. 6

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Ending-Youth-Homelessness-Promising-Program-Models.pdf>

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/YHDP-NOFA-Appendix-A.pdf>

¹² *HUD's Ending Youth Homelessness Guidebook Series: Promising Program Models*, p. 9

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Ending-Youth-Homelessness-Promising-Program-Models.pdf>

¹³ *HUD YHDP NOFA Appendix A*, p. 6

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/YHDP-NOFA-Appendix-A.pdf>

¹⁴ *HUD's Ending Youth Homelessness Guidebook Series: Promising Program Models*, p. 10

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Ending-Youth-Homelessness-Promising-Program-Models.pdf>

¹⁵ *HUD's Ending Youth Homelessness Guidebook Series: Promising Program Models*, p. 11

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Ending-Youth-Homelessness-Promising-Program-Models.pdf>

¹⁶ *HUD YHDP NOFA Appendix A*, p. 6

<https://www.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/YHDP-NOFA-Appendix-A.pdf>