

YSN Talking Points – 2021 Legislative Session

HOMELESS YOUTH ACT 2021 – HF? / SF2192

THE ISSUE

More than 6,000 Minnesota youth are homeless and on their own every night in the state. They are everywhere – our cities, suburbs, small communities and rural areas. And Wilder Research says 6,000 is a conservative estimate because (1) youth experiencing homelessness are hard to find and (2) the availability of services across our state is still very limited. Also according to Wilder Research:

- 25% of adults experiencing homelessness report that their first time being homeless was age 17 or younger.
- 30% of homeless youth report they stayed in an abusive situation because they had no other housing options.
- Almost half of homeless youth report they experience violence or sexual exploitation while being homeless and/or became homeless due to domestic violence.
- Youth who are experiencing homelessness struggle to meet basic needs, attend school and stay employed.

2020/2021 Oppressions Laid Bare

- Our children, youth and young families cannot “Just Stay Home” to stay healthy and safe.
- Youth Homelessness is a racial justice issue. 73% of MN’s youth experiencing homelessness are BIPOC compared to 26% of the general youth population in Minnesota.
- Youth experiencing homelessness are also disproportionately LGBTQ+ - studies have consistently shown that 25% of youth experiencing homelessness or higher identify as LGBTQ+ compared to 3 to 5% of the general youth population.
- MN’s paradox, the best outcomes for white youth-the worst in the nation for BIPOC youth. By investing in the Homeless Youth Act you are supporting making a difference in the outcomes for BIPOC youth.
- Do better MN!

THE REQUEST

Additional \$10 million to the base of \$11.238 in the Homeless Youth Act to expand support:

- Preventing and ending youth homelessness-it is a solvable issue! If we expand our homeless prevention and intervention services we can reduce and end youth homelessness!
- Supporting youth with safe shelter and housing can prevent sexual exploitation (studies have shown that 1 out of every 4 youth experiencing homelessness are also sexually exploited)-if we provide young people with a safe place to live and support the less likely they are to be exploited.

- Prevents youth involvement in criminal justice system – young people experiencing homelessness are trying to survive and often times end up having criminal charges as a result-if we can transition youth out of homelessness they are much less likely to become involved in the criminal justice system.
- Increase youth skills for independent living, educational achievement and employment

FACTS ABOUT THE HYA

- We've made progress in recent years, thanks to legislative and local action. Our biennial appropriation today is **\$11.238 million**. This is incredibly progress and we thank you for your support-but we need more resources for these incredible youth.
- The Homeless Youth Act keeps youth safe and gets them critical supports they need to become stable, successful young adults. When we support them, they respond.
- The Homeless Youth Act kick-starts services where none currently exist, expands programs to address unmet needs and sustains existing programs.
- The Homeless Youth Act leverages federal, local and private philanthropic funds. It does not fully fund any programs. Our community and nonprofit partners use state funds wisely!
- In a study by the University of Minnesota that followed 1,451 homeless youth from 2011, the costs to taxpayers are covered if just 6% of them achieve self-sufficiency at age 20. (A summary of that study is provided as a handout.)
- We, as a community, have a vested interest in supporting homeless youth – both in terms of future costs avoided and the gains we collectively realize when youth are able to live stable lives and fully participate in our community.