



2021 Legislative Session Summary for the Youth Services Network (YSN)

Bills Relating to Youth Homelessness, Trafficking and Juvenile Justice

The work of advocates and coalitions this session, including the Youth Services Network, resulted in many legislative wins which impact young people experiencing homelessness and/or involved in the Juvenile and Adult Criminal Justice Systems. Some of these partners (in addition to the YSN) include the MN Second Chance Coalition and Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless. In a year with significant challenges and barriers at the Capitol, this list of wins is exceptional and worth celebrating! We appreciate the legislators and bill authors who are champions at the Capitol and kept the pressure on all session-there are so many to name and thank but Senator Dibble has continued to be a leading champion for youth homelessness and was again during this session-his leadership has been/is incredibly helpful! We also appreciate all of the youth who come forward and help lead for change!

Youth Homelessness Related Bills:

- The request from YSN to double the Homeless Youth Act did not go through this year, although the original amount of \$11.238 million was sustained and additional/new funding that homeless youth agencies can apply for was passed (and listed in the following bullets).
- **The Emergency Services Program (ESP), MN Statutes 256E.36 was increased by \$12 million in FY 22-23.** Funds are run through DHS-OEO and are flexible and can be used for activities that “prevent or decrease the period of homelessness of families and to decrease the time period that families stay in emergency shelters”, historically OEO has awarded grants with these funds for homeless prevention, street outreach and/or emergency shelter. These funds would be open to youth providers and adult providers to apply for.

This is a huge increase as ESP is currently in our state’s budget at \$844,000 per year. This increase was championed largely by the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless-we supported this but they were leading the lobbying effort on this one so want to give credit where credit is due!

- Capital for Emergency Shelters was funded at \$1 million per year for the next 4 years.
- Housing Support base rate was increased by \$50 per month (this is the funds formerly known as GRH).

- **\$20 million for Homeless Prevention!** This is new funding that came through Rep. Gomez and is coming through the Department of Revenue so needs to go to the counties who would then do an RFP/contract with providers.
- Rep. Noor put in a bill to have DHS provide an update to the 2007 DHS Report to the Legislature on Youth Homelessness. The report is due to the legislature on December 15, 2022 and it is required that the Department work with community based providers for input into the report.
- The waiver of fees for Birth Certificates and ID's for youth experiencing homelessness passed this year-which is great! This is something that Rep. Fischer has championed over the years and was able to be passed this year! Beginning 1/1/22 youth who are experiencing homelessness will not have to pay for a Birth Certificate or ID.

Juvenile and Adult Criminal Justice Reform:

Key wins include:

- Ending driver's license suspensions due to inability to pay fines and fees
- Expanding diversion opportunities for youth. *Now every law enforcement agency statewide has legislative authority to divert kids out of the system, rather than waiting for county attorneys to do so.*
- Ending indiscriminate shackling of youth in court
- Ending the incarceration of pregnant people and instead using community based interventions
- Ending the separation of newborns from incarcerated parents

Funding was allocated for key studies, including:

- Annual reports on the number of youth designated as Extended Jurisdiction Juveniles. *For the first time in the program's nearly 30 years, we'll have statewide data on how it's working.*
- Felony murder laws
- DHS background checks, which include thousands of provisions that disqualify people with records from living-wage work and entire career fields
- "Predatory offender" registration

Safe Harbor:

- We did not receive any additional allocations for our state's Safe Harbor Law and No Wrong Door Response this year, however, we did sustain the current level of funding which is \$14.2 Million per biennium.

Additional Advocacy within City of Minneapolis for American Recovery Plan (ARP) Funds:

- City Council Member Cano requested \$650,000 of ARP funds to be directed to support youth and adult victims of human trafficking (sex and labor) which was passed by the City Council the week of June 28th.
- We are working to get a dedicated target of ARP funds for youth homelessness through the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County through the help and advocacy of Senator Dibble.