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## **The Runaway and Homeless Youth Program: Administration, Funding, and Legislative Actions**

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# The Runaway and Homeless Youth Program: Administration, Funding, and Legislative Actions

## Summary

The exact number of runaway and homeless youth in the nation is not known. Various sources estimate that at any given time, the number of such youth falls between 500,000 and 2.8 million. In the early 1970s, concern about runaway youth gained national prominence because of a noticeable increase in the number of such youth. At that time, it was reported that one million youth in the nation left home without parental or guardian permission. In January 1972, two-day congressional hearings began a process that eventually led to the passage of the 1974 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA, P.L. 93-415). As Title III of JJDPA, the Runaway Youth Act (RYA) encouraged states to improve local treatment of at-risk youth. Federal funding was provided to states that agreed to deinstitutionalize runaway youth and other status offenders (such as truants) and provide them with shelter, food, counseling and other necessities. Such emergency assistance, through what was termed the Basic Center Program (BCP), was delivered apart from the law enforcement, mental health, child welfare, and juvenile justice systems.

In 1977, RYA was expanded to include homeless youth, and the name of the act changed to the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA). Subsequently, two additional programs were created and funded through the act — the Transitional Living Program (TLP) for older homeless youth, and the Street Outreach Program (SOP) to remove runaway and homeless youth from the streets and protect them from possible sexual abuse and exploitation.

On October 10, 2003, the Runaway, Homeless, and Missing Children Protection Act (RHMCPA) was signed into law (P.L. 108-96) reauthorizing and amending RHYA and the Missing Children's Assistance Act (MCAA) for FY2004 through FY2008. RHMCPA authorized grants to local and private groups to create and operate local runaway and homeless youth shelters. Also, maternity group homes were added as an allowable activity under the TLP. For FY2004, \$105 million was authorized for the Consolidated Runaway and Homeless Youth Program (RHYP), which combined BCP and TLP, and such sums as necessary for FY2005 through FY2008. SOP was authorized for such sums as necessary for FY2004 through FY2008. Congress appropriated, however, \$89.4 million for RHYP for FY2004, and \$15.3 million for SOP. For FY2005, Congress allocated \$88.7 million for RHYP and \$15.1 million for SOP. For FY2006, \$87.8 million was appropriated for RHYP, and \$15.0 million for SOP. The President requested the same funding levels for FY2007 that were enacted for FY2006 for both RHYP and SOP.

In the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress, three bills have been introduced that would amend RHYA to include provisions related to maternity group homes — S. 6 (the Marriage, Opportunity, Relief, and Empowerment Act of 2005), H.R. 3908 (the Charitable Giving Act), and S. 1780 (the CARE Act of 2005). Each was referred to the appropriate Committee. No further action has occurred.

This report will be updated as warranted.

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# The Runaway and Homeless Youth Program: Administration, Funding, and Legislative Actions

## Introduction and Background

No one knows the exact number of runaway<sup>1</sup> and/or homeless youth<sup>2</sup> in the nation. Various numbers have been suggested at different times with caveats applied for clarification. For example, a 1989 General Accounting Office (GAO) report estimated that there were between 1 million and 1.3 million runaway and homeless youth with the caveat that no distinction was made in the estimate between runaway youth and homeless youth.<sup>3</sup> A 1995 Research Triangle Institute study prepared for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) estimated that 2.8 million youth ages 12 to 17 who responded to a household survey reported a runaway experience, implying that they had run away from home at least once.<sup>4</sup> The October 2002 *National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children (NISMAART-2)* study released by the Department of Justice (DOJ) Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) estimated that in 1999, 1,682,900 youth ran away from home or were asked to leave their homes (that is, thrownaway) by their caretakers.<sup>5</sup> In 2001, the National Runaway Switchboard

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<sup>1</sup> A runaway youth is defined as an individual under the age of 18 who has left home without parental or a legal guardian's permission for more than 24 hours. In contrast, a "throwaway or thrownaway" youth is a person under the age of 18 who leaves home with parental or a legal guardian's permission for over 24 hours. "Runaway Prevention Curriculum: Teacher's Guide," *National Runaway Switchboard*, 2001, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (codified at 42 U.S.C. §§ 5701 et seq.) defines a homeless youth as an individual 16 to 21 years of age, who cannot live in a safe environment with a relative and who has no other alternative living arrangement (42 U.S.C. § 5732a(3)). A street youth is defined as a runaway youth who is indefinitely or intermittently homeless and spends a significant amount of time on the street or in other areas that increase the risk that such a youth will experience sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or drug abuse. (42 U.S.C. § 5732a(5)).

<sup>3</sup> U.S. General Accounting Office, *Homelessness: Homeless and Runaway Youth Receiving Services at Federally Funded Shelters*, GAO/HRD-90-45 (Dec. 19, 1989), p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Jody M. Greene et al., *Youth with Runaway, Throwaway, and Homeless Experiences: Prevalence, Drug Use, and Other At-Risk Behaviors*, vol. 1, Final Report, Prepared for the U.S. Health and Human Services by the Research Triangle Institute, Feb. 1995, p. E-6.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *NISMAART: Runaway/Thrownaway Children: National Estimates and Characteristics*, by Heather Hammer, David Finkelhor, and Andrea J. Sedlak, NISMAART Bulletin Series, NCJ (continued...)

(NRS) (discussed below) estimated that each day, 1.3 million runaway and homeless youth live on the streets in the nation. NRS stated that “one out of seven children will run away from home before the age of 18 and that about 5,000 of such youth die annually from assault, illness, and suicide.”<sup>6</sup> The HHS Administration for Children and Families, in its *FY2004 Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees*, differentiated between runaway and homeless youth by estimating that between 500,000 to 1.5 million youth run away from home annually, while about 300,000 youth experience homelessness each year.<sup>7</sup>

Although the exact number of such youth is unknown, in the early 1970s, concern about their welfare occurred when an apparent growth in the number of runaway youth gained national prominence. At that time, it was reported that about one million youth in the nation had left home without parental or guardian permission.<sup>8</sup> In January 1972, two days of congressional hearings were held to discuss the runaway youth problem and the legislative proposal, the Runaway Youth Act. Of particular interest were the reasons why youth left home. Experts testified about reasons that many youth ran away from home, which included significant family problems, such as physical or sexual abuse, or neglect; problems at school; or problems within the youth themselves. Experts believed that choosing to run away represented anguished cries for help.<sup>9</sup> While away from home, such youth were exposed to exploitation and other dangers of living on the street with no public services available to meet their needs. Furthermore, in many states, running away from home violated the law, and runaways were arrested and detained in a juvenile or penal institution with no other alternatives to address their problems and concerns.

The 1972 hearings began a process that eventually led to the passage of the 1974 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) (P.L. 93-415), which established a system that provided financial assistance to states that improved local treatment of at-risk youth. For example, in order to receive federal funding through JJDPA, states had to agree to deinstitutionalize runaway youth and other status offenders<sup>10</sup> (referring to minors confined for offenses that would not be punishable if committed by an adult, such as truancy and running away from home).

In 1974, through the passage of the Runaway Youth Act (RYA), as Title III of the JJDPA, a means was created to assist youth who had run away from home.

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<sup>5</sup> (...continued)

196469, Oct. 2002, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> “Runaway Prevention Curriculum,” *National Runaway Switchboard*, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, *Fiscal Year 2004 Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees*, p. H-47.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, *Runaway Youth*, 92<sup>nd</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., Jan. 13-14, 1972 (Washington: GPO, 1972), p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, *Basic Center Program*, at [<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/youthdivision/programs/bcfactsheet.htm>].

Assistance for such youth would be separate from the law enforcement, mental health, child welfare and juvenile justice systems through what was termed the Basic Center Program (BCP).

In 1977, through Juvenile Justice Amendments (P.L. 95-115), the RYA was reauthorized and its scope of coverage expanded to include homeless youth. The name of the provision was changed to the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) and it assisted such youth through BCP. In 1988, the Transitional Living Program for Older Homeless Youth (TLP) was created to provide long-term assistance not available through BCP. In 1994, Congress created the Education and Prevention Services to Reduce Sexual Abuse of Runaway, Homeless, and Street Youth Program or the Street Outreach Program (SOP) to assist in the safety and well-being of youth who end up living on the streets after fleeing from (or having been asked to leave) homes marked by abuse, neglect, or parental drug or alcohol abuse. The program was established through the Violence Against Women Act of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-322). SOP assists youth who have been or are at risk of being sexually abused, used for prostitution, or for sexual exploitation.

Initially, all three program elements (that is, BCP, TLP, and SOP) were separately funded and administered as the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program (RHYP) by the Family and Youth Services Bureau of HHS' Administration for Children and Families. On October 12, 1999, RHYA was amended and reauthorized through the Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children Protection Act (MERCPA) (P.L. 106-71), which consolidated program funding for BCP and TLP into a single appropriation, which is referred to as the Consolidated Runaway and Homeless Youth Program. Also, MERCPA amended the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act to include the Street Outreach Program as a separately funded RHYA program component. SOP services are coordinated with BCP and TLP efforts.

On October 10, 2003, the Runaway, Homeless, and Missing Children Protection Act was signed into law (P.L. 108-96) to reauthorize and amend the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and the Missing Children's Assistance Act (MCAA), superseding MERCPA. For discussions about missing and exploited children, see CRS Report RL31655, *Missing and Exploited Children: Overview and Policy Concerns*, and CRS Report RS21365, *The Missing Children's Assistance Act (MCAA): Appropriations and Reauthorization*.

This report provides a brief overview of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program, discusses RHYA reauthorization and related legislation, and provides an appropriations funding history for the program.

## **Program Administration and Components**

The Consolidated Runaway and Homeless Youth Program is administered by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), as stated above. Under RHYA, the Secretary of HHS is authorized to make grants to local public and private entities (or

a combination of such entities) to create, operate, or renovate local centers to provide services for runaway and homeless youth and their families.

Under RHYA, 90% of appropriated funds for the Basic Center and the Transitional Living Programs must be reserved for creating and operating community-based runaway and homeless youth centers. Of this amount, between 20% and 30% must be reserved for TLP. The remaining 10% of appropriated funds must be used for a national communications system (that is, the National Runaway Switchboard), an information clearinghouse, technical assistance and training for grantees, research, evaluation, and demonstration and service projects designed to increase knowledge about and improve services for runaway and homeless youth.

Grants are awarded on a competitive basis for project periods up to three years for BCP, and up to five years for TLP. Grantees must provide a nonfederal share or a match of at least 10% of the federal funds awarded. The nonfederal share may be met with cash or in-kind contributions. If an applicant fails to provide its share, the federal government match is withheld. Temporary demonstration projects may be made to provide services to youth in rural areas. Competitive grants are made to states, localities, and private groups (or a combination of such groups) for providing BCP services to runaway and homeless youth in rural areas, including transportation.

Each component of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Program is discussed below.

## **Basic Center Program**

The purpose of the Basic Center Program is to meet the immediate needs of runaway and homeless youth and their families through creating or strengthening local community-based programs. The goals of BCP are to lighten the problems of such youth; reunite them with their families, and promote resolving family problems through counseling and other avenues; reinforce family connections and foster a stable home life; and help such youth to make constructive decisions regarding their plight.<sup>11</sup>

The Secretary of HHS is authorized to make grants to public and nonprofit private entities, and combinations of such entities, to create and operate local centers to serve runaway and homeless youth and their families. These entities include any state or local government unit, combination of local government units, community-based public and private nonprofit organizations, institutions, agencies and coordinated networks of such groups, faith-based organizations, federally recognized or unrecognized Indian tribes, and urban Indian tribes.<sup>12</sup>

Each BCP grantee must provide short term services to runaway and homeless youth under 18. Such services should include, providing temporary shelter for up to 14 days, food, clothing, individual or group and family counseling, health care

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<sup>11</sup> “Runaway and Homeless Youth (Basic Center Program),” *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance*, 93:623.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

referrals, and making an attempt to reunite them with their families, or if necessary, providing alternative appropriate living arrangements. When youth leave the shelter, aftercare services are available to them and to their families. BCP also provides shelter for youth who are at risk of running away from home, or have a history of running away from home, and will give age appropriate services or referrals for homeless youth ages 18 through 21. Grantees are required to provide services in residential settings for at least four and up to 20 youths. Such settings may include host homes (usually private homes under contract with the center), group homes, or supervised apartments for shelter services.<sup>13</sup>

For BCP, the amount of federal funds available to grantees within each state is determined by a formula. Under this formula, federal funds are divided annually among the states (that is, the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the outlying areas), based on their relative population of persons under the age of 18, proportionate to the national population of youth under 18. Each state, except the outlying areas, is allotted a minimum of \$100,000 annually, while the outlying areas — that is, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands — are allotted a minimum of \$45,000 per year. Community-based public and private agencies apply directly to the federal government and compete for BCP grants, subject to these state allotments. Priority is given to applicants who have demonstrated experience in providing services to runaway and homeless youth and to those who apply for less than \$200,000 per year. Funding for the second and third year, however, depends on the program's satisfactory performance and on the availability of funds.<sup>14</sup>

## Transitional Living Program

The Transitional Living Program assists older homeless youth (16- to 21-year-olds), including pregnant and parenting youth, who need longer-term supportive assistance. Services are geared toward assuring such youth a successful transition to independent self-sufficiency and avoidance of long-term dependence on social services. The youth are provided residential services for up to 540 days (or 18 months), that is, living accommodations through host families or supervised apartments. Other services they receive include counseling in basic life skills, interpersonal skill development, educational improvement, job acquisition skills, and physical and mental health care, as needed, to assist them in making a successful transition to self-sufficient living.<sup>15</sup>

As with BCP grants, TLP grants are available to states, local units of government, a combination of such units, public or private nonprofit agencies, organizations, institutions or other nonprofit entities, faith-based organizations, federally recognized or unrecognized Indian tribes, and to urban Indian tribes.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> "Transitional Living Program for Homeless Youth," *Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance*, 93.550; see [<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/youthdivision/programs/tlpfactsheet.htm>].



Applicants may apply for up to a \$200,000 grant per fiscal year, which equals \$1 million for a five-year project period.<sup>16</sup>

**Maternity Group Homes.** For FY2002, the Administration proposed a new Maternity Group Homes (or second chance homes)<sup>17</sup> initiative as a program component of TLP to allow young single mothers to participate in transitional living opportunities. Concern that such mothers are vulnerable to abuse and neglect, often end up on welfare, in foster care, in homeless shelters or on the streets and that their children are at-risk of becoming teen parents themselves, prompted this proposal. Competitive grants would have been offered to faith-based and community-based groups to provide a safe and nurturing adult-supervised living environment for unwed teen mothers (16 to 21) and their children who cannot live safely with their own families.

For FY2002, the Administration requested \$33 million specifically for maternity group homes as a component of TLP. Congress appropriated, however, a total of \$39.7 million for TLP, without specifying funds for maternity group homes but including an additional \$19 million over the FY2001 TLP appropriation to ensure that pregnant and parenting homeless teens would be able to access transitional living opportunities and support through their communities.<sup>18</sup>

Since FY2002, funding for the needs of pregnant and parenting teens has been given to various organizations that already were receiving TLP funds and were directly serving that teen population.<sup>19</sup> When the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress reauthorized the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, maternity group homes were explicitly added as an allowable use of funds under TLP.

For FY2003 through FY2006, the President requested annual funding of \$10 million for maternity group homes, separate from TLP funding. Congress, however, never appropriated specific funding for such homes. Both pregnant and parenting teens would have been assisted through community- or faith-based maternity group homes.<sup>20</sup> Congress was aware of the need for funding residential services for young mothers and their children, and that pregnant and parenting teens were eligible for

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<sup>16</sup> U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, "Announcement of Availability of Financial Assistance and Request for Applications for Runaway and Homeless Youth Program Grants," *Program Announcement No. ACF/ACYF/RHYP 2002-02*, p. 12, [[http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=2002\\_register&docid=02-4122-filed](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=2002_register&docid=02-4122-filed)].

<sup>17</sup> See CRS Report RL31540, *Second Chance Homes: Federal Funding, Programs, and Services*, by Edith Fairman Cooper.

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Congress, Committee of Conference, *Making Appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies for the Fiscal Year Ending Sept. 30, 2002*, conference report to accompany H.R. 3061, 107<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> sess., H.Rept. 107-342 (Washington: GPO, 2001), pp. 104-105.

<sup>19</sup> Spokesman at FYSB, telephone conversation with author, Apr. 8, 2003.

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, "Consolidated Runaway and Homeless Youth Program," *FY2003 Justifications*, p. H-50.

and served by TLP. Congress expected that the Family and Youth Services Bureau would continue providing technical assistance to enable TLP grantees and their community partners to address the unique needs of young mothers and their children, as well as to assist interested entities in identifying funding sources currently available to provide residential services to this population. For FY2007, the President has not requested separate funding for Maternity Group Homes.

## Street Outreach Program

As mentioned above, congressional concern about possible sexual abuse and exploitation of runaway and homeless youth living on the streets,<sup>21</sup> led to creating the Street Outreach Program. The goal of SOP is to assist such youth by providing services that will help them move from the streets into safe and appropriate alternative living arrangements. Such services include treatment and counseling, crisis intervention, prevention and education activities, individual assessments, survival aid, street-based education and outreach, information and referrals, and followup support. Also, SOP staff must have access to local emergency shelter space or such space that can be made available for youth who are willing to leave the streets. Accommodations are needed in order to maintain interaction with such youth during the time that they are in the shelter.<sup>22</sup> In addition, FYSB encourages grantees to help such youth achieve their full potential by focusing on youth development strategies, such as, providing opportunities for such youth to exercise leadership, build skills, and become involved in their communities.<sup>23</sup>

Since 1996, FYSB has provided grants to community-based public and private nonprofit agencies to conduct outreach designed to foster relationships between grantee staff and street youth. Priority is given to applicants with experience in assisting runaway, homeless, and street youth. Generally, awards are made for three-year project periods. Applicants may apply for a \$100,000 grant each year for a maximum of \$200,000 for the three-year project period. Satisfactory performance and the availability of funds determine whether the second and third year awards are provided. Progress and fiscal reports are required to be submitted twice a year. Also, a final program and expenditure report are required within 90 days after the project is completed.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> MERCPA amended RHYA, defining a street youth as a runaway youth, or indefinitely or intermittently a homeless youth, who spends a large portion of time on the street or in other areas that increase the risk for sexual abuse, exploitation, prostitution, or drug abuse.

<sup>22</sup> U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, *Street Outreach Program*, at [<http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/youthdivision/programs/sopfactsheet.htm>].

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

## National Runaway Switchboard

The National Runaway Switchboard (NRS) is the national communications system that was established in 1974 through the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. The purpose of NRS is to link runaway and homeless youth, or youth at risk of running away, to their family members or to community-based resources to help such youth and their families to find other needed services.

NRS is a free 24-hour hotline that operates out of Chicago. Over 100 specially trained volunteers, assisted by a professional staff, provide hotline services seven days a week, and 365 days a year to callers in the nation, as well as those in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam. Staffers are equipped to provide assistance to youth and their families from every geographic, educational, economic, and racial/ethnic part of U.S. society. Callers are provided confidential, nonjudgmental assistance during a time of crisis. Also, national referrals are made for shelter, food, medical, and/or legal assistance.<sup>25</sup>

NRS responds to about 120,000 calls annually for some type of assistance. Of that number, 44% of the calls come from youth, 36% come from parents, and the remaining 20% come in for general information and client-related calls.<sup>26</sup>

The NRS states that each caller receives individualized attention and support. According to NRS, the results and benefits of the hotline can be divided into three categories — prevention, intervention, and referral. Hotline staff work with and educate youth callers who recognize their need for assistance before a crisis occurs (prevention); staff serve as neutral channels of communication so that youth can talk through their problems and develop their own plan of action (intervention); and the staff identifies agency resources within the callers' community where they and their families can receive assistance (referral).<sup>27</sup>

## Reauthorization Legislation

Legislation was enacted to reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act for FY2004 through FY2008, and to authorize funding for maternity group homes through TLP. On May 1, 2003, H.R. 1925, the Runaway, Homeless, and Missing Children Protection Act, was introduced by Representative Phil Gingrey to reauthorize programs under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and the Missing Children's Assistance Act. On October 10, 2003, an amended version of the measure was signed into law (P.L. 108-96).

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<sup>25</sup> National Runaway Switchboard, *Media Information Kit*, at [<http://www.nrscrisisline.org/faq.asp>].

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, "Runaway and Homeless Youth Program, *Fiscal Year 2007 Justification of Estimates for Appropriations*, pp. D-41-D-42 (hereafter cited as *Fiscal Year 2007 Justification of Estimates for Appropriations*).

<sup>27</sup> National Runaway Switchboard, *Media Information Kit*, p. 3.

Title I amends RHYA by expanding the findings section to emphasize that such youth have a disproportionate share of serious health, behavioral, and emotional problems because of a lack of sufficient resources to obtain care; they are in urgent need of temporary shelter and services, including services that are linguistically appropriate and that acknowledge the environment of such youth seeking assistance; the federal government has the responsibility to assist such youth by developing an effective system of care, including aftercare services and street outreach services, because of the interstate nature of the problem; and improved coordination and collaboration are necessary between federal programs that serve such youth to develop a long-term strategy for responding to their needs.

Grants for services that a local Basic Center may provide include testing for sexually transmitted diseases, at the request of a runaway or homeless youth.

The measure allows a runaway and homeless youth center, or a locally controlled temporary shelter for such youth, to provide for a maximum of 20 youths, except if the applicant is located in a state where a law or regulation requires a higher maximum capacity of youth to comply with licensure requirements. Also, for purposes of the Basic Center Program, a homeless youth is defined as one not over 18 years of age. Youth, however, between the ages of 18 and 21 years are allowed to continue receiving services and referrals at a Basic Center, but temporary residential services must be limited to younger youth.

The act's eligibility for assistance to establish a TLP specifies that plans to establish group homes include maternity group homes, and that services provided include, as appropriate, parenting skills. A definition for maternity group homes is included as a new subsection. The 540-day (18-month) length of stay at a TLP is amended by providing a limited extension. A youth who is under 18 years of age on the last day of the 18-month period may remain in the program, if the youth is otherwise qualified, until the earliest date when either the youth turns 18, or the 180<sup>th</sup> day (or six months) after the 18-month period is reached.

Provisions regarding eligibility for grant assistance through BCP and TLP stipulate that an applicant must develop a plan for ensuring coordination with McKinney-Vento school district liaisons, designated under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to assure that runaway and homeless youth would be provided information about educational services available under Title VII, Subtitle B of P.L. 100-77, regarding Education for Homeless Children and Youth. Also, the measure stipulates that eligible TLP applicants agree to develop an adequate plan that will ensure proper referral of homeless youth to various services including post-secondary education, training that will include services and programs available under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, and to welfare assistance that will include programs under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.

The measure authorizes \$105 million for RHYA (except for SOP) to be appropriated for FY2004, and such sums as necessary for FY2005 through FY2008. Also, it authorizes such sums as necessary for SOP, for FY2004 through FY2008.

The law adjusts the percentage split for BCP and TLP funding by increasing the TLP minimum to 45% (of the 90% funding required for the BCP and TLP projects) and allowing this percentage to be increased up to 55% for those fiscal years when continuation grants are obligated and the quality or number of applicants for both BCP and TLP warrant such an adjustment.

The HHS Secretary is directed to consult with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to ensure coordination of programs and services for homeless youth. Also, no later than two years after the act becomes law, the HHS Secretary, in consultation with the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, is required to submit a report to Congress on strategies to end youth homelessness. Furthermore, the HHS Secretary is required to evaluate TLP programs by reporting on long-term housing outcomes for youth, 12 to 18 months after they leave the program.

Finally, the law stipulates that no program funds may be used for distributing sterile needles or syringes for the hypodermic injection of an illicit drug. Any person or entity who receives program funds and uses them for needles or syringes distribution, must give a separate account for such funds from expenses used for other RHYA program activities.

Title II of the law discusses amendments to the Missing Children's Assistance Act.

## **Legislation in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress**

Three bills have been introduced in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress that would amend RHYA to include a provision for maternity group homes. On January 24, 2005, S. 6, the Marriage, Opportunity, Relief, and Empowerment Act of 2005 (MORE Act), was introduced by Senator Rick Santorum and referred to the Senate Finance Committee. Title III, Subtitle H of the bill would amend RHYA to require an evaluation of maternity group homes and require the evaluator to submit a report to Congress regarding the status, activities, and accomplishments of such homes (supported by grant funds) no later than two years after the date in which the Secretary of HHS entered into a contract for the evaluation, and biennially thereafter. The bill would authorize \$33 million for FY2006 for maternity group homes eligible under RHYA, and such sums as necessary for FY2007. Identical provisions are included in S. 1780, introduced by Senator Santorum on September 28, 2005, and referred to the Senate Finance Committee.

On September 27, 2005, Representative Roy Blunt introduced H.R. 3908, the Charitable Giving Act of 2005, that would not only amend the Internal Revenue Code to provide incentives for individuals and businesses to increase contributions to charities, but also would amend RHYA to include maternity group homes for homeless youth within TLP. Referred to the House Committees on Ways and Means and Education and the Workforce, no further action has occurred. This provision, however, is similar to language already enacted in P.L. 108-96.

## Appropriations History

Since FY2002, Congress has appropriated approximately \$88 or \$89 million each year through FY2006 for RHYP, and about \$15 million for SOP. For FY2007, the President has requested the same amounts enacted for each program in FY2006, that is, \$87,837,000 and \$15,027,000, respectively. Also, for FY2007, the Administration proposes awarding 328 BCP grants, and 193 TLP grants that would include maternity group homes to provide transitional living opportunities for pregnant and parenting homeless teens. Furthermore, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) announced that it will begin using vouchers to provide maternity group home services in order to reach more vulnerable youth. ACF estimates that \$4 million will be used to support about 100 vouchers to pregnant and parenting homeless teens. It states further that a competitive grant would be awarded to a national organization for issuing the vouchers. Also, that national group would be responsible for recruiting and accrediting various maternity group home programs throughout the nation and for working with existing grantees to identify youth seeking those types of specialized services.<sup>28</sup>

For SOP, the requested FY2007 funds would be used to continue assisting 140 grantees with developing programs designed to establish relationships between grantee staff and street youth in order to meet their needs through outreach and education efforts.<sup>29</sup>

**Table 1** and **Table 2** present an appropriations funding history for RHYP and for the separately funded SOP, respectively.

**Table 1. RHYP Appropriations, FY2002-FY2007, by Grant Component**  
(\$ in thousands)

Program	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07 Pres. Budg. Req.
Basic Centers	\$48,288	\$49,473	\$49,171	\$48,786	\$48,298	\$48,298
Transitional Living	39,736	40,505	40,260	39,938 <sup>a</sup>	39,539 <sup>a</sup>	39,539 <sup>a</sup>
Total	\$88,024	\$89,978	\$89,431	\$88,724	\$87,837	\$87,837

**Source:** HHS, FY2004, *Administration for Children and Families, Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees*, p. H-45; HHS, FY2005, *Administration for Children and Families, Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees*, p. H-89; HHS, FY2006, *Administration for Children and Families, Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees*, p. D-44; and HHS, FY2007, *Administration for Children and Families, Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees*, p. D-41.

a. Includes Maternity Group Homes

<sup>28</sup> *Fiscal Year 2007 Justification of Estimates for Appropriations*, p. D-42.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. D-47.

**Table 2. Grants to Reduce Sexual Abuse of Runaway, Homeless, and Street Youth (SOP), FY2002-FY2007**  
(\$ in thousands)

Program	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07 Pres. Budg. Req.
Street Outreach	\$14,999	\$15,399	\$15,302	\$15,178	\$15,027	\$15,027

**Source:** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children and Families, Budget Office, Feb. 24, 2004; and *HHS, FY2004, Administration for Children and Families, Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees*, p. H-45; *HHS, FY2005, Administration for Children and Families, Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees*, p. H-97; and *HHS, FY2006, Administration for Children and Families, Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees*, p. D-51; and *HHS, FY2007, Administration for Children and Families, Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees*, p. D-47.

## Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) Review

In FY2005, a PART performance analysis was conducted on RHYP as part of the budget process. The program was rated as “Not Performing — Results Not Demonstrated.” The goal of RHYP was to increase the ratio of youth living in safe and appropriate settings after leaving the program. PART determined that “while the program has measures to assess the program’s short term effects, it lacks sufficient measures to assess the program’s long-term impact on the youth it serves. Also, the program does not have an appropriate efficiency measure.”<sup>30</sup>

RHYP administrators plan to take the following actions in order to improve the program’s performance:

- “Identifying and addressing the barriers that led to the program not meeting its targets for some goals.
- Completing the design and implementation of an evaluation, which assesses the program’s impact on homeless youth in the transitional living (residential) program.
- Developing an appropriate efficiency measure, using existing data from the Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System.”<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> “Program Assessment: Runaway and Homeless Youth,” ExpectMore.gov, at [<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore/summary.10001064.2005.html>].

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.