



Runaway and Homeless Youth: Reauthorization Legislation and Issues in the 110th Congress

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Summary

The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) was signed into law in 1974 as Title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (P.L. 93-415). RHYA authorizes funding for programs to support runaway and homeless youth, as well as related training, research, and other activities. These programs and activities are administered by the Family and Youth Services Bureau (FYSB) in the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Administration for Children and Families.

In the second session of the 110th Congress, Congress passed and the President signed into law the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-378) to extend existing programs and establish new activities under RHYA for FY2009 through FY2013. The law represents a compromise between provisions that were included in two bills introduced in the 110th Congress: H.R. 5524 and S. 2982. On March 4, 2008, Representative John Yarmuth introduced H.R. 5524, the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008, which passed the House on June 9, 2008. On May 6, 2008, Senator Patrick Leahy introduced S. 2982, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Protection Act, which passed the Senate on September 25, 2008. The House approved S. 2982 on September 26, and the President signed it into law as P.L. 110-378 on October 8, 2008.

This report discusses P.L. 110-378 and includes a table with a side-by-side comparison of its provisions to those in H.R. 5524, as well as to the law and regulations as they existed prior to the enactment of S. 2982. The new law amends and adds provisions related to program funding, requirements, and accountability. It extends the authorization of appropriations for the three programs under RHYA that provide direct services to youth: the Basic Center Program (BCP), Transitional Living Program (TLP), and Street Outreach Program (SOP). Unlike prior law, P.L. 110-378 enables HHS to reallocate any unused BCP funds from one state to other states and permits youth to remain in BCP and TLP shelters for a longer period. Another change made by the law requires HHS to regularly submit a report to Congress that describes the incidence and prevalence of runaway and homeless youth. The law also directs the Government Accountability Office to report to Congress on the process by which HHS awards BCP, TLP, and SOP grants.

The provisions of P.L. 110-378 reflect issues raised by policymakers and advocates about RHYA during the reauthorization process. One issue was the amount of funding allocated to grantees under the three direct-service programs. Grantees expressed the concern that although Congress has periodically increased funding authorization for these programs, funding for individual grantees has remained relatively stable over time. A second issue was the lack of outcome data for youth who run away or experience homelessness. Finally, the bill addresses issues related to the educational and workforce needs of runaway and homeless youth.

This report will not be updated.

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The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) was enacted in 1974 as Title III of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (P.L. 93-415). RHYA authorizes funding for grant programs that provide direct services to youth—the Basic Center Program (BCP), Transitional Living Program (TLP), and Street Outreach Program (SOP)—and related training, research, and other activities. These programs and activities are administered by the Family and Youth Services Bureau in the Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS) Administration for Children and Families. The Basic Center Program provides temporary shelter, counseling, and after care services to runaway and homeless youth under age 18 and their families, while the Transitional Living Program is targeted to older youth ages 16 to 21. Youth who use the TLP receive longer-term housing with supportive services. The Street Outreach Program provides education, treatment, counseling, and referrals for runaway, homeless, and street youth who have been subjected to or are at risk of being subjected to sexual abuse and exploitation.¹

RHYA has been reauthorized approximately every five years since the 1970s. Most recently, in the second session of the 110th Congress, the President signed into law the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act (P.L. 110-378) to extend existing programs and authorize new activities under RHYA for FY2009 through FY2013. P.L. 110-378 represents a compromise between provisions that were included in two bills—H.R. 5524 and S. 2982—to reauthorize RHYA.² On March 4, 2008, Representative John Yarmuth introduced H.R. 5524, the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008. The bill was referred to the House Education and Labor Committee, but was not taken up by the committee. On June 9, 2008, the House approved the bill by voice vote under suspension of the rules. The version of the bill that was passed contained most of the same provisions as the original version. On May 6, 2008, Senator Patrick Leahy introduced S. 2982, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Protection Act. On May 22, 2008, the Senate Judiciary Committee passed S. 2982, which included an amendment that substituted the introduced version with a similar version of the bill. On September 25, 2008, S. 2982 was approved by the Senate. The Senate-passed version is different from the version that passed the Judiciary Committee and includes many of the same provisions as those in H.R. 5524. The House approved S. 2982 on September 26, 2008, and the President signed it into law as P.L. 110-378 on October 8, 2008.

This report first provides a broad overview of P.L. 110-378, followed by a more detailed summary of the law’s provisions. The second section discusses the issues that were raised during hearings in the 110th Congress about runaway and homeless youth, and the provisions in P.L. 110-378 that, in part, address these issues. **Table A-1** at the end of the report provides a side-by-side comparison of P.L. 110-378 with prior law, current regulation, and H.R. 5524. As shown in the table, notable differences include funding authorization levels, the authorization for a national homeless youth awareness campaign (as proposed by H.R. 5524), length of stay at RHYA-funded programs, and the definitions of runaway youth and homeless youth.

¹ For detailed program information, see CRS Report RL33785, *Runaway and Homeless Youth: Demographics and Programs*, by (name redacted).

² A third bill, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act Reauthorization of 2008 was introduced on August 3, 2007, by Representative Raul Grijalva as Title II, Subtitle A of A Place to Call Home Act (H.R. 3409), an omnibus youth policy and child welfare bill. However, the bill was not voted on by the House Education and Labor Committee or the full House.

Overview

The Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-378) reauthorizes programs for runaway and homeless youth, expands congressional oversight of these programs, and establishes new activities. The major provisions of the law relate to funding for the Basic Center Program, Transitional Living Program, and Street Outreach Program; requirements for grantees that receive BCP and TLP grants; and accountability of programs and activities authorized under RHYA.

- **Funding.** P.L. 110-378 authorizes FY2009 appropriation levels for the BCP, TLP, and related activities that exceed the levels authorized for FY2004 by \$35 million (these are the only recent years for which Congress has specified authorized appropriation levels). The law also increases the authorized annual minimum levels of BCP funding available for states and territories. It further requires HHS to reallocate unused BCP funds from one state to another. The amount allocated to states for FY2009 and FY2010 may not be lower than the amount appropriated to the states in FY2008.
- **Requirements.** P.L. 110-378 allows youth to remain in a program funded under the BCP and TLP longer they were able to under the prior law, although the law imposes additional criteria for youth who stay longer at TLP-funded programs. The law also changes the definition of “homeless youth” to permit youth older than age 18 and 22 to stay at BCP- and TLP-funded programs, respectively, but only under certain circumstances. Another change made by the law specifies that in funding grants for research and other projects related to runaway and homeless youth, HHS is to give priority to applicants that serve diverse youth and represent diverse geographic regions of the U.S. (The term “diverse” is not defined.) Other requirements pertain to BCP and TLP plans submitted by grant applicants.
- **Accountability.** P.L. 110-378 requires HHS to promulgate regulations that specify performance standards for public and non-profit entities that receive BCP, TLP, and SOP grants. The law further requires HHS to periodically submit to Congress an incidence and prevalence study of runaway and homeless youth ages 13 to 26, as well as the characteristics of a representative sample of these youth. HHS must consult with the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness in developing the study. The law also directs the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to evaluate the process by which organizations apply for BCP, TLP, and SOP, including HHS’s response to these applicants. GAO is to submit a report on its findings to Congress.

The discussion below provides more details of these provisions.

Funding

Authorization of Appropriations

The prior law (P.L. 108-96) to reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act authorized funding for all parts³ of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, except the Street Outreach Program, at \$105 million for FY2004 and such sums as may be necessary for FY2005 through FY2008. The Street Outreach Program was authorized to receive such sums as may be necessary for FY2004 through FY2008.

For all parts of RHYA, except the SOP and the new incidence and prevalence study provisions, the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 authorizes \$140 million for FY2009 and such sums as may be necessary for FY2010 through FY2013. The law authorizes \$25 million for the SOP for FY2009 and such sums as may be necessary for FY2010 through FY2013. Finally, the law authorizes such sums as may be necessary for the study for FY2009 through FY2013.

Allocation for the Basic Center Program

Funding for the Basic Center Program and related training and other activities is allocated among states (including the District of Columbia) and the territories, and is distributed by HHS on a competitive basis to community-based organizations. As the law existed prior to the enactment of P.L. 110-378, each state and territory received a minimum annual allotment of \$100,000 and \$45,000, respectively, in BCP funds. P.L. 110-378 increases the annual minimum funding available for each state to \$200,000 and for each territory to \$70,000. The law also provides that funding for each state in FY2009 and FY2010 is to be no less than the amount allotted to that state for FY2008 (the bill is silent on a minimum for territories in those years). Further, unlike prior law, P.L. 110-378 enables the HHS Secretary to reallocate any funds that have not been obligated before the end of a fiscal year for a state to the other states. The law does not specify the criteria for re-allotting the funds.

The new law does not change the funding structure for the Transitional Living Program and Street Outreach Program. Funds for these programs are allocated competitively by HHS to community-based organizations.

Requirements

P.L. 110-378 changes program requirements related to (1) the length of time that youth are eligible to stay in Basic Center Program and Transitional Living Program facilities; (2) the definition of homeless youth and runaway youth; (3) BCP and TLP plans submitted by applicants; and (4) applicants that are to be prioritized under the Street Outreach Program.

³ Part A pertains to the BCP; Part B pertains to the TLP; Part C pertains to the National Communication System; Part D pertains to coordinating, training, research, and other activities; Part E pertains to the SOP; and Part F pertains to general provisions, such as assistance to potential grantees, lease of surplus federal facilities, reports, records, definitions, and authorization of appropriations, among other provisions.

Length of Stay

The Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 authorizes longer periods in which a youth may stay at a program funded by the BCP or TLP. Current regulation specifies that youth may remain at a BCP shelter for up to 15 days. However, P.L. 110-378 permits youth to stay at a shelter for up to 21 days. The new law continues to allow youth to remain at TLP projects for up to 540 days (18 months) or longer for youth under age 18 and adds that a youth may remain in the program for a continuous period of 635 days (approximately 21 months) under “exceptional circumstances.” This term means circumstances in which a youth would benefit to an unusual extent from additional time in the program. The new law further authorizes that a youth in a TLP who has not reached age 18 on the last day of the 635-day period may, in exceptional circumstances and if otherwise qualified for the program, remain in the program until his or her 18th birthday.

Definition of “Homeless Youth” and “Runaway Youth”

Under the law as it existed prior to the enactment of the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008, “homeless youth” for purposes of the BCP was defined as an individual younger than age 18 for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative and for whom no other safe alternative living arrangement exists. P.L. 110-378 amends the first clause to define “homeless youth” as an individual younger than age 18, *or an older maximum age* if the BCP center is located in a state or locality with a law or regulation that permits this higher age.

For purposes of the TLP, the prior law defined “homeless youth” as an individual age 16 through 21 for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative and for whom no other safe alternative living arrangement exists. P.L. 110-378 changes the first clause of the definition to include an individual ages 16 through 22, *or an age exceeding 22 years old* on the last day the youth is permitted under law to be at the shelter, so long as the participant enters the TLP project prior to reaching age 22. (As mentioned above, P.L. 110-378 permits a stay of 540 days, or up to 635 days if the youth would greatly benefit from being in the program.)

Finally, under current regulation, a “runaway youth” is defined as a person under age 18 who absents himself or herself from home or place of legal residence without the permission of his or her *family*. P.L. 110-378 enacts similar language that defines “runaway youth” as an individual who leaves home or place of residence without the permission of his or her *parent or legal guardian*.

BCP and TLP Plans

As required under the previous law, applicants for TLP funding were required to submit a plan to the HHS Secretary specifying that they would provide, *directly or indirectly*, shelter and services, among other types of assistance. The Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 amends the law to require that applicants provide, by a *grant, agreement, or contract*, shelter, services, and other assistance.⁴ Also under P.L. 110-378, applicants for TLP and BCP grants must develop an adequate emergency preparedness and management plan.⁵

⁴ It is not clear whether the language will change the way TLP applicants sub-contract services for runaway and (continued...)

Priority Applicants for the SOP and Research Projects

Under the law as it existed prior to enactment of the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008, HHS was to prioritize non-profit private agencies with experience in providing services to runaway and homeless youth, including youth living on the street, when awarding grants under the Street Outreach Program. P.L. 110-378 requires that HHS also give priority to public agencies with experience in serving runaway and homeless youth.

P.L. 110-378 also makes changes to the priority areas for awarding grants for research, evaluation, demonstration, and service projects concerning runaway and homeless youth. Under the prior law, HHS could prioritize projects that addressed one of nine priority areas. P.L. 110-378 modifies the language regarding two of these priority areas. For one of the priority areas, regarding access to quality health care, the law changes the reference from projects addressing *mental* health care to projects addressing *behavioral* health care. For the other priority area, regarding access to education, the law adds that the projects should decrease high school dropout rates, increase rates of attaining a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or increase placement and retention in postsecondary education or advanced workforce training programs. The law also inserts as a tenth priority area projects that assist youth in obtaining and maintaining safe and stable housing. Finally, P.L. 110-378 makes a change pertaining to applicants that apply for grants to implement projects in one of the priority areas. Under the previous law, HHS was to give priority consideration to applicants with experience working with runaway and homeless youth. P.L. 110-378 adds that HHS is to ensure selected applicants represent diverse geographic regions of the U.S. and carry out projects that serve diverse youth. “Diverse” is not defined in the law.⁶

Accountability

The Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 includes provisions that seek to improve accountability of programs and activities authorized by RHYA, including requiring HHS to establish performance standards for BCP, TLP, and SOP grantees; directing GAO to evaluate the process by which grants are awarded under the three programs; and requiring HHS to periodically submit a report to Congress that contains estimates of runaway and homeless youth and certain characteristics of the population.

(...continued)

homeless youth, if at all. Prior grant applications for the BCP, TLP, and SOP have asked applicants to submit information about any sub-grants or contracts with other entities that provide services to runaway and homeless youth.

⁵ The law does not define how this plan should be carried out, or what is considered “adequate.”

⁶ The Department of Health and Human Services, through the Family and Youth Services Bureau, has defined diversity in runaway and homeless youth programs to include characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic and educational status, sexual orientation, physical capacity, age, personality type, religious and spiritual beliefs, regional customs, and immigrant status. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Family and Youth Services Bureau, *A Guide to Enhancing Cultural Competence of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs*, January 1994, pp. 5-7.

Performance Standards

The Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 requires that within one year after its enactment (October 8, 2009), HHS is to issue rules that specify performance standards for public and non-profit entities that receive BCP, TLP, and SOP grants. In developing the regulations, HHS is to consult with stakeholders in the runaway and homeless youth policy community. The law further requires that HHS integrate the performance standards into the grantmaking, monitoring, and evaluations processes for the BCP, TLP, and SOP.

Existing Performance Review Processes

As they existed prior to the enactment of P.L. 110-378, the RHYA statute and accompanying regulations did not explicitly set forth performance standards for the grantees. However, grantees were (and are) *collectively* expected to meet certain performance measures established by the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART) process.⁷ The performance measures are as follows:

- achieve the proportion of youth served in the TLP entering safe and appropriate settings directly after exiting care at 85% by FY2008 and maintain this level through FY2010 (this is known as a long-term outcome measure);
- improve funding efficiency by increasing the percentage of youth who complete the TLP by graduating or who leave ahead of schedule because of other opportunities (this is known as a long-term efficiency measure);
- increase the percentage of TLP youth participants who are engaged in community service and service learning activities while in the program (this is known as a outcome measure); and
- increase the proportion of youth who are prevented from running away through BCP in-home or off-site services (this is known as an outcome measure).

Data for these outcome measures are collected from each grantee through the NEO-RHYMIS (National Extranet Optimized Runaway and Homeless Youth Management Information System) reporting system, which includes a range of data elements on the characteristics and short-term outcomes of youth receiving services through the BCP, TLP, and SOP.⁸ Further, during the grant application process, described below, applicants must discuss the results or benefits expected from their programs. For example, applicants are advised to identify quantitative outcomes for their proposed projects that will fulfill the program purpose and scope of services, as described in RHYA and the grant announcement.

⁷ U.S. Office of Management and Budget, *Detailed Assessment on the Runaway and Homeless Youth Assessment*, 2003 and U.S. Office of Management and Budget, *Detailed Assessment on the Runaway and Homeless Youth Assessment*, 2007, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore/summary/10001064.2006.html>. (Hereafter PART 2003 or PART 2007.)

⁸ For additional information about NEO-RHYMIS, see https://extranet.acf.hhs.gov/rhymis/custom_reports.html.

Oversight of Grant Review Process

The Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 directs the Government Accountability Office to examine the process by which organizations apply for BCP, TLP, and SOP grants. Specifically, GAO is to submit to Congress findings and recommendations relating to (1) HHS’s written responses to and other communications with unsuccessful applicants to determine if the information in the responses is conveyed clearly; (2) the content of the grant applications and other associated documents to determine if these materials are presented in a way that gives an applicant a clear understanding of the information that is to be provided and the terminology used in the materials; (c) the peer review process (if any) for the grants; (d) the typical time frame for responding to applicants and the efforts made by HHS to communicate about delayed funding decisions; and (e) the plans for implementation of technical assistance and training authorized under RHYA, and the effect of such programs on the application process for the grantees.⁹

Existing Grant Review Process

Applicants for BCP, TLP, and SOP grants are currently evaluated and rated by an independent review panel made up of non-federal reviewers who are experts in the field of runaway and homeless youth issues.¹⁰ The review panel uses evaluation criteria to assign a score up to 100 for each applicant and to identify the application’s strengths and weaknesses. The criteria are established in regulation¹¹ and described in greater detail in the grant announcements.

As set forth in the grant announcements, these criteria include the extent to which the application

- identifies the services that will be provided, as required by and consistent with RHYA, among other requirements;
- demonstrates the organizational capacity necessary to oversee federal grants through an explanation of the organization’s fiscal controls and governance structure, among other requirements;
- identifies quantitative outcomes for the proposed project that will fulfill the program purpose and scope of services as described in RHYA and the grant announcement, among other requirements;
- describes clear and appropriate program objectives that will fulfill the program purpose, as well as a clear need for the proposed project through a discussion of the conditions of youth and families in the area to be served, among other requirements;
- includes an organizational chart that demonstrates the relationship between all positions, including consultants, sub-grants and/or contractors, to be funded through the grant, among other requirements; and

⁹ For information about recent changes to the training and technical assistance programs, see CRS Report RL33785, *Runaway and Homeless Youth: Demographics and Programs*, by (name redacted).

¹⁰ For additional information about the grant review process, see archived grant funding announcements for the program, http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/grants_archive.html.

¹¹ 45 C.F.R. 1351.81.

- includes a detailed line-item budget for the federal and non-federal share of project costs and demonstrates how cost estimates were derived.

As further described in the grant announcements, the review panel's assigned scores assist the FYSB Associate Commissioner and program staff in considering applications. Applications are generally ranked in order of the average scores assigned by reviewers; however, the scores, in combination with other factors, determine whether an application is funded. These other factors include, but are not limited to, comments of reviewers and government officials, HHS staff evaluation and input, geographic distribution, previous program performance of applicants, compliance with grant terms under previous HHS grants, audit reports, investigative reports, and an applicant's progress in resolving any final audit disallowance on previous FYSB or other federal agency grants. According to HHS, because RHYA grants are highly competitive, well-qualified applicants may not receive funding.¹² Further, in some years, applicants with scores in the 90s have not been awarded grants because such a large number of applicants receive scores of 100 or close to 100.

HHS does not have an appeals process for unsuccessful applicants. However, in accordance with HHS's Awarding Agency Grants Administration Manual (AAGAM), unsuccessful applicants are notified by letter that they were not awarded funding, with a full explanation of the reasons the application was not funded.¹³ The letter contains a compilation of review comments outlining the strengths and weaknesses of their application as identified by the panel of non-federal reviewers. Compilations are also available for successful applications, however, they are only sent at the request of these applicants. Scores are not automatically sent to any applicants but are available upon request.

Prevalence and Incidence Studies

The precise number of homeless and runaway youth is unknown due to their residential mobility and other factors, and RHYA, as authorized through FY2008, was silent on whether HHS or any other entity was to approximate this number. Runaway and homeless youth often eschew the shelter system for locations or areas that are not easily accessible to shelter workers and others who count the homeless and runaways.¹⁴ Determining the number of homeless and runaway youth is further complicated by the lack of a standardized methodology for counting the population and inconsistent definitions of what it means to be homeless or a runaway.¹⁵ In response to a 2002 congressional request through the appropriations process,¹⁶ HHS submitted a report to Congress in 2003 that discusses a plan for developing estimates of the incidences of

¹² Based on correspondence with the Department of Health and Human Services on September 21, 2007.

¹³ *Ibid.*, February 26, 2008.

¹⁴ Christopher L. Ringwalt et al., "The Prevalence of Homelessness Among Adolescents in the United States," *American Journal of Public Health*, vol. 88, no. 9 (September 1998), p. 1325.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ The Senate Appropriations Committee made this request in S.Rept. 107-84 to accompany the Senate version of the Labor, HHS, Education Appropriations Bill for 2002 (S. 1536). Companion legislation (H.R. 3061) was signed into law as P.L. 107-116.

runaway, throwaway,¹⁷ homeless, and street experiences among youth, as well as a plan for regularly monitoring incidence trends.¹⁸

The Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 seeks to determine the number of youth who have run away or are homeless by requiring HHS to estimate at five year intervals, beginning within two years of the enactment of P.L. 110-378 (October 8, 2010), the incidence and prevalence of the runaway and homeless youth population ages 13 to 26. The law also directs HHS to assess the characteristics of these youth. HHS is required to conduct a survey of and direct interviews with a representative sample of homeless youth ages 13 to 26 to determine past and current socioeconomic characteristics; barriers to obtaining housing and other services; and other information HHS determines useful, in consultation with states and other entities concerned with youth homelessness. HHS is to consult with the federal Interagency Council on Homelessness about the studies overall. The new law does not specify the methodology for carrying out the studies, except to say that HHS should make the estimate based on the best quantitative and qualitative social science research methods available. Further, if HHS enters into an agreement with a non-federal entity to carry out the assessment, the entity is to be a non-governmental organization or individual determined by HHS to have expertise in this type of research. As mentioned above, the law authorized such sums as may be necessary for FY2009 through FY2013 to conduct the study.

The studies must be submitted to the House Education and Labor Committee and Senate Judiciary Committee, and made available to the public.

Issues

During the 110th Congress, the House and Senate conducted hearings on the challenges facing runaway and homeless youth and the federally funded services to assist the population.¹⁹ The issues raised included inadequate levels of funding for RHYA grantees, limited information about the outcomes of runaway and homeless youth, and the need for greater education and workforce opportunities for these youth. The Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 incorporates provisions that, in part, address the three issues.

¹⁷ “Throwaway youth” (or “push outs”) generally refer to runaway and homeless youth who have been abandoned by their parents or have been told to leave their households.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, *Incidence and Prevalence of Homeless and Runaway Youth*, May 9, 2003; available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/fys/design_opt/reports/incidence/incidence.pdf.

¹⁹ U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Education and Labor. Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities. *Runaway, Homeless, and Missing Children: Perspectives on Helping the Nation’s Vulnerable Youth*. Hearings. 110th Congress, 1st session, July 24, 2007. Transcript available at http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=110_house_hearings&docid=f:36729.pdf. U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Ways and Means. Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support. *Disconnected and Disadvantaged Youth*. Hearings. 110th Congress, 1st session, June 19, 2007. Written testimony available at <http://waysandmeans.house.gov/hearings.asp?formmode=detail&hearing=569>. U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary. *Living on the Street: Finding Solutions to Protect Runaway and Homeless Youth*. 110th Congress, 2nd session, April 29, 2008. Written testimony available at <http://judiciary.senate.gov/hearing.cfm?id=3312>.

Funding

At a hearing conducted by the Senate Judiciary Committee on April 29, 2008, service providers and advocates for runaway and homeless youth raised concerns that funds appropriated under RHYA have not been adjusted for increases in the cost of living. A provider in Vermont explained that his RHYA-funded programs have been level-funded since 1994, while costs have risen significantly. These same concerns were highlighted at a July 24, 2007, hearing on runaway, homeless, and missing children, conducted by the House Education and Labor Committee Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities. Further, the Government Accountability Office described in its February 2008 report on disconnected youth that funding has remained stagnant for federal youth programs, including those funded by RHYA. The report states: “While overall Transitional Living Program funding increased in FY2002 to support a greater number of programs, the amount available to individual local programs—capped at \$200,000—has not changed since 1992. One [runaway and homeless] program director explained that considering increases in the cost of operation, this amount funds only part of one staff rather than three as in previous years.”²⁰

An analysis of per grantee award amounts from FY2004 through FY2007 indicates that BCP and TLP funding has remained stable or has declined slightly.²¹ For example, \$44.4 million in BCP funds was awarded to 345 grantees for FY2004, resulting in an average grant of \$128,734. For FY2007, approximately \$43.3 million was awarded to 336 grantees, with an average grant amount of about \$128,821. Average TLP award amounts declined over the period from FY2004 through FY2007. For FY2004, 194 grantees shared \$36,744,000 in TLP funds, resulting in an average grant of \$189,402. The average grant award decreased to \$181,558 for FY2007, when 190 grantees shared \$34,496,000 in TLP funds.

In response to concerns about funding, the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 increases the authorization of appropriations in at least one year (FY2009) for the BCP, TLP, and SOP, and increases the minimum BCP awards for states and territories. However, for most programs—including those authorized under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act—Congress has passed, and the President has enacted, a continuing resolution for FY2009 (P.L. 110-329), which in most cases, provides for the same level of funding as in FY2008. The resolution extends until March 9, 2009, and does not reflect final funding levels for FY2009.

Youth Outcomes

At the hearings held by the Senate Judiciary Committee and House Education and Labor Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities, former runaway and homeless youth discussed the challenges of living on the street, such as the inability to find work and connect to school. One witness at the Senate Judiciary hearing described the assistance he received at a TLP-funded program that now employs him as a manager for the program. He explained that through intensive case management, he was empowered to stop using drugs and to live independently. Yet little is known about the outcomes of runaway and homeless youth generally. Local grantee

²⁰ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Disconnected Youth: Federal Action Could Address Some of the Challenges Faced by Local Programs That Reconnect Youth to Education and Employment*, GAO-08-313, February 2008, p. 29.

²¹ Based on a Congressional Research Service (CRS) analysis of appropriation information and the reported number of grantees, as provided in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, *Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees, FY2006 through FY2009*.

organizations have limited information about youth after they receive services, and research on whether youth experience homelessness as adults is dated. Some grantees may decide to follow up with youth who received services, but HHS does not require longitudinal data collection. HHS's 2007 report to Congress, *Promising Strategies to End Youth Homelessness*, states that longer-term studies of runaway and homeless youth are challenging because of the youth's transient nature.²² Further, knowledge about effective strategies for serving these youth is limited²³ and few, if any, studies appear to have been conducted to determine the costs and benefits of these interventions.

To glean more information about the runaway and homeless youth population, the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 requires HHS to determine the incidence and prevalence of runaway and homeless youth and to report on the socio-demographic and other characteristics of the population. Although not a specified goal of the act, this information may help practitioners and social science researchers develop effective interventions for the population.

Evaluation of TLP Sites

Efforts are currently underway at HHS to learn more about the youth who are served by the Transitional Living Program. In August 2007, HHS approved a sub-contract to Abt Associates to conduct an evaluation of the TLP at select grantee sites.²⁴ The study seeks to describe the outcomes of youth who participate in the program and to isolate and describe factors that may have contributed to their successes or challenges, including service delivery approaches, personal characteristics, and local circumstances. HHS (through the Family and Youth Services Bureau) and Abt researchers have conducted three site visits to TLP grantees (in Dallas, Texas; Portland, Oregon; and Wichita, Kansas) and a series of consultations with HHS and outside experts to inform the design of the study.

FYSB has not yet selected the TLP survey sites for the study itself; however, the sites will likely have extensive experience working with runaway and homeless youth and have been awarded continuous TLP funding for at least three years after the survey commences. These sites will work to ensure that after receiving training, staff will be sufficiently capable of administering the survey instruments. The sites will also need to be large enough to capture an adequate sample size.

Youth participants will complete surveys at entry and while receiving services through a survey administered by their TLP programs. They will also complete surveys for up to one year after leaving the program. Youth will self-report the data to a website six months and twelve months after exiting. Evaluators will compare the individual outcomes of each youth to his or her benchmark data. The youth surveys are pending executive branch review, and FYSB expects to begin collecting the data by the end of calendar year 2008. FYSB anticipates making preliminary

²² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Promising Strategies to End Youth Homelessness, Report to Congress*, 2007. Available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/docs/reporttocongress_youthhomelessness.pdf. This report was required under P.L. 108-96. See 42 U.S.C. 5701.

²³ Interventions can include case management, working with the youth's family, and social skills training, among other areas. For a review of research on intervention and prevention of homeless and runaway situations, see Paul A. Toro, Amy Dworsky, and Patrick J. Fowler, *Homeless Youth in the United States: Recent Research Findings and Intervention Approaches*, 2007 National Symposium on Homelessness Research, March 2007. Available at <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/homelessness/symposium07/toro/index.htm>.

²⁴ Based on correspondence with the Department Health and Human Services on March 28, 2008.

information available before the last surveys are completed. Further, FYSB expects to maintain the self-reporting website indefinitely as a means of tracking TLP graduates after the formal study is complete.

HHS issued a proposed information collection request for public comment about the evaluation in the *Federal Register* on August 25, 2008.²⁵

Education and Employment Outcomes for Runaway and Homeless Youth

On June 19, 2007, the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support held a hearing on disconnected and disadvantaged youth, with a focus on runaway youth. Witnesses described “disconnected youth” as those youth who have weak social networks of family, friends, and communities that can provide assistance such as employment connections, health insurance coverage, housing, tuition and other financial assistance, and emotional support. They also discussed measurable characteristics to indicate whether youth are disconnected, such as the lack of high school or college attendance coupled with not having a job over a specific period of time (e.g., one year).²⁶

Runaway and homeless youth are vulnerable to becoming disconnected because of separation from their families, absence from school, and non-participation in the economy.²⁷ Family conflict—rooted in abuse and neglect, school problems, and drug and alcohol abuse—can compel youth to leave home. Family disconnectedness is also evident among many runaway and homeless youth involved in the foster care system. These youth are brought to the attention of child welfare services because of incidents of abuse and neglect. Further, youth “aging out” of the foster care system experience homelessness at a greater rate than their counterparts in the general population due, in part, to family disconnectedness. Some gay and lesbian youth also experience family disassociation when they come out about their sexuality.

Some runaway and homeless youth spend time out of school while they are away from a permanent home. The FY2007 NEO-RHYMIS survey indicated that about 20% of youth were not attending school regularly before entering the Basic Center Program.²⁸ Of youth in the Transitional Living Program, 21% had dropped out of school. Some homeless youth face barriers to attending school because of transportation problems and the absence of parents and guardians who can provide records and permission for youth to participate in school activities. Finally, some runaway and homeless youth are removed from the formal economy and resort to illegal activity, including stealing and selling drugs in exchange for cash. Other such youth are too young to work legally or experience mental health and other challenges that make working difficult.

²⁵ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, “Proposed Information Collection Activity; Comment Request,” 73 *Federal Register* 50022, August 25, 2008. Comments are due October 25, 2008.

²⁶ For additional information about disconnected and other vulnerable youth, see CRS Report RL33975, *Vulnerable Youth: Background and Policies*, by (name redacted).

²⁷ Bob Reeg, “The Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and Disconnected Youth,” in Jodie Levin-Epstein and Mark H. Greenburg, eds., *Leave No Youth Behind: Opportunities for Congress to Reach Disconnected Youth* (July 2003), pp. 56-63.

²⁸ These figures were derived from the report, “Grade Completed at Exit.” See <https://extranet.acf.hhs.gov/rhymis/>.

The Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 seeks to fund research projects that focus on connecting youth to work and school. The act amends RHYA to require HHS to give priority to research, evaluation, demonstration, and service projects that increase access to education and career pathways for runaway and homeless youth. These projects must be intended to help decrease high school dropout rates, increase rates of attaining a secondary school diploma or its equivalent, or increase placement and retention in postsecondary education or advanced workforce training programs.

Appendix.

Table A-I. Comparison of Changes Enacted by S. 2982/P.L. 110-378 with the Previous Law, Current Regulation (Where Applicable), and H.R. 5524

Bill Provision and Amendments Made by S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378 to RHYA (and U.S. Code) (The section numbers refer to H.R. 5524)	Previous Law (as it existed prior to the enactment of S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378)	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982/P.L. 110-378 (as signed by the President on October 8, 2008)
Sec. 1. Short Title				
	Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.		Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008 (to amend the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act).	(Sec. 1) Same as H.R. 5524.
Sec. 2. Findings				
Finding About Positive Youth Development Amends Sec. 302 (42 U.S.C. 5701)	No provision.		Adds as a purpose that services for runaway and homeless youth should be developed and provided using a positive youth development approach that ensures a young person a sense of (a) safety and structure; (b) belonging and membership; (c) self-worth and social contribution; (d) independence and control over one's life; and (e) closeness in interpersonal relationships.	(Sec. 2) Same as H.R. 5524.

Bill Provision and Amendments Made by S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378 to RHYA (and U.S. Code) (The section numbers refer to H.R. 5524)	Previous Law (as it existed prior to the enactment of S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378)	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982/P.L. 110-378 (as signed by the President on October 8, 2008)
Sec. 3. Grants for Centers and Services				
Youth's Length of Stay Amends Sec. 311(a) (42 U.S.C. 5711)	No provision related to length of stay. However, the law specifies that services provided by BCP projects include "safe and appropriate shelter."	1351.1(a) "Temporary shelter" under the Basic Center Program is defined as "the provision of short term (maximum of 15 days) room and board and core crisis intervention services, on a 24-hour basis, by a runaway and homeless youth project."	Safe and appropriate shelter not to exceed 15 days, or not to exceed 21 days, if the center is "located in a state or locality with an applicable law or regulation that permits a length of stay in excess of 15 days in compliance with licensure requirements for child and youth serving facilities."	(Sec. 3) Safe and appropriate shelter not to exceed 21 days.
Grants for States and Territories Amends Sec. 311(b) (42 U.S.C. 5711)	An annual minimum of \$100,000 for each state and an annual minimum of \$45,000 for each territory.		To the extent that sufficient funds are available, and subject to the provision about funding for FY2009 and FY2010 (below), an annual minimum of \$150,000 for each state and an annual minimum of \$70,000 for each territory.	(Sec. 3) subject to the provision about funding for FY2009 and FY2010 (below), an annual minimum of \$200,000 for each state and an annual minimum of \$70,000 for each territory.
Minimum Funding for FY2009 and FY2010 Amends Sec. 311(b) (42 U.S.C. 5711)	No provision.		Funding for each state in FY2009 and FY2010 is to be no less than the amount allotted to that state for FY2008.	(Sec. 3) Same as H.R. 5524.
Reallocation of Unused Funds Amends Sec. 311(b) (42 U.S.C. 5711)	No provision.		The Secretary shall reallocate any funds from one state to other states that will not be obligated before the end of a fiscal year.	(Sec. 3) Same as H.R. 5524, with a few minor, non-substantive differences in the text.

Bill Provision and Amendments Made by S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378 to RHYA (and U.S. Code) (The section numbers refer to H.R. 5524)	Previous Law (as it existed prior to the enactment of S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378)	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982/P.L. 110-378 (as signed by the President on October 8, 2008)
Sec. 4. Basic Center Grant Program Eligibility				
Adequate Emergency Preparedness and Management Plan Amends Sec. 312(b) (42 U.S.C. 5712(b))	No provision.		Projects must develop an adequate emergency preparedness and management plan.	(Sec. 3) Same as H.R. 5524.
Sec. 5. Transitional Living Grant Program Eligibility				
Provision of Shelter, Services, and Other Assistance Amends Sec. 322(a) (42 U.S.C. 5714-2(a))	To qualify for funding, applicants must agree in their plan submitted to the Secretary that they will provide, <i>directly or indirectly, shelter and services</i> related to basic life skills and other services.		Applicants must specify in their plans that they will provide, <i>directly or by contract</i> , shelter and services related to basic life skills and other services.	(Sec. 4) Applicants must specify in their plans that they will provide, <i>by grant, agreement, or contract</i> , shelter and services related to basic life skills and other services.
Youth's Length of Stay in Program Amends Sec. 322(a) (42 U.S.C. 5714-2(a))	Not to exceed a continuous period of 540 days, except that youth under age 18 may remain in the program until their 18 th birthday or the 180 th day after the end of the 540-day period, whichever comes first.		Adds that youth may remain in the program for a continuous period of up to 635 days if they are in a project "located in a state that has an applicable state or local law or regulation that permits a length of stay in excess of the 540-day period in compliance with licensure requirements for child and youth serving facilities."	(Sec. 4) Not to exceed a continuous period of 540 days, or 635 days in exceptional circumstances, except that a youth under age 18 may remain in the program beyond the 635 days (if otherwise qualified for the program and under exceptional circumstances) until his or her 18 th birthday.
Definition of "Exceptional Circumstances" Amends Sec. 322(c) (42 U.S.C. 5714-2(c))	No provision		No provision.	(Sec. 4) Circumstances in which a youth would benefit to an unusual extent from additional time in the program.

Bill Provision and Amendments Made by S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378 to RHYA (and U.S. Code) (The section numbers refer to H.R. 5524)	Previous Law (as it existed prior to the enactment of S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378)	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982/P.L. 110-378 (as signed by the President on October 8, 2008)
Emergency Preparedness and Management Plan Amends Sec. 322(a) (42 U.S.C. 5714-2(a))	No provision.		Transitional Living Program projects must develop an adequate emergency preparedness and management plan.	(Sec. 4) Same as H.R. 5524.
Sec. 6. Research, Evaluation, Demonstration, and Service Projects				
Selection of Grantees Amends Sec. 343(b) (42 U.S.C. 5714-23)	The Secretary is to give <i>special consideration</i> to proposed projects relating to research, evaluations, and demonstrations in nine priority areas, including (1) youth who repeatedly leave and remain away from their homes; (2) transportation related to services provided under RHYA; (3) runaway and homeless youth in rural areas; (4) programs that place runaway and homeless youth with host families; (5) staff training in sexual assault and victimization; (6) innovative methods of developing resources that enhance runaway and homeless youth centers; (7) training for staff and youth about the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV); (8) increasing access to health care (including <i>mental health care</i>) for youth; and (9) increasing access to education for runaway and homeless youth.		The Secretary is to give <i>priority</i> to projects focused on the nine priority areas in current law (with some modifications to the descriptions of the projects listed under paragraphs (8) and (9) in current law) as well an additional project under a new paragraph (10): (8) increasing access to quality health care (including <i>behavioral health care</i>) for youth; (9) increasing access to education for runaway and homeless youth, including access to educational and workforce programs to achieve outcomes such as decreasing high school dropout rates, increasing rates of attaining a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or increasing placement and retention in postsecondary education or advanced workforce training programs; and (10) providing programs, including innovative programs, that assist youth in obtaining and maintaining safe and stable housing, and which may include	(Sec. 5) Same as H.R. 5524, with a few minor, non-substantive differences in the text.

Bill Provision and Amendments Made by S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378 to RHYA (and U.S. Code) (The section numbers refer to H.R. 5524)	Previous Law (as it existed prior to the enactment of S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378)	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982/P.L. 110-378 (as signed by the President on October 8, 2008)
Priority Selection of Grantees Amends Sec. 343(c) (42 U.S.C. 5714-23)	The Secretary is to give priority consideration to applicants with experience working with runaway and homeless youth.		programs with supportive services that continue after the youth complete the remainder of the programs. Adds that the Secretary is to give priority consideration to applicants with experience working with runaway and homeless youth and ensure that applicants selected represent diverse geographic regions of the U.S. and carry out projects that serve diverse youth.	(Sec. 5) Same as H.R. 5524, with a few minor, non-substantive differences in the text.
Sec. 7. Estimate of Incidence and Prevalence of Youth Homelessness <i>Adds a new Section 345 under Part D (42 U.S.C. 5714-21—5714-24)</i>				
Periodic Estimate of Incidence and Prevalence of Youth Homelessness Adds new subsection Sec. 345(a)	The Senate Appropriations Committee requested, through S.Rept. 107-84 (to accompany S. 1536), that HHS submit a report to Congress that discusses a plan for developing estimates of the incidences of runaway, throwaway, homeless, and street experiences among youth, as well as a plan for regularly monitoring incidence trends. This report was submitted in 2003.		Not later than two years after this provision becomes effective, and at subsequent five-year intervals, the Secretary, in coordination with the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, shall prepare a written report for the House Education and Labor Committee and Senate Judiciary Committee that contains an estimate, obtained using the best quantitative and qualitative social science research methods available, of the incidence and prevalence of runaway and homeless youth ages 13 to 26, and includes an assessment of the characteristics of these youth.	(Sec. 6) Same as H.R. 5524, with a few minor, non-substantive differences in the text.

Bill Provision and Amendments Made by S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378 to RHYA (and U.S. Code) (The section numbers refer to H.R. 5524)	Previous Law (as it existed prior to the enactment of S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378)	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982/P.L. 110-378 (as signed by the President on October 8, 2008)
Content of Incidence and Prevalence Assessment Adds new subsection Sec. 345(b)	No provision.		Each assessment must contain the results of a survey of and direct interviews with, a representative sample of runaway and homeless youth ages 13 to 26 to determine past and current (a) socioeconomic characteristics; (b) barriers to obtaining safe, quality, and affordable housing; comprehensive and affordable health insurance and health services; and incomes, public benefits, supportive services, and connections to caring adults; and (c) other information that the Secretary determines may be useful, in consultation with states, local units of government, and national non-governmental organizations concerned with homelessness.	(Sec. 6) Same as H.R. 5524.
Implementation of Assessment Adds new subsection (Sec. 345(c))	No provision.		If the Secretary enters into any agreement with a non-federal entity to carry out the assessment, such entity shall be a non-governmental organization, or an individual, determined by the Secretary to have appropriate expertise in quantitative and qualitative social science research.	(Sec. 6) Same as H.R. 5524.

Bill Provision and Amendments Made by S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378 to RHYA (and U.S. Code) (The section numbers refer to H.R. 5524)	Previous Law (as it existed prior to the enactment of S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378)	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982/P.L. 110-378 (as signed by the President on October 8, 2008)
Sec. 8. Sexual Abuse Prevention Program (Note: also known as the Street Outreach Program)				
Priorities in Selecting Applicants Amends Sec. 351(b) (42 U.S.C. 5714-41(b))	In selecting applicants to receive grants, the Secretary shall give priority to non-profit private agencies that have experience in providing services to runaway, homeless, and street youth.		Same as current law, except that the Secretary is to also give priority to public agencies that have experience in providing services to runaway, homeless, and street youth.	(Sec. 7) Same as H.R. 5524.
Sec. 9. National Homeless Youth Awareness Campaign <i>H.R. 5524 would have redesignated current Part F as Part G and added a new Sec. 361 under a new Part F</i>				
Purpose <i>H.R. 5524 would have added a new subsection 361(a)</i>	No provision.		The Secretary shall, directly or through grants or contracts, conduct a national homeless youth awareness campaign for the purposes of (a) increasing awareness among individuals of all ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, and geographic locations about the issues facing runaway and homeless youth, the resources available for these youth, and the tools available for the prevention of youth runaway and homeless situations; and (b) encouraging parents, guardians, educators, health care professionals, social service professionals, law enforcement officials, and other community members to assist youth in averting or resolving runaway and homeless situations.	No provision.

Bill Provision and Amendments Made by S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378 to RHYA (and U.S. Code) (The section numbers refer to H.R. 5524)	Previous Law (as it existed prior to the enactment of S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378)	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982/P.L. 110-378 (as signed by the President on October 8, 2008)
Use of Funds <i>H.R. 5524 would have added a new subsection 361(b)</i>	No provision.		Funds made available for the campaign may be used only for the following: (a) dissemination of educational information and materials through various media, including television, radio, the Internet, and related technologies; (b) partnerships with national and other organizations concerned with homelessness; (c) in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, development and placement in media of public service announcements that educate the public on the issues facing runaway and homeless youth and the opportunities adults have to assist these youth; and (d) evaluation of the effectiveness of the campaign.	No provision.
Prohibitions on Use of Funds <i>H.R. 5524 would have added a new subsection 361(c)</i>	No provision.		Prohibits the use of funds for the national awareness campaign: (a) to supplant pro bono service time donated by national or local broadcasting networks, advertising agencies, or production companies for the campaign, or other pro bono work for the campaign; (b) for partisan political purposes, or to express advocacy in support of or opposition to any clearly identified candidate, ballot initiative or regulatory proposal;	No provision.

Bill Provision and Amendments Made by S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378 to RHYA (and U.S. Code) (The section numbers refer to H.R. 5524)	Previous Law (as it existed prior to the enactment of S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378)	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982/P.L. 110-378 (as signed by the President on October 8, 2008)
Financial and Performance Accountability <i>H.R. 5524 would have added a new subsection 361(d)</i>	No provision.		<p>(c) to fund advertising that features any elected official, person seeking office, cabinet level official, or other federal employee employed pursuant to Section 213 of Section C of Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations, as amended; (d) to fund advertising that does not contain a primary message intended to educate the public on the issues facing runaway and homeless youth (or youth considering running away) or the opportunities for adults to help such youth; and (e) to fund advertising that solicits contributions from both public and private sources to support the national awareness campaign.</p> <p>The Secretary is to conduct (a) audits and reviews of costs of the national awareness campaign pursuant to Section 304C of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 (41 U.S.C. 254d); and (b) an audit to determine whether the costs of the national awareness campaign are allowable under Section 306 of that act (41 U.S.C. 256).</p>	No provision.

Bill Provision and Amendments Made by S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378 to RHYA (and U.S. Code) (The section numbers refer to H.R. 5524)	Previous Law (as it existed prior to the enactment of S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378)	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982/P.L. 110-378 (as signed by the President on October 8, 2008)
Report to Congress Would have added a new Section 361(e)	No provision relating to a report on a national awareness campaign. However, current law (Sec. 382(a)) requires the Secretary to submit a report to Congress biennially on the status, activities, and accomplishments of entities that receive grants under RHYA. ^a		The Secretary is to include in the report to Congress (as currently required under law)— a summary of the national awareness campaign that describes (a) the activities undertaken by the campaign; (b) steps to ensure that the campaign operates in an effective and efficient manner consistent with the overall strategy and focus of the campaign; and (c) each grant entered into with a corporation, partnership, or individual working on the campaign.	No provision.
Sec. 10. Definitions				
Definition of “Homeless Youth” (for the Basic Center Program only) Amends Sec. 387(3) (42 U.S.C. 5732a)	“Homeless youth” is defined as an individual who is not more than 18 years old; for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative; and who has no other safe alternative living arrangement.		Amends the first clause of the current definition to include an individual who is less than 18 years old, or an older maximum age if the BCP center is located in a state or locality with a law or regulation that permits a higher maximum age, in compliance with licensure requirements for child and youth serving facilities.	(Sec. 10) Same as H.R. 5524.

Bill Provision and Amendments Made by S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378 to RHYA (and U.S. Code) (The section numbers refer to H.R. 5524)	Previous Law (as it existed prior to the enactment of S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378)	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982/P.L. 110-378 (as signed by the President on October 8, 2008)
Definition of “Homeless Youth” (for the Transitional Living Program only) Amends Sec. 387(3) (42 U.S.C. 5732a)	“Homeless youth” is defined as an individual between the ages of 16 and 21; for whom it is not possible to live in a safe environment with a relative; and who has no other safe alternative living arrangement.		Amends the first clause of the current definition to include an individual between the ages of 16 and 22 or an age exceeding 22 years old upon exiting the TLP project (as permitted under Sec. 322(a)) ^b so long as the participant entered the TLP project prior to reaching age 22.	(Sec. 10) Same as H.R. 5524.
Definition of “Runaway Youth” (for the Transitional Living Program only) Amends Sec. 387(3) (42 U.S.C. 5732a)	“Runaway youth” is defined as a person under age 18 who absents himself or herself from home or place of legal residence without the permission of his or her <i>family</i> .		No provision.	(Sec. 10) Same as regulation, except that the individual absents himself or herself from home or place of legal residence without the permission of a <i>parent or legal guardian</i> .
Sec. 11. Authorization of Appropriations				
RHYA (other than select parts) Amends Sec. 388(a) (42 U.S.C. 5751(a))	\$105 million for FY2004 and “such sums as may be necessary” for FY2005 through FY2008, except for Part E (Street Outreach Program).		\$150 million for FY2009 and “such sums as may be necessary” for each of FY2010 through FY2013, except for Part E (Street Outreach Program) and proposed Part F (National Homeless Youth Awareness Campaign).	(Sec. 11) \$140 million for FY2009 and “such sums as may be necessary” for each of FY2010 through FY2013, except for Part E (Street Outreach Program and Sec. 345 under Part D (Periodic Estimate Assessment)).
Part E (Street Outreach Program) Amends Section 388(a) (42 U.S.C. 5751(a))	“Such sums as may be necessary” for FY2004 through FY2008.		\$30 million for FY2009 and “such sums as may be necessary” for each of FY2010 through FY2013.	(Sec. 11) \$25 million for FY2009 and “such sums as may be necessary” for each of FY2010 through FY2013.

Bill Provision and Amendments Made by S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378 to RHYA (and U.S. Code) (The section numbers refer to H.R. 5524)	Previous Law (as it existed prior to the enactment of S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378)	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982/P.L. 110-378 (as signed by the President on October 8, 2008)
Part F (National Homeless Youth Awareness Campaign) <i>H.R. 5524 would have redesignated Part F from General Provisions to the National Homeless Youth Awareness Campaign</i>	No provision.		\$3 million for each of FY2009 through FY2013.	No provision.
Part C (National Communications System) and Part D (Coordinating, Training, Research, and Other Activities) Sec. 388(a) (42 U.S.C. 5751 (a))	In each fiscal year, after reserving the amounts required for Parts A and B (BCP and TLP, respectively), the Secretary shall use the remaining amount (if any) to carry out Parts C and D.		No provision.	(Sec. 11) Conforming amendment to exclude Sec. 345 from receiving funding that is allocated for Part C or Part D.
Sec. 345 (Periodic Estimate Assessment) Sec. 388(a) (42 U.S.C. 5751(a))	No provision.		“Such sums as may be necessary” for each of FY2009 through FY2013.	(Sec. 11) Same as H.R. 5524, with minor differences in the text.
Sec. 12. Performance Standards <i>H.R. 5524 would have added a new Sec. 390; S. 2982/P.L. 110-378 adds a new Sec. 386A under Part F (General Provisions)</i>				
Establishment of Performance Standards Adds a new subsection 386A(a)	No provision.		Not later than one year after this section becomes effective, the Secretary is to issue rules that specify performance standards for public and non-profit entities that receive BCP, TLP, and SOP grants.	(Sec. 8) Same as H.R. 5524, with a few minor, non-substantive differences in the text.
Implementation of Performance Standards Adds a new subsection 386A(c)	No provision.		The Secretary shall integrate the performance standards into the grantmaking, monitoring, and evaluations processes for the BCP, TLP, and SOP.	(Sec. 8) Same as H.R. 5524, with a few minor, non-substantive differences in the text.

Bill Provision and Amendments Made by S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378 to RHYA (and U.S. Code) (The section numbers refer to H.R. 5524)	Previous Law (as it existed prior to the enactment of S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378)	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982/P.L. 110-378 (as signed by the President on October 8, 2008)
Consultation Adds a new subsection 386A(b)	No provision.		In developing performance standards, the Secretary shall consult with representatives of public and nonprofit private entities that receive grants under RHYA, including statewide and regional nonprofit organizations (including combinations of such organizations), and national nonprofit organizations concerned with youth homelessness.	(Sec. 8) Same as H.R. 5524, with a few minor, non-substantive differences in the text.
Public Comment <i>H.R. 5524 would have added a new subsection 390(d)</i>	No provision.		Before issuing rules to establish performance standards, the Secretary is to provide an opportunity for public comment concerning the standards and maintain an official record of such comment.	No provision.
Sec. 13. GAO Study and Report <i>H.R. 5524 and S. 2982 do not specify the section of RHYA in which this language would be inserted</i>				
Study	No provision.		The Government Accountability Office (GAO) is to conduct a study, and make findings and recommendations, relating to the process for awarding grants under Parts A, B, and E of RHYA, including (a) the Secretary's written responses to (and any other methods for communicating with) applicants that do not receive a grant under Part A, B, or E, to determine if the	(Sec. 11) Same as H.R. 5524, with a few minor, non-substantive differences in the text.

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			<p>information in the response is conveyed clearly; (b) the structure of the grant application and associated documents (including announcements that grants are available under such parts), to determine if these materials are structured so that the applicant has a clear understanding of what is required in each provision to successfully complete the application, including a clear explanation of terminology required to be used by the applicant; (c) the peer review process (if any) used to review the grants (including the selection of peer reviewers) and the oversight of the peer review process by HHS employees, as well as to the extent to which these employees make funding determinations based on the comments and scores of the peer reviewers; (d) the typical time frame and process used by HHS employees, including employee responsibilities, for responding to applicants and the efforts made by HHS staff to communicate with applicants when funding decisions are delayed or not appropriated before the beginning of the current fiscal year; and (e) the</p>	

Bill Provision and Amendments Made by S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378 to RHYA (and U.S. Code) (The section numbers refer to H.R. 5524)	Previous Law (as it existed prior to the enactment of S. 2982/ P.L. 110-378)	Current Regulation (where applicable)	H.R. 5524 (as passed by the House June 9, 2008)	S. 2982/P.L. 110-378 (as signed by the President on October 8, 2008)
Report	No provision.		plans for, and implementation of, where applicable, RHYA-authorized technical assistance and training programs (authorized under Sec. 342), ^c and the effect of such programs on the grant application process. GAO is to prepare and submit a report to Congress on its findings and recommendations no later than a year after the bill is enacted.	(Sec. 11) Same as H.R. 5524.

Source: Table prepared by the Congressional Research Service

- a. Section 382(a) pertains to the biennial report to Congress on the status, activities, and accomplishments of entities that receive grants under Parts A, B, C, D, and E of RHYA.
- b. Section 322(a) pertains to eligibility for grants under the Transitional Living Program. As amended by S. 2982/P.L. 110-378, youth may remain in the program for a continuous period of 635 days (approximately 21 months) under “exceptional circumstances,” or circumstances in which a youth would benefit to an unusual extent from additional time in the program.
- c. Section 342 pertains to grants for technical assistance and training made to statewide and regional nonprofit organizations (and combinations of such organizations) to provide assistance to entities eligible to carry out programs, projects, and activities under RHYA.

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