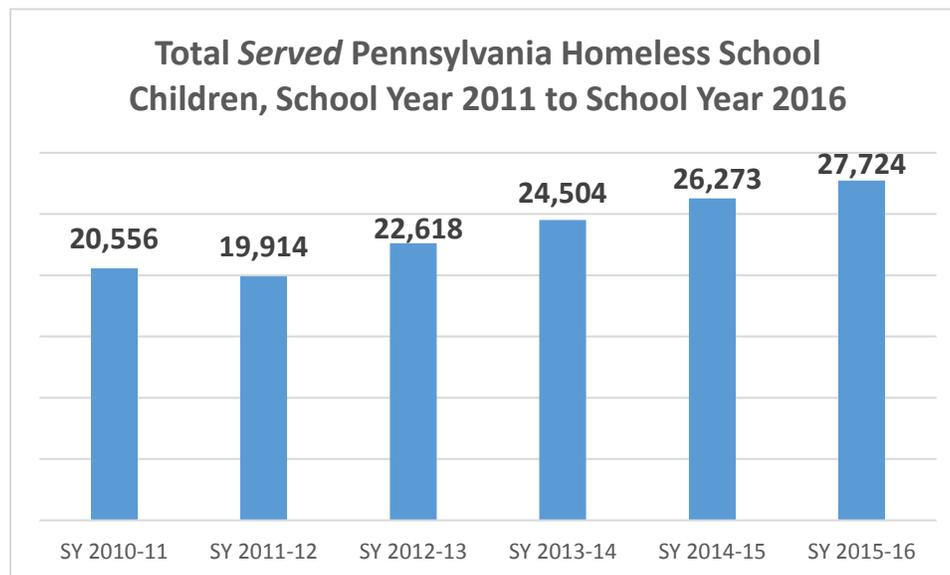

Summary of federal and state legislation affecting youth who are housing insecure or homeless

More than 27,000 children and youth were homeless in Pennsylvania the past year.



Federal:

1. Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act

What is the problem? Congress has debated improving the RHY program but has not approve a final bill. In addition, Congress is discussing funding RHY at the current Fiscal Year 2017 level of \$119 million, in spite of the growing numbers of youth who experience homelessness. The number of homeless youth has increased greatly over time, but funding for shelter, transitional housing and street outreach has not increased. There are only about 8-10 Basic Centers, 3 Maternity Group Homes, and two street outreach programs in all of Pennsylvania, yet more than 20,000 youth are homeless every year.

What is the recommendation? Reauthorize the [Runaway and Homeless Youth Act](#) via [HR 5339](#) and fund it at \$165 million, up from the current FY 2018 \$127 million.

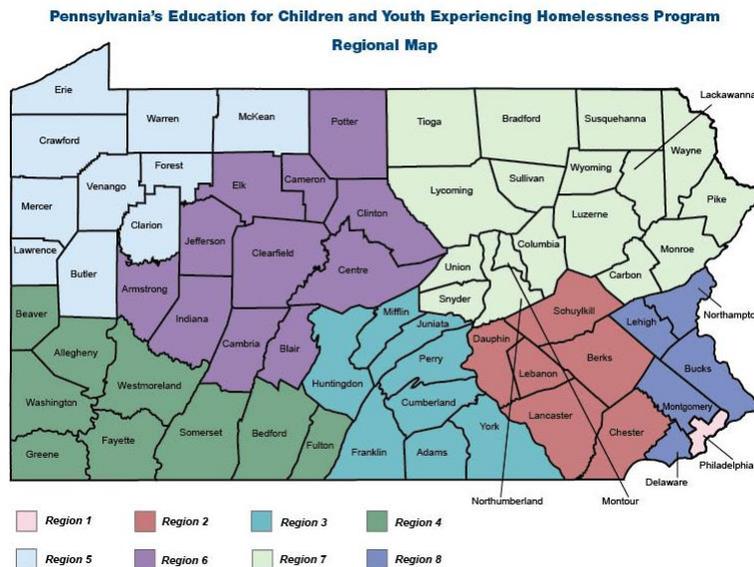
How would it help? For over 40 years, the [Runaway and Homeless Youth Act](#) has provided funding for street outreach, temporary emergency housing, and transitional housing services for runaway, homeless, and trafficked youth. These proposals make critical updates to the RHYA, including:

- There are 32 added or edited definitions in the new RHY final rule that improve a variety of issues.

- New provisions to **combat sex trafficking** and other forms of forced labor and discrimination
- **Increases** the length of stays in emergency shelter from 21 to 30 days.
- More than 280 organizations nationwide supported these provisions in the last Congress.

2. Education for Homeless Children and Youth

What is the problem? The public school system is the largest and most significant intervention for youth homelessness. Schools are often the only source of stability for youth. The Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) program removes barriers to the enrollment, attendance, and opportunity for success for homeless children and youth. Despite an increase in the number of youth who experience homelessness, funding has not increased.



In addition, Congress enacted the “Every Student Succeeds Act” (ESSA) that added amendments to the EHCY program, including new requirements for appropriate capacity for state and local personnel, better identification of homeless children and youth, enhanced school stability, and special protections for preschool children and unaccompanied homeless youth. However, school districts have little capacity to implement the new rules without an increase in capacity.

What is the recommendation? Congress should consider appropriating EHCY at \$100 million for FY 2019, an increase from the current \$85 million.

3. Homeless Children and Youth Act [H.R. 1511/S. 611]

What is the problem? Youth homelessness is often experienced in forms that do not fit HUD's current definition, such as couch surfing and staying with friends. Because of the limitations of the HUD definition of homelessness, large numbers of homeless youth do not have access to important services and housing and thus remain in unstable and dangerous situations. Similarly, families lose out on assistance or do not seek it for fear of losing their children to the child welfare system.

What is the recommendation? Congress should approve of the [Homeless Children and Youth Act](#).

How would it help? The [Homeless Children and Youth Act](#) is bi-partisan legislation that would make it easier for homeless children, youth, and families to receive homeless assistance by amending the definition of homelessness to better reflect a youth's experience of homelessness.

The [Homeless Children and Youth Act](#) (HCYA) **amends HUD's definition of homelessness** to include children and youth who are verified as homeless through:

- HUD's homeless assistance programs
- Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs
- Violence Against Women Act programs
- Public school district programs ¹

The HCYA would recognize and make visible the problem of youth homelessness and would equip jurisdictions with resources to respond to these youth.

- **Homeless Assistance Act** (Public Law 100-77, 101 Stat. 482) unless continued enrollment is not in the child's best interest.
- **Transportation:** A child experiencing homelessness or awaiting foster care shall be entitled to free transportation to the child's school of origin in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (Public Law 100-77, 101 Stat. 482). This clarifies that schools (including preschools) must provide or arrange transportation for students to and from their school of origin and it must be comparable to what is offered to non-homeless students. In addition, children in foster care who do not qualify as homeless under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act shall be entitled to receive transportation.
- **Timely Graduation After Experiencing Educational Disruption.--** Each student experiencing an educational disruption shall be assigned a point of contact at the school the child attends. Also, school districts would need to honor credits previously earned in any prior educational placement by students experiencing an educational disruption.

¹ <https://www.nn4youth.org/policy-advocacy/hcya>; <https://www.hudexchange.info/onecpd/assets/File/2013-AHAR-Part-2.pdf>; <http://helphomelesskidsnow.org/>.