

# **Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act (S. 262)**

## **SECTION-BY-SECTION**

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### **Section 1. Short Title.**

Cited as the “Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act”.

### **Section 2. References.**

Clarifies that this bill amends the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5701 et seq.).

### **Section 3. Findings.**

Amends the findings to the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) by adding that services provided to runaway and homeless youth should be age, gender, and culturally appropriate, and acknowledges that runaway and homeless youth are at high risk of becoming victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons.

### **Section 4. Basic Center Program.**

This section extends the allowable time period for temporary housing stays from 21 days to 30 days. It requires that services provided under this section are age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate. Counseling and aftercare services are currently available to youth and their families, and this reauthorization permits youth to identify individuals as family who may not be biological relatives. This is a recognition that counseling and aftercare planning should include those who are best suited to support the youth and help them transition into a more stable environment.

This section expands the definition of allowable services to include trauma-informed and gender-responsive services for runaway or homeless youth, including youth who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation. It also allows for services to include an assessment of family, including those identified as family by the youth, engagement in support and reunification, interventions, and services for parents or legal guardians of youth.

Applicants must develop a plan for establishing or coordinating with outreach programs designed to serve youth who are cultural minorities, have limited ability to speak English, or who are victims of sexual exploitation or trafficking in persons.

This section adds new statistical record-keeping requirements for service providers, as well as a requirement that Basic Center Programs develop emergency preparedness plans to address natural disasters, inclement weather, and mental health emergencies.

Program staff are required to assist youth in filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

This section eliminates a prior eligibility priority to applicants requesting grants of less than \$200,000.

### **Section 5. Transitional Living Grant Program.**

This section adds a requirement that grantees under this program offer counseling services that are age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate. It requires Transitional Living Program (TLP) grantees to provide new services including job attainment skills, mental and physical health care, and suicide prevention services. TLPs must also provide counseling to homeless youth and encourage the involvement of their families, including those identified as family by the youth. TLPs must provide aftercare services to homeless youth who have received shelter services.

TLPs will be required to establish a plan to ensure the proper referral of homeless youth to mental health service providers, health care programs, and programs that provide comprehensive services to victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation. They must develop a plan to provide age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate services.

Applicants must submit additional statistical information, including the number, characteristics, and demographic information of the homeless youth who participate in the program, including the prevalence of trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation of such youth.

TLPs must also develop an emergency preparedness plan to respond to natural disasters, inclement weather, and mental health emergencies.

### **Section 6. Coordinating, Training, Research, and Other Activities.**

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) must coordinate their activities with relevant Federal agencies, including the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Justice. This is required to prevent duplication of services and ensure that efforts across agencies are complementary.

Priority consideration will be given to grant applicants who train their staff to identify and respond to youth suffering the behavioral and emotional effects of violence, trauma, sexual abuse and assault, trafficking in persons, or sexual exploitation.

Priority consideration will also be given to grant applicants who articulate best practices for identifying and providing age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate services to vulnerable and underserved youth populations and youth victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation.

Priority consideration will be given to grant applicants who verify the youth as runaway or homeless when they complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

Priority consideration will also be given to grant applicants who track the relationship between the runaway and homeless youth populations and trafficking in persons, including noting whether youths who are victims of trafficking in persons were previously involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems.

In addition to giving priority to applicants who represent diverse geographic regions of the United States, HHS must give priority to applicants who carry out projects that serve diverse populations of runaway or homeless youth, including youth who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation.

The Department of Health and Human Services must submit to Congress a written report within two years of enactment, and every five years after that, on the incidence of runaway and homeless individuals between the ages of 12 and 26. The report will include demographic information about runaway or homeless youth, including youth who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation. It must also include information about challenges faced by runaway and homeless youth in obtaining comprehensive and affordable health insurance and health services, including mental health services and access to education and job training.

#### **Section 7. Sexual Abuse Prevention Program.**

This section clarifies that public entities, in addition to non-profits, are eligible to receive grants under this section. It specifies that the Secretary of HHS can make grants to applicants providing services to youth at risk of sexual abuse, violence, trafficking in persons, or sexual exploitation.

#### **Section 8. General Provisions.**

The Department of Health and Human Services must submit to Congress a written report within two years of enactment, and every other year after that, on the status, activities, and accomplishments of entities that receive grants, with particular attention to their ability to collect data on trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation of runaway and homeless youth.

The report must also include information on the number and characteristics of homeless youth served by such projects, including youth who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation, youth who are pregnant or parenting, or youth who have been involved in the child welfare system or the juvenile justice system. The report must also evaluate projects on their ability to encourage the resolution of problems within the family through counseling and development of self-sufficient living skills.

The bill also includes a nondiscrimination provision to clarify that a grantee may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or disability.

Authorizes \$140 million for grant programs under RHYA for each of fiscal years FY 2016 through FY 2020.

Authorizes \$2 million for each of fiscal years FY 2016 through FY 2020 for HHS to carry out the Prevalence Estimate.

Authorizes \$25 million for the Sexual Abuse Program for each of fiscal years FY 2016 through FY 2020.