

**256K.45 RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH ACT.**

Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** (a) The definitions in this subdivision apply to this section.

(b) "Commissioner" means the commissioner of human services.

(c) "Homeless youth" means a person 21 years of age or younger who is unaccompanied by a parent or guardian and is without shelter where appropriate care and supervision are available, whose parent or legal guardian is unable or unwilling to provide shelter and care, or who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The following are not fixed, regular, or adequate nighttime residences:

(1) a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;

(2) an institution or a publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations;

(3) transitional housing;

(4) a temporary placement with a peer, friend, or family member that has not offered permanent residence, a residential lease, or temporary lodging for more than 30 days; or

(5) a public or private place not designed for, nor ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.

Homeless youth does not include persons incarcerated or otherwise detained under federal or state law.

(d) "Youth at risk of homelessness" means a person 21 years of age or younger whose status or circumstances indicate a significant danger of experiencing homelessness in the near future. Status or circumstances that indicate a significant danger may include: (1) youth exiting out-of-home placements; (2) youth who previously were homeless; (3) youth whose parents or primary caregivers are or were previously homeless; (4) youth who are exposed to abuse and neglect in their homes; (5) youth who experience conflict with parents due to chemical or alcohol dependency, mental health disabilities, or other disabilities; and (6) runaways.

(e) "Runaway" means an unmarried child under the age of 18 years who is absent from the home of a parent or guardian or other lawful placement without the consent of the parent, guardian, or lawful custodian.

**Subd. 2. Homeless and runaway youth report.** The commissioner shall develop a report for homeless youth, youth at risk of homelessness, and runaways. The report shall include coordination of services as defined under subdivisions 3 to 5.

Subd. 3. **Street and community outreach and drop-in program.** Youth drop-in centers must provide walk-in access to crisis intervention and ongoing supportive services including one-to-one case management services on a self-referral basis. Street and community outreach programs must locate, contact, and provide information, referrals, and services to homeless youth, youth at risk of homelessness, and runaways. Information, referrals, and services provided may include, but are not limited to:

- (1) family reunification services;
- (2) conflict resolution or mediation counseling;
- (3) assistance in obtaining temporary emergency shelter;
- (4) assistance in obtaining food, clothing, medical care, or mental health counseling;
- (5) counseling regarding violence, prostitution, substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy;
- (6) referrals to other agencies that provide support services to homeless youth, youth at risk of homelessness, and runaways;
- (7) assistance with education, employment, and independent living skills;
- (8) aftercare services;
- (9) specialized services for highly vulnerable runaways and homeless youth, including teen parents, emotionally disturbed and mentally ill youth, and sexually exploited youth; and
- (10) homelessness prevention.

Subd. 4. **Emergency shelter program.** (a) Emergency shelter programs must provide homeless youth and runaways with referral and walk-in access to emergency, short-term residential care. The program shall provide homeless youth and runaways with safe, dignified shelter, including private shower facilities, beds, and at least one meal each day; and shall assist a runaway with reunification with the family or legal guardian when required or appropriate.

- (b) The services provided at emergency shelters may include, but are not limited to:
- (1) family reunification services;
  - (2) individual, family, and group counseling;
  - (3) assistance obtaining clothing;
  - (4) access to medical and dental care and mental health counseling;
  - (5) education and employment services;

- (6) recreational activities;
- (7) advocacy and referral services;
- (8) independent living skills training;
- (9) aftercare and follow-up services;
- (10) transportation; and
- (11) homelessness prevention.

Subd. 5. **Supportive housing and transitional living programs.** Transitional living programs must help homeless youth and youth at risk of homelessness to find and maintain safe, dignified housing. The program may also provide rental assistance and related supportive services, or refer youth to other organizations or agencies that provide such services. Services provided may include, but are not limited to:

- (1) educational assessment and referrals to educational programs;
- (2) career planning, employment, work skill training, and independent living skills training;
- (3) job placement;
- (4) budgeting and money management;
- (5) assistance in securing housing appropriate to needs and income;
- (6) counseling regarding violence, prostitution, substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy;
- (7) referral for medical services or chemical dependency treatment;
- (8) parenting skills;
- (9) self-sufficiency support services or life skill training;
- (10) aftercare and follow-up services; and
- (11) homelessness prevention.

Subd. 6. **Funding.** Any funds appropriated for this section may be expended on programs described under subdivisions 3 to 5, technical assistance, and capacity building. Up to four percent of funds appropriated may be used for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating runaway and homeless youth programs receiving funding under this section. Funding shall be directed to meet the greatest need, with a significant share of the funding focused on homeless youth providers in greater Minnesota.

**History:** *2006 c 264 s 13; 2007 c 147 art 2 s 49*