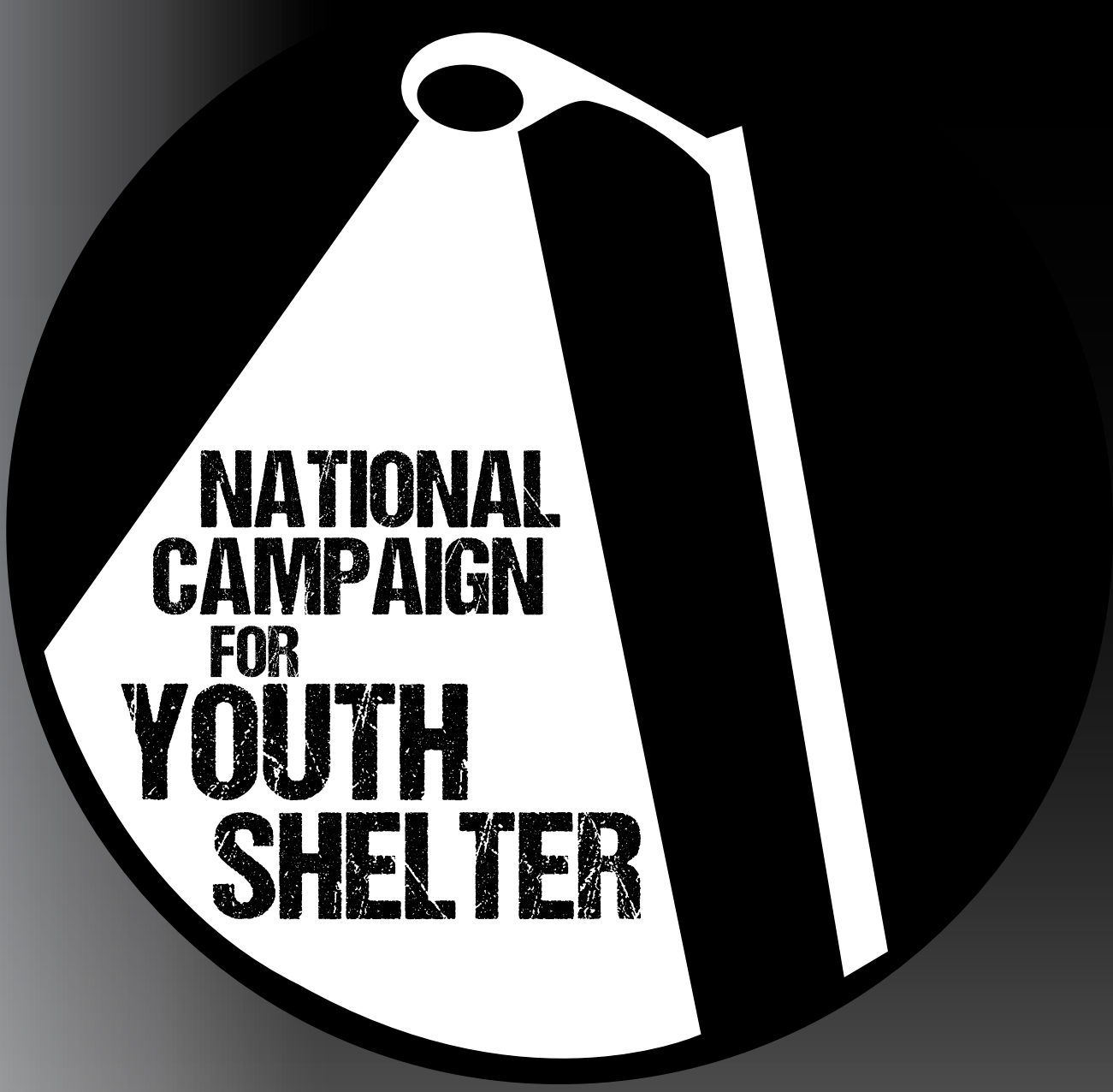


Youth Homelessness Awareness Events: Planning Guide

National Coalition for the Homeless
info@nationalhomeless.org

Demand a bed for every youth.

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

MAJOR CAUSES

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Family Rejection
- Aging Out of Foster Care
- Abandonment
- Parental Neglect

DANGERS FOR YOUTH

70 percent of youths on the streets eventually become victims of some form of commercial sexual exploitation.

30 percent of youths living in shelters will also fall victim to commercial sexual exploitation.

THIS IS A CRISIS

There are only 4,000 youth shelter beds in the United States, yet as many as 500,000 unaccompanied youths experience homelessness each year.

LGBT youth are disproportionately over-represented in the homeless youth population, with as many as 40% of the nation's homeless youth being LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender).

Nearly seven in 10 (68%) of LGBT homeless youth find themselves without a home because of a lack of acceptance of their sexual orientation or gender identity by their families.

Roughly 50% of homeless youth will leave home because they experienced some form of abuse at the hands of their families.

HOMELESSNESS is associated with an 87 percent increased likelihood of dropping out of school.

MAJOR IMPACTS

- Poor Mental/Physical Health
- Shorter Life Expectancy
- Earlier Parenthood
- Criminal Records
- Barriers to Employment
- Dependence on Welfare

WE NEED:

- SAFE & IMMEDIATE SHELTER FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE
- SHELTER BEDS & APPROPRIATE SERVICES FOR YOUTH
- A MORE COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF COUNTING HOMELESS YOUTH

7 Steps to Help End Youth Homelessness

1. LEARN & DEBATE

Understanding an issue is always the first step to resolving it. Get to know the causes and common struggles faced by youth experiencing homelessness by researching and speaking with experts, including young people who have experienced homelessness.

2. EDUCATE

Raise awareness and help others to understand the complexities of this issue. Share facts and figures as well as personal narratives to pique the interest of your peers.

3. ACTIVATE

Kick-start the effort locally by activiating your community to get more involved. Start brainstorming community events that will continue to raise awareness and resources.

4. EVALUATE

Dive deeper into the specifics of youth homelessness in your area. Start flushing out a strategy to determine who you need to approach and what you need to demand to see change in your community.

5. ADVOCATE

Take initiative and bring your demands to the most appropriate authority. Get a feel for what is currently being done and what needs to change. Help make them aware of the facts and the growing support for change.

6. ESCALATE

Rally more support to be able to continue the fight for more vested interest, more resources, and a long-term commitment for improvements.

7. CELEBRATE

Do not quit until every young person in your community has a safe and supportive place to live. Once that is achieved, make sure you recognize all of the good work done by your network and celebrate your succcess.

I don't want to be invisible anymore!

Host Organize Publicize Engage

Youth Homelessness Awareness Events

Host a "Youth4Youth" event where young people can come together to learn about youth homelessness and to discuss how they can work to address it in the local community and nationwide. You can show a documentary or invite a speaker who has experienced in his or her youth to share stories and answer questions. Youth homelessness is often not seen or discussed and it is important for young people to realize that there are people just like them living in incomprehensibly challenging circumstances. Finish the event with some action that demonstrates solidarity among young people, such as having everyone sign a pledge to volunteer or donate to a youth homeless service provider.

Launch a challenge for your creative community members, asking them to design visual resources (pictures, videos, infographics, charts, etc.) that can be used to educate your community about the youth homelessness crisis. Print the winning design on T-shirts, coffee mugs, wall posters, etc. that can be sold for a fundraiser, or be used as great giveaways.

Act4Youth Simulation: Simulate the struggles of youth homelessness with a lock-in event. All guests receive a packet on arrival with the background information of a young person who is experiencing homelessness. Task them to go try to find shelter, a meal, a job, and make a doctor's appointment, with the resources they are given in their packet. Set up stations to serve as each of those locations and have volunteers either help or turn participants away. After 6, 12, 18, or 24 hours, gather everyone together to debrief and discuss the realities of the struggles young people must face when they do not have a home. **(Full instructions and materials for this simulation are included in Appendix 1).**

Collaborate with your local LGBT community to arrange a panel discussion about the challenges that LGBT young people face when they come out to unsupportive families, as well as the specific struggles of being on the streets for this population.

Organize a research group to survey how many beds are available to people under the age of 24 in your community. Share your findings and try to pull together a task force to fight for additional resources for young people experiencing homelessness.

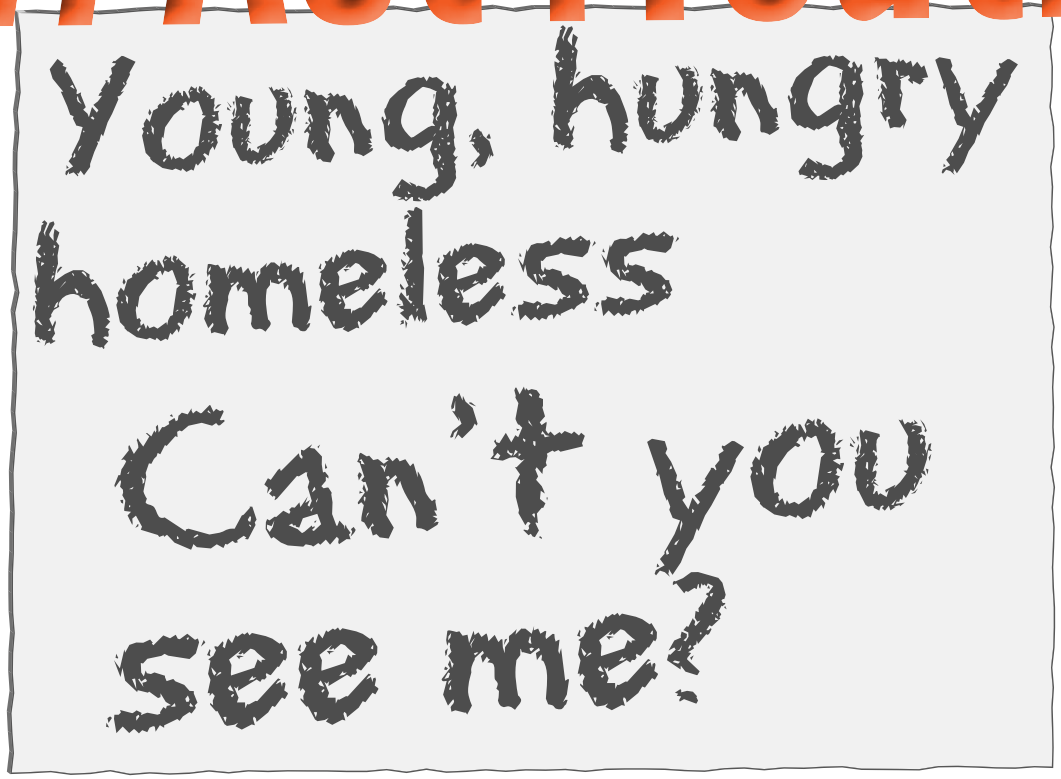
Competitive? Join the National Campaign for Youth Shelter fundraising challenge. We have big things planned to reach an end of youth homelessness in America, but we'll need your help. After your awareness events, please ask your newly informed activists to donate $15-100 to help the cause.

www.razoo.com/team/National-Campaign-For-Youth-Shelter

Sample Social Media Content Suggestions:

- The National Campaign for Youth Shelter is fighting for every young person to have access to safe shelter. #Act4Youth
- Kids who grow up on the streets are in real danger and so is the society that allows them to do so. #Act4Youth
- We support the National Camapaign for Youth Shelter because EVERYONE deserves a bed. #Act4Youth
- LGBT youth are disproportionately over-represented in the homeless youth population. We need safe shelter now! #Act4Youth
- No teenager who comes out of the closet should be thrown onto the streets! #Act4Youth
- All young people deserve to have a safe place to sleep without fear of discrimination or abuse. #Act4Youth

#Act4Youth



Share these badges!

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR YOUTH SHELTER

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR YOUTH SHELTER

DEMAND A BED FOR EVERY YOUTH.

‘Being on the street isn’t the hardest part about being homeless. It’s the moving on. It’s the getting past the fact the you’ve faced rejection or abandonment, sometimes from those who are meant to love you most, and learning how to piece your life back together.’

Rotimi Rainwater
Producer, Lost in America
Formerly homeless youth

Act4Youth - Youth Homelessness Simulation

Planning Ahead:

- Recruit 15-20 volunteers to work the event. Communicate the nature of the event to them so that they are prepared for the potential high-stress positions the simulation may create. They should ideally have some experience with assisting homeless youth.
- Arrange to purchase or seek donations for meals, school supplies, sleeping bags, cots, etc. Check with a local shelter to see what products they prefer so that you may donate the materials following the simulation.
- Print and cut the included simulation cards, waivers, mock transit passes, mock cash, and any other forms that may be utilized in the simulation (eg. application for a state ID).
- Invite credible guest speakers to lead the follow-up discussion groups.
- Gather local data on youth homelessness to incorporate into the discussion.
- Obtain a projector, easel pad, white board, etc. that can be set up to track ideas in the follow-up discussion.
- Talk with local service providers to arrange a day of service for those who would like to take action following the simulation.
- Designate and assign volunteers to areas to serve as the following places:

  School Cafeteria
  Homeless Liaison Office
  Big Savings Mart
  Hospital / City Clinic
  Office of Social Services
  Community Kitchen
  Teen Shelter
  Homeless Shelter

Setting Up:

- School: Set-up the cafeteria. Your state has a reduced-lunch program for students with an orange stamp on their cards. Some eligible students are worried about the stigma and have not sought the stamp.
- School: Designate a Homeless Liaison's Office. Leave bus tokens, food vouchers, and the reduced-lunch stamp for the volunteer to give to students that will come forward and admit to being homeless.
- Transportation: Place a volunteer at each end of the hallway between two necessary services. This distance is too long to be walked and participants must buy a bus token to pass.
- Hospital: Establish areas for both emergency services and a free clinic
- Social Services Office: Leave applications for food stamps, transitional housing, IDs, etc
- Youth Shelter: Set up spaces for 5% of participants
- Adult Shelter: Set up spaces for 10% of participants. Residents need to reapply for a space at 6am each morning. No storage area.
- Food Kitchens: Place the dining areas at far distances from one another. Set up stringent restrictions on the times in which distinct meals are served in each location. Serve simple prepackaged foods like soups, PB&J, and deli meat sandwiches. Optional: Have one site that can accomodate food allergies or diet preferences.
- Big Savings Mart: Leave job applications and schedule of interviews. There are open positions for 5% of applicants.

Youth Homelessness Simulation

Role List for Volunteers - *Positions can be combined if needed*

- Teen Shelter Case Worker
- Teen Shelter Volunteer
- High School Homeless Liaison
- High School Cafeteria Staff (2)
- Adult Shelter Case Worker
- Adult Shelter Volunteer
- Community Kitchen Staff/Volunteers (3)
- Big Savings Mart Hiring Manager
- City Clinic Worker
- City Clinic Doctor
- Emergency Room Worker
- Police Officers (2)
- 211 Operator
- Office of Social Services Staff

As volunteers move around the site, they are permitted to give 'money' to panhandlers and also may make discriminatory comments (within reason) to the participants. They may also call the police to take belongings that are left unaccompanied. If someone is sleeping outside, they may bring them to the emergency room.

Youth Homelessness Simulation

Reflection Questions:

What barriers did you face during this homelessness simulation?

Was this a positive learning experience?

What did you learn from other participants?

Were you prepared for the intensity of the experience?

How did stress factor into your decisions and your experience?

Do you feel you would be able to complete your tasks if you faced them in the real world?

What would you have done next if the simulation hadn't ended?

Did you ever have to make a compromise that could have put you or your health in danger?

How would you respond if you began to suspect that your friend was no longer living at home?

How did you decide what priorities to focus on?

Were you afraid that someone would take advantage of the vulnerable position you were in?

Are there are enough resources in your community for youth?

How were you treated by authority figures?

Do you feel you could trust the people you had to interact with?

What will you do now to help your homeless peers?

What was the most surprising challenge you faced?

Youth Homelessness Simulation

Discussion Guide:

1. There are at least 500,000 runaway or homeless young people in the United States at any given moment, yet only one out of every 125 shelter beds are available to youth.

What does this mean for the countless number of runaway and homeless youth looking for a place to stay?

How can we win more designated beds for youth?

Of the available 4,000 beds nationwide, how many offer other necessary services to assist young people?

What are the most important things that young people experiencing homelessness need in order to be able to start fresh?

Why doesn't the government know exactly how many people between the ages of 16-24 do not have homes?

2. The average life expectancy of someone who lives on the streets is 50-years-old. People experiencing homelessness are significantly more vulnerable to communicable diseases, violence, infection, and other physical and mental health concerns.

What are the associated physical health risks for youth currently facing homelessness?

How can homeless young people with pre-existing medical conditions seek healthcare?

How do stress, trauma, and other mental health factors affect people who are not living in stable homes?

3. Five percent of the youth population in the U.S. identifies as LGBT, yet these individuals comprise up to 40% of the homeless youth population.

What are the primary causes of youth homelessness?

How do they differ from the root causes of adult and family homelessness?

Why do so many LGBT youth find themselves without a safe and permanent place to stay?

Are LGBT youth treated differently on the streets? In the social services system?

3. Nearly all people living in a state of homelessness have experienced discrimination at some point. From housing agencies, shelters, employers, private businesses, etc there is often a stigma built up around homelessness. For this reason, many young people try to hide the fact that they are homeless and will not seek help.

How can communities identify persons who need assistance without self-identification by the individual?

What are the best ways to approach young people to offer help?

3. By the year 2018, it is projected that high school dropouts will only have access to 10 percent of the jobs in America.

Why is this prediction so significant when referring to youth who are, have been, or will be homeless?

What are the long-term implications of experiencing homelessnes...

On Education?

On Health?

On Relationships?

On Mental Development?

What are ways that unhoused young people can proactively prevent their circumstances from significantly altering the trajectory of their lives?

Youth 1

MALE
23-YEARS-OLD

Three years ago you found out that you had contracted HIV from a previous relationship. In the beginning, there was minimal impact on your day-to-day life. You were working a steady job at an advertising firm, until they had a layoff. The sudden impact of lost income forced you to fall behind on rent and the owner decided to evict you knowing your status. You went from shelter to shelter until the stress started taking a toll on your body. With your need for medical attention, you are now looking to enter a transitional or permanent supportive housing program. You have a case worker from one shelter where you have stayed that encouraged you to focus on making it to all of your doctor visits. Your health benefits have lapsed and the costs of your treatments are quickly adding up. Now you find yourself not only unemployed and homeless but in a state of declining health.

Youth 2

FEMALE
18-YEARS-OLD

You are six-months pregnant. You were staying with the father of your child, until he decided that he did not want to raise a child of mixed ethnicity. Your religious family will not accept you or allow you to return home after conceiving a child without being married Various friends have allowed you to stay on their couches, but never for more than 2-3 days. One extended family member told you that she could help you if you could find your way to New York City. When you arrived, she had been persuaded not to help you and leaves you penniless, without a home. For the last month you have been living at Penn Station. You have been to numerous agencies around town for help but have yet to find anything. You are principally worried about your child's health since you are under considerable stress and do not have regular access to prenatal care.

Youth 3

MALE
15-YEARS-OLD

Around the age of 8, you started to notice that you were different. Your body had the anatomy of a female, however, you have always considered yourself a male. Now, seven years later, you are ready to come out as a transgender male and hope to begin transitioning. One day, before school, you wrote a letter to your parents pleading them to accept you for who you are, however, when you arrived home there was another letter waiting for you taped to the front door. The letter explained that you were not welcome back into "their" home, and were no longer their "daughter." You have no money, no food, and no mode of transportation.

Youth 4

FEMALE
17-YEARS-OLD

You came out to your parents 10 months ago and they kicked you out of their home. You stayed with friends for 2 months but they couldn't help you any longer than that. You moved to New York City eight months ago to try to find a job. You are hoping to get a job and your own apartment so that you can stop sleeping in the parking garage and get your GED. You eat dinner at the Community Kitchen on weeknights, and volunteers there give you a $30 McDonalds gift card each week, but you don't like going to McDonalds because the manager has kicked you out on several occasions for your appearance.

Youth 2

Tasks:

- Go to the City Clinic and get health assistance
- Attempt to find shelter for you and your unborn child
- Head to the Community Kitchen which only serves food from 5 PM to 7 PM. Be sure to arrive early, due to long lines and shortage of food
- Visit the Office of Social Services to try to get an EBT card so that you may buy food
- Avoid being arrested on loitering charges

Remember:

- The police will kick you out, fine you, or even arrest you if they see you in public multiple times
- Keep all of your belongings with you at all times
- Being a single woman on the streets can be very dangerous. Be cautious of strangers
- Being pregnant, you should avoid eating deli meat.

Youth 1

Tasks:

- Visit the Adult Homeless Shelter to try to find somewhere to sleep tonight. Ask if they offer free meals and/or have a case worker you may speak to
- Go to your job interview at Big Savings Mart at 3:30 pm
- Visit the clinic and try to work out a long-term treatment plan, with appointments that you will be able to keep
- Head to the Community Kitchen which only serves food from 5 PM to 7 PM. Be sure to arrive early, due to long lines and shortage of food

Remember:

- There is no storage at the shelter. If you get a space or sleep outside, keep all of you belongings with you at all times
- Walking between appointments takes a lot of time. Be sure to leave enough time or try to find money to take the bus

Youth 4

Tasks:

- Attempt to panhandle in Hallway Boulevard
- Visit the Office of Social Services and the Homeless Shelter to try to find somewhere to sleep tonight
- Go to your job interview at Big Savings Mart at 4:30 pm

Remember:

- You must keep all of your belongings with you at all times or they will be stolen or swept up by the police
- The parking garage is dangerous. You would prefer to sleep anywhere else, but if you can't, avoid other people

Youth 3

Tasks:

- Visit the Homeless Liaison's Office to learn about your options and to ask for a free-lunch stamp to be able to eat in the cafeteria
- Find the Teen Shelter and try to secure a place to sleep for the night
- Attempt to panhandle in Hallway Boulevard

Remember:

- Be sure to keep all of your belongings with you so that they are not stolen
- Avoid dangerous areas at night, such as the parking garages

Youth 5

MALE
15-YEARS-OLD

You just started high school, and are currently homeless. The only reason, however, you have not dropped out is because you get your daily meals from the school cafeteria. Your parents kicked you out of the house last year because you had been arrested for drug possession. You regularly sleep at the Teen Shelter, but they have a zero-tolerance policy for drugs. Now, you must figure out how to go to school, recieve a steady income, stay clean, and get to the youth shelter on time every night. None of your friends or teachers know that you are sleeping in a shelter.

Youth 6

MALE
17-YEARS-OLD

You have just received a job at the local fast food restuarant and are starting to make good grades in all of your classes. Your home life, however, is filled with verbal and physical abuse from your father. You avoid home as much as possible due to the abuse, however, the only escape you have is to leave. After working long hours and saving all of your money, you have decided to flee from your abusive home. You have about $600 and a couple of bags filled with all of your necessary items.

Youth 7 & 8

FEMALE
16-YEARS-OLD

You are pregnant. The father, your boyfriend, had been staying with you and your parents. When he lost his job, your parents decided to kick him out and you left with him. His parents will not take you in because of their bad relationship with their son. You suddenly find yourselves broke, homeless, and with a baby due in a few months. Thanks to friends you have been able to crash on some couches and have a decent meal everyday. You find a mutual friend that is willing to let you guys stay with her rent-free until you get back on your feet. Once you guys move in about three weeks later you find out that her landlord is selling the property and you all must be out in 30 days. Your boyfriend must now rush to find a job while you seek assistance in a transitional housing program and try to find an adoption agency that will help get you the medical attention that you need.

Youths 7 & 8

MALE
20-YEARS-OLD

Your girlfriend is pregnant. You had been staying with her parents, though you dropped out of school to work at the local fast food restaurant. You were fired a few weeks ago for arriving late too many times. As a result, her parents kicked you out. Your girlfriend left with you, but neither of you have jobs. Thanks to friends you have been able to crash on some couches and have a decent meal everyday. You find a mutual friend that is willing to let you guys stay with her rent-free until you get back on your feet. About three weeks after moving in you find out that her landlord is selling the property and you all must be out in 30 days. You must speed up your job search now to earn adequate savings for a deposit on an apartment.

Youth 6

Tasks:

- Visit the Office of Social Services and inquire about a program that would help you put a deposit on an affordable apartment
- Apply for an EBT card so that you may buy food
- Visit the Homeless Shelter and Teen Shelter to try to find a space to sleep tonight and do laundry
- Decide how you will stay in school, and whether or not you will want to keep your job, or get a new one

Remember:

- You must maintain proper hygiene to keep your job in the food-service industry
- Storing your property is a major struggle. Keep it with you as much as possible

Youth 5

Tasks:

- You have just been woken up by one of the volunteers at the local youth emergency shelter so that you can go to school on time. Be sure to gather all of your belongings and to not leave anything behind
- Go to your job interview at Big Savings Mart at 2:30 pm
- Head to the Community Kitchen which only serves food from 5 PM to 7 PM. Be sure to arrive early, due to long lines and shortage of food
- Visit the Homeless Liaison's Office to collect bus tokens to be able to make it to the Teen Shelter by 8:00 pm

Remember:

- It's difficult to get a shower and do laundry at the shelter but you must appear clean at all times
- You do not want to take all of your belongings to school but they are not safe to be left behind. Try to hide them somewhere they won't be found at the Teen Shelter

Youth 7 & 8

Tasks:

- Go to your job interview at Big Savings Mart at 3:00 pm
- Visit the Office of Social Services and inquire about a program that would help you put a deposit on an affordable apartment
- Apply for an EBT card so that you may buy food
- Head to the Community Kitchen which only serves food from 5 PM to 7 PM. Be sure to arrive early, due to long lines and shortage of food

Remember:

- You have somewhere safe to sleep and store your belongings tonight
- Money is tight and you must do everything you can to make sure your girlfriend is eating nutritious meals

Youths 7 & 8

Tasks:

- Find a case worker to help you find transitional housing that will keep you sheltered until your boyfriend finds a job and you give birth
- Seek medical attention at the City Clinic
- Head to the community kitchen which only serves food from 5 PM to 7 PM. Be sure to arrive early, due to long lines and shortage of food

Remember:

- You can have free lunches if you go to school, but you should not eat deli meat if you are pregnant
- You need to prioritize maintaining proper nutrition to have a healthy baby

Youth 9

MALE
19-YEARS-OLD

You have just finished your first year at college. During that time, you have built up the strength and the courage to come out to your parents. They were shocked, confused, and angry. Your parents turn to physical abuse. They do not accept you for who you are and cannot seem to control their anger. They have cut you off financially, and have forced you to leave your home. You must find somewhere to stay for the summer and attempt to find a way to finance the rest of your college education and living expenses.

Youth 10

FEMALE
17-YEARS-OLD

You decided to leave home a couple of months ago to escape from the abusive environment that surrounded you. You were able to find a shelter that would allow you to stay there while you were still in school, but this was one of the worst shelters in the city. After a few months of being there, the environment rubbed off on you and you found yourself in a life of drugs. You shared needles with many different people, not knowing their status. Last week you visited the emergency room for breathing troubles, only to find out that you are HIV positive. Finding a new shelter with a support system to help you get off of drugs is your priority. You have always dreamed of graduating high school, but your grades have dropped and you don't know if it will be possible. You try your best to get to school because you don't want anyone to know about your housing situation or your health. You're scared of how people might think of you if they knew the truth.

Youth 11

FEMALE
15-YEARS-OLD

Your single mother began dating a new man she met online five months ago. He is wealthy and invited you both to move into his home. Your mother was able to cut back on the number of shifts she was working and now spends more time at home. From the beginning, this man made inappropriate comments to you and you never felt comfortable with the idea of moving into his home. Your mother brushed off your protestations. Since you arrived, his bad behavior has only escalated as he often gets too close and makes horrible advances. You have just decided that you need to leave before anything worse happens. You do not have a car. You plan on walking to school before the buses arrive to stash your bags in your locker and use the computer in the library to make a plan. You aren't sure about who to talk to and want to keep it to yourself, however, you only have $35 and a cell phone.

Youth 12

MALE
13-YEARS-OLD

You are currently living in a household that is not only verbally abusive, but physically as well. You love your parents, however, your friends and your teachers are starting to ask about the scrapes and bruises you seem to always have, due to the physical beatings you recieve at home. After much consideration, you have decided to runaway from your parents in order to live a life free from the abuse. You only have $20, a bag of clothes, a sleeping bag, and some personal belongings.

Youth 10

Tasks:

- In order to live independently, you must first find somewhere to live. Call your local 211 center for more details
- Visit the Homeless Shelter and the Teen Shelter to see if they have places for you
- Visit the clinic and try to work out a long-term treatment plan, with appointments that you will be able to keep
- Decide whether you can speak to the Homeless Liaison without drumming up suspicion about your situation

Remember:

- The Homeless Liaison can give you bus tokens and other assistance
- Walking between appointments takes a lot of time. Be sure to leave enough time or try to find money to take the bus

Youth 9

Tasks:

- In order to live independently, you must first find somewhere to live. Call your local 211 center for more details
- You have also made finishing up school a priority. Visit the high school Homeless Liaison for information on emergency grants and scholarships
- Go to your job interview at Big Savings Mart at 4:00 pm
- You are finding yourself struggling with severe depression. Please refer to the City Clinic for a therapist who specializes in LGBT and family issues

Remember:

- You must keep all of your belongings with you at all times or they will be stolen or swept up by the police
- Walking between appointments takes a lot of time. Be sure to leave enough time or try to find money to take the bus

Youth 12

Tasks:

- Visit the Teen Shelter to try to find a place to sleep tonight
- Visit the Homeless Liaison to ask for advice on what steps you should take in order to transition into a life away from your parents
- Ask the Homeless Liaison for a free-lunch stamp
- Visit the City Clinic to have your wounds examined
- Attempt to panhandle in Hallway Boulevard

Remember:

- You must keep all of your belongings with you at all times or they will be stolen or swept up by the police
- The Homeless Liaison can give you bus tokens and other assistance
- Walking between appointments takes a lot of time. Be sure to leave enough time or try to find money to take the bus

Youth 11

Tasks:

- In order to live independently, you must first find somewhere to live. Call your local 211 center for more information
- Go to your job interview at Big Savings Mart at 5:00 pm
- Head to the Community Kitchen which only serves food from 5 PM to 7 PM. Be sure to arrive early, due to long lines and shortage of food

Remember:

- If you cannot find a spot at a shelter, you must sleep outside. The police will kick you out, fine you, or even arrest you if they see you sleeping in public multiple times. Finding a hidden spot to sleep will be safest
- Keep all of your belongings with you at all times
- Being a single woman on the streets can be very dangerous. Be cautious of strangers

Youth 13

FEMALE
24-YEARS-OLD

You are the mother of two little girls. You and their father have been married for six years, but for the last four he has subjected you to the absolute worst treatment. He has abused you mentally, physically, and verbally. Recently, during one of his spats, he not only beat you but then tried to attack the children. At that point you had had enough. While he was away at work the next day you decided to take your girls and leave with nothing but the clothes on your back, $200 cash, and your car. Due to the isolation that he has caused between family and friends of yours, the only place you have to sleep is the car. Luckily you have food stamps to purchase food for your girls and a cleaning job that pays about $8.50/hr, but that alone is not enough to put a deposit on an apartment big enough for you and the girls.

Youth 14

FEMALE
14-YEARS-OLD

You and your family immigrated to the United States three months ago. You barely know english and neither you nor your parents have been able to find a home or a job. Now, your parents have agreed that they can no longer take care of you because it puts too much of a strain on them financially. So they give you two weeks until they will officially cut you off. Once those two weeks are up you must find a place to stay and a way to support yourself.

Youth 15

FEMALE
21-YEARS-OLD

You have been out as a transgender female for the past two years. Your grandmother was the only family member who would accept and bring you in, however, she passed away last week and you do not want to go back to your verbally abusive parents. Unfortunately, all emergency youth shelters are full, and you are now third on the waitlist for the youth transitional living program in your hometown. You do not have a job, however, you were left with $100 from your grandmother.

Youth 16

MALE
16-YEARS-OLD

You ran away from home last week. Your single mother neglected you, leaving you to provide for yourself, but 9 days ago, she became physically abusive. She watched you leave and said that she won't support you in any way any longer. You have a job at a clothing store in the mall, making $8.50/hr. Your appearance is very important for this job, so you need to prioritze your hygiene and try to keep your clothes clean. A friend is letting you use her dad's storage unit to keep your belongings, but it is 6 miles from your school. No one else knows that you have left home. If you don't go to school, people will discover what is wrong, but your work schedule is not flexible and you need the income.

Youth 14

Tasks:

- Visit the Office of Social Services to apply for an identification card that will make you eligible for transitional housing programs and an EBT card
- Visit the Homeless Liaison's office to determine your options

Remember:

- You do not want any of your peers to discover that you won't have a home. You cannot be seen sleeping in public or panhandling
- English is not your native language. There will be a barrier between you and those attempting to assist you

Youth 13

Tasks:

- Find a shelter that accepts both you and your girls
- Visit the Office of Social Services and inquire about a program that would help you put a deposit on an affordable apartment
- Make sure to get the oldest child to school so that they will not suspect anything

Remember:

- Make sure to keep everything with you and keep the car safe
- Do not get caught letting your girls rest in the office building you clean at night

Youth 16

Tasks:

- Visit your school's Homeless Liaison for bus tokens and grocery gift cards
- Try to find a bed at the Teen Shelter and do your laundry
- Head to the Community Kitchen which only serves food from 5 PM to 7 PM. Be sure to arrive early, due to long lines and shortage of food

Remember:

- You don't want people to find out that you're homeless so you must not be seen panhandling, in the food bank, etc.
- You would rather keep your job and stay at the same school than go into foster care
- You must maintain proper hygiene to keep your job in the apparel industry
- Storing your property is a major struggle. Keep it with you as much as possible

Youth 15

Tasks:

- Visit your school's Homeless Liaison and ask if there is anywhere else for you to stay until you are placed into the transitional living program
- Go to your job interview at Big Savings Mart at 5:30 pm
- Head to the Community Kitchen which only serves food from 5 PM to 7 PM. Be sure to arrive early, due to long lines and shortage of food

Remember:

- Be sure to keep all of your belongings with you so they are not stolen or taken by the police
- Avoid dangerous areas at night, such as the parking garage

Youth 17

MALE
18-YEARS-OLD

You just turned 18 and have just been released from foster care. Unfortunately, you had no idea that this would be the case, and your foster parents no longer have the funds to take care of you. Now, you must figure out where to live, where to find a job, and how to get into your local community college. Since you have never been homeless before, you must seek out help from professionals in order to avoid anyone knowing about your situation.

Youth 18

FEMALE
18-YEARS-OLD

Now that you have just turned 18, you have aged out of foster care. Although you have been looking forward to this moment for a while, you are still on the wait list for the local transtitional living program. They have just notified you that you can enter the program in one month. This means you must find a job and a place to stay in order to properly take care of yourself. You must also start applying for school soon since you have just graduated high school.

Youth 19

MALE
14-YEARS-OLD

You have just dropped out of high school due to the amount of stress that you are facing living by yourself on the street. It seems like you go day-to-day trying to find a job, seeking out medication for your health needs, and trying to make it to school on time. Now that you do not have to go to school, you can focus more on what you need to do to survive. Once you have gotten back on your feet, you would like to return to school. Therefore, you must find resources to get you off the streets and back into school.

Youth 20

FEMALE
15-YEARS-OLD

You have been on the streets for one year. You were dating another man who was experiencing homelessness, mostly for protection. You recently got tired of him stealing money from you so you left him and bought a one-way bus ticket to New York. You now have absolultely no support system and you are being told that all of the shelters are full for single women. You are hoping to get a job, but it is really challenging without a phone number at which the employer could reach you. You would double-up with other people, if it kept you off the streets and gave you a little protection from the outside world.

Youth 18

Tasks:

- Since you have one month until you can enter into your transitional living program, you must stay at a shelter. Contact 211 to see where there are available beds
- Go to your job interview at Big Savings Mart at 1:30 pm
- Visit the Homeless Liaison's Office for bus tokens and information about applying to community college

Remember:

- Keep all of your belongings with you, or very well-hidden, at all times in order to keep them from being stolen
- Being a single woman on the streets can be very dangerous. Be cautious of strangers

Youth 17

Tasks:

- Visit the Homeless Shelter to find a case worker who can help you apply to live in a transitional living program
- Determine where you will sleep until you have a place in the program
- Go to your job interview at Big Savings Mart at 6:00 pm
- Head to the Community Kitchen which only serves food from 5 PM to 7 PM. Be sure to arrive early, due to long lines and shortage of food

Remember:

- Keep all of your belongings with you, or very well-hidden, at all times in order to keep them from being stolen
- You don't want people to find out that you're homeless so you must not be seen panhandling, sleeping outside, etc.

Youth 20

Tasks:

- Visit the Office of Social Services to apply to a Transitional Housing program and for an EBT card
- Go to your job interview at Big Savings Mart at 12:30 pm
- Visit the Homeless Shelter and Teen Homeless Shelter to request a bed
- Head to the Community Kitchen which only serves food from 5 PM to 7 PM. Be sure to arrive early, due to long lines and shortage of food

Remember:

- Keep all of your belongings with you, or very well-hidden, at all times in order to keep them from being stolen
- Being a single woman on the streets can be very dangerous. Be cautious of strangers

Youth 19

Tasks:

- Go to your job interview at Big Savings Mart at 1:00 pm
- Head to the Community Kitchen which only serves food from 5 PM to 7 PM. Be sure to arrive early, due to long lines and shortage of food
- Make sure your clothes are clean and you maintain your hygiene in order to have the best luck at finding a job and getting into a housing program
- Attempt to panhandle in Hallway Boulevard

Remember:

- Keep all of your belongings with you, or very well-hidden, at all times in order to keep them from being stolen
- You can do laundry and shower at the Teen Shelter, if you can get a spot there