

Homeless Youth Act Biennial Report

# Homeless Youth Act Biennial Report

Minnesota Department of Human Services  
Office of Economic Opportunity

February 2015



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Minnesota Department of **Human Services**

## Legislative Report

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**Contents**

I. Legislation.....4

II. Introduction.....5

III. Identification of Needs.....6

IV. Details about Grant Awards.....7

V. Geographic Distribution of Funds .....11

VI. Activities and Outcome Indicators.....12

VII. Appendix A: Homeless Youth Act Statute .....13

VIII. Appendix B: List of Homeless Youth Act Grantees.....17

## **I. Legislation**

Minn. Stat. 256K.45, subd. 2, requires a biennial report be submitted to the legislative committees having jurisdiction. Below is the text referencing this report in the statute:

### 256K.45 Homeless Youth Act

#### Subd. 2. Homeless youth report

The commissioner shall prepare a biennial report, beginning in February 2015, which provides meaningful information to the legislative committees having jurisdiction over the issue of homeless youth, that includes, but is not limited to: (1) a list of the areas of the state with the greatest need for services and housing for homeless youth, and the level and nature of the needs identified; (2) details about grants made; (3) the distribution of funds throughout the state based on population need; (4) follow-up information, if available, on the status of homeless youth and whether they have stable housing two years after services are provided; and (5) any other outcomes for populations served to determine the effectiveness of the programs and use of funding.

The Homeless Youth Act, in its entirety, is found in the Appendix of this report.

## II. Introduction

This report is submitted to the Minnesota Legislature pursuant to Minn. Stat. 256K.45, subd. 2.  
**Homeless Youth Act.**

The Homeless Youth Act defines homeless youth, runaway youth, youth at-risk of homelessness, and the continuum of services for runaway and homeless youth. It provides funding to nonprofits and Tribal Governments to support street outreach, drop-in centers, emergency shelters, transitional living and youth supportive housing programs. A description of each program type is in Table 1, Section IV, Details about Grant Awards. Homeless Youth Act programs provide positive youth development opportunities and connections to cultural traditions for at-risk and homeless youth age 21 or younger unaccompanied by a parent or guardian.

As required by legislation, this report details how Minnesota's Department of Human Services-Office of Economic Opportunity distributed \$5,238,000 in funding for the Homeless Youth Act for the 2014-15 biennium. Also included, as required in statute, is information about:

- The areas of the state with the greatest need for services and housing for homeless youth, and the level and nature of the needs identified
- Details about grants made
- The distribution of funds throughout the state based on population need
- Follow-up information, if available, on the status of homeless youth and whether they have stable housing two years after services are provided
- Any outcomes for populations served to determine the effectiveness of the programs and use of funding.

This report was prepared by the Office of Economic Opportunity, Minnesota Department of Human Services.

### III. Identification of Needs

The following data is from Wilder Research findings—2012 Statewide Homeless Study.<sup>1</sup>

An **estimated 4,080** unaccompanied Minnesota youth experience homelessness on any given night. This includes an estimated 2,211 minor youth ages 17 and under, and 1,869 young adults ages 18 - 21.

According to the researchers, these numbers are conservative estimates; the actual number of unaccompanied youth is likely considerably higher. This is because many homeless people, particularly youth who often couch-hop or find temporary places to stay, as well as homeless people in greater Minnesota where there are fewer shelter beds, are outside the shelter system and not counted on the night of the study. Compared to their representation in the total Minnesota population, youth ages 21 and younger are the group most likely to be homeless.

*One in four  
females and one in  
six males report  
being physically or  
sexually attacked  
while homeless*

*-Wilder Research*

Some of the findings from the 2012 Wilder Study include:

- One-third (33 percent) slept outside at least one night of the previous 30 nights.
- More than one-half (53 percent) were “doubled-up” at least one night of the previous 30 nights.
- One-quarter (25 percent) of homeless youth had been turned away from shelters in the past three months because there were no available bed spaces.
- The number of homeless youth of color is disproportionately high compared to their prevalence in the general population of Minnesota youth.
- Seven in 10 homeless youth (70 percent) were African-American, American Indian, Asian, Hispanic, or of mixed race, compared to 24 percent of all Minnesota youth.
- Slightly more than half (52 percent) had a serious mental illness, with depression most common at 29 percent.
- Slightly more than one-third (36 percent) had a chronic physical health condition, most often high blood pressure (10 percent) or chronic lung or respiratory problems (7 percent).

#### Geographic Areas

According to Wilder, four in 10 youth (42 percent) identified by the study as homeless were found in greater Minnesota (49 percent of youth minors and 41 percent of young adults).

In 2013, there were 108 emergency shelter beds designated for unaccompanied youth statewide, 15 of which were in greater Minnesota. There were 341 transitional housing program units designated for unaccompanied youth, 159 of which were in greater Minnesota and on reservations. Two-hundred-fifty-eight units of permanent supportive housing were designated for unaccompanied homeless youth, with 12 in greater Minnesota. The 108 emergency shelter beds and 599 units of housing for youth in 2013 fell short of meeting the needs of homeless youth.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Wilder Research, *Homelessness in Minnesota-Findings from the 2012 Statewide Homeless Study*, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Minnesota Dept. of Human Services, Office of Economic Opportunity, *Rural Homeless Youth Listening Sessions Project Summary Report*, 2013.

## **IV. Details about Grant Awards**

### **Funding Available, Requests, and Recommendations**

The Homeless Youth Act was funded at \$4,238,000 for the 2014-2015 biennium. All funds were distributed through a competitive Request for Proposals process. Scoring criteria included, but was not limited to, program capacity, program design (accessibility of services, appropriateness of services, cost effectiveness, etc.), program revenue and budget, geographic location and previous performance.

Forty-nine applications were received, requesting more than \$20 million in funding, five times the amount of requests as there were dollars available.

An additional \$1,000,000 was appropriated by the Legislature in spring 2014. Existing Homeless Youth Act grantees were invited to submit applications for additional funding. Applications were submitted by 24 of the 30 grantees, requesting more than \$1,720,000. Funds were awarded to 21 applicants.

**Funded Activities**

As defined in statute, program activities include prevention, outreach, drop-in, shelter and supportive housing. Below is a brief explanation of each program type.

<b>Table 1: Description of Homeless Youth Act Activities</b>	
<b>Program Type</b>	
Prevention	Activities of all homeless youth program providers contribute to prevention of ongoing homelessness for youth. Prevention activities include capacity and infrastructure building, family reunification, crisis counseling and transition services.
Street Outreach	Street outreach programs locate, build relationships with, and meet the immediate needs of homeless youth living on the streets or in temporary arrangements, while working to connect youth with a range of services, including housing.
Drop-in	Drop-in centers provide homeless youth with basic needs including meals, a safe place during the day, and supportive services to assist them in securing permanent housing. Drop-in centers provide walk-in access to crisis intervention and one-to-one case management services on a self-referral basis.
Shelter	Shelter programs provide youth with referral and walk-in access to emergency, short- and medium-term residential care. These programs provide safe, dignified shelter, including private shower facilities, beds and meals; and assist youth with reunification with family or legal guardian when required or appropriate.
Supportive Housing	Supportive housing programs can be site-based (i.e., all units located in one facility), or scattered-site (i.e., units located in apartments in the community). Supportive housing programs assist youth in locating and maintaining safe, dignified housing. Programs may offer rental assistance and related supportive services, or refer youth to other organizations that provide such services. Programs may also assist youth in maintaining their current housing through homelessness prevention activities (e.g., rent assistance, family counseling, etc.). Supportive housing models can be time-limited (i.e., transitional housing up to 24 months), or have no time limitation (i.e., permanent housing).

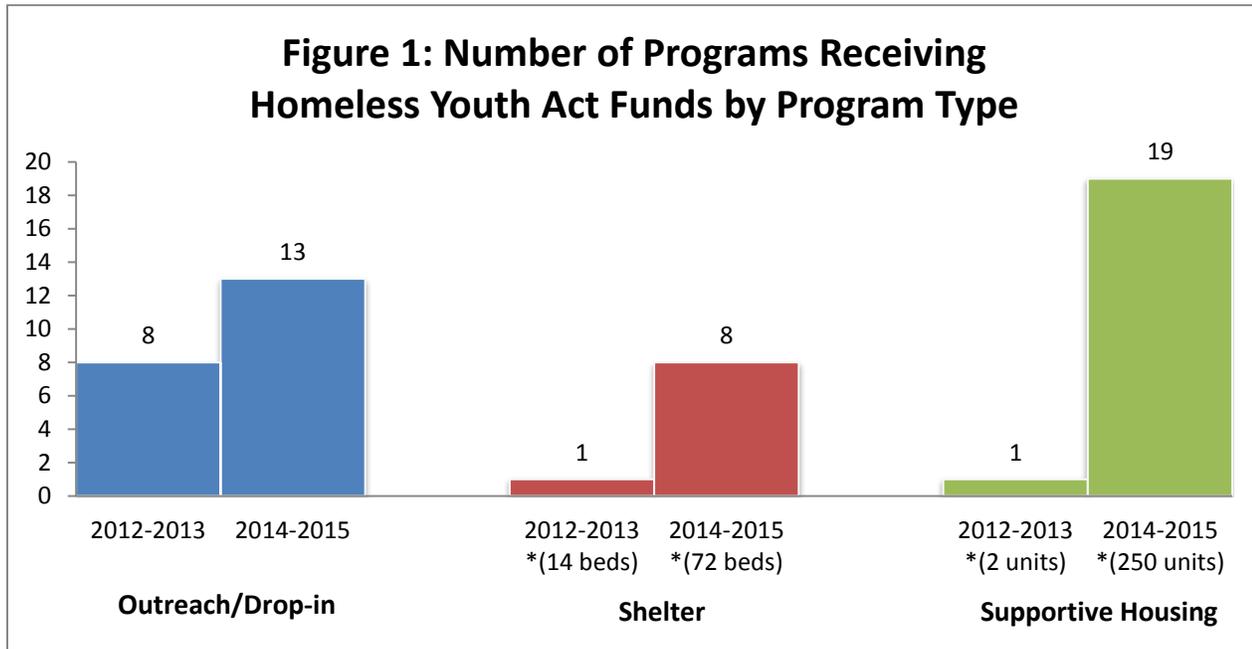
All of the activities outlined in Table 1 include a wide range of service components including, but not limited to:

- Case management
- Family reunification
- Access to housing resources
- Access to education and employment opportunities
- Food and/or hot meals
- Voicemail
- Mental health counseling and services
- Individual, family and group counseling
- Transportation
- Crisis intervention
- Conflict mediation
- Independent living skills training
- Advocacy
- Assistance navigating systems
- Substance abuse treatment/counseling
- Access to medical and dental care
- Recreational activities

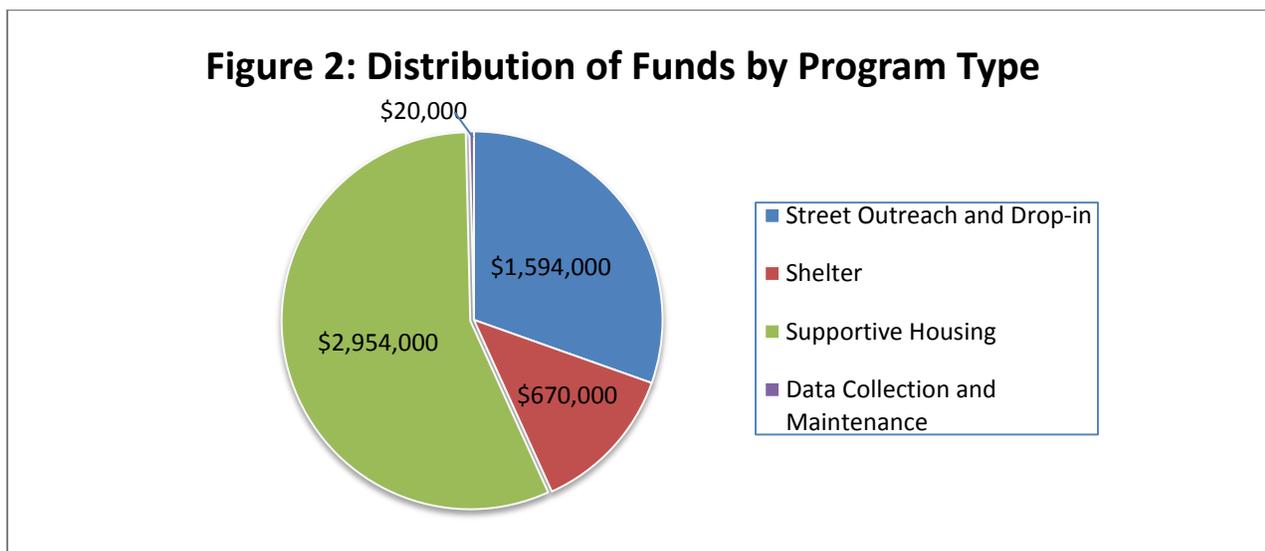
# Homeless Youth Act Biennial Report

- Aftercare and follow-up services.

The department provided funding to 30 agencies to operate 38 specific programs for youth (some of the 30 Homeless Youth Act grantee agencies provide multiple program types). Funding was provided to Amherst H. Wilder Foundation to support data collection and maintenance of the Homelessness Management Information System (HMIS). Figure 1 shows the number of awards by program type and Figure 2 shows the amount funded by program type.



\*Housing and shelter units are offered through a variety of models including residential settings, host homes, and scattered-site housing. In addition, supportive housing may be time limited in design (i.e., transitional housing), or not time limited (i.e., permanent housing).



## **New Programs and Expansion Projects**

With the increase in Homeless Youth Act funding in 2013, the department was able to fund new agencies and projects, and expand existing projects. Homeless Youth Act funds supported:

- 24 new providers funded with Homeless Youth Act funds
- 81 new units of housing and shelter developed
- 15 new or expanded projects, including street outreach, drop-in centers, emergency shelter, and youth supportive housing.

Implementation of new projects and expansion of existing projects typically involve significant ramp-up activities, which may include securing site locations, applying for licensing, and training and hiring staff. The nature of ramp-up projects results in slower spending initially, until the project is fully implemented.

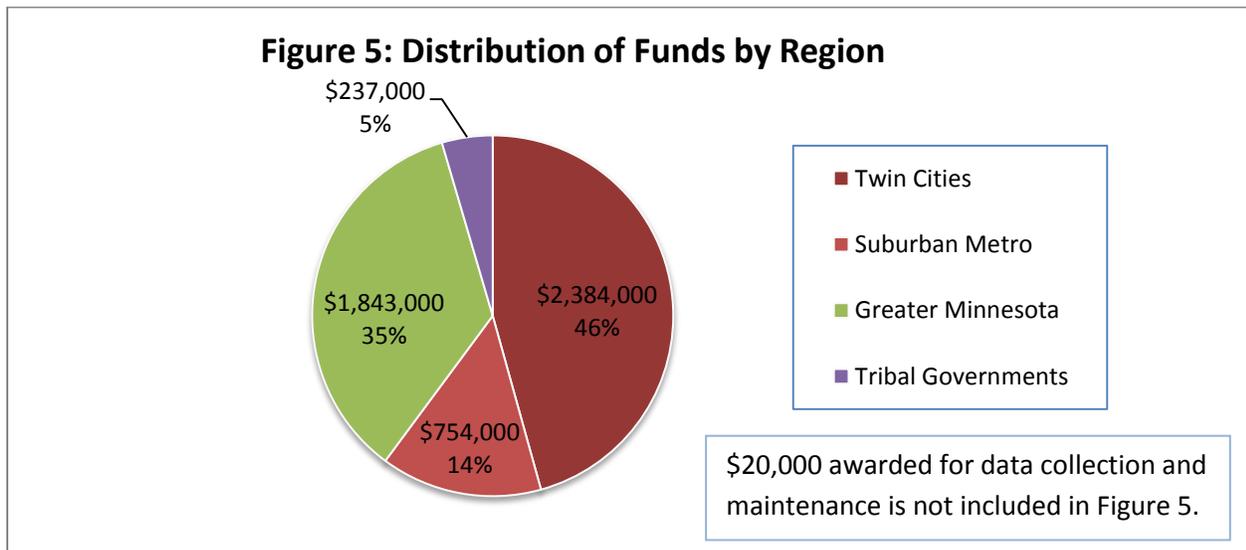
In addition to expansion, Homeless Youth Act funding strengthened the ability of the existing homeless youth service network to sustain the level of services, emergency shelter, and housing that was in place before the increase in Homeless Youth Act funding. Including Homeless Youth Act funded beds and units, there are currently an estimated 118 dedicated emergency shelter beds and 625 units of dedicated youth supportive housing statewide.

## V. Geographic Distribution of Funds

Distribution of funding was made with consideration of geographic needs. Forty-two percent of youth identified by the Wilder Research 2012 homeless study were in greater Minnesota. Funding distribution is in line with these findings (Figure 5), as follows:

- Of 18 applications received from greater Minnesota, 13 (72 percent) were funded
- Of 30 applications received from the Twin Cities metro area (including suburban areas), 17 (57 percent) were funded.

Of 30 provider agencies awarded funding, 12 are in the Twin Cities metro, 11 in greater Minnesota, five in suburban metro, and two are tribal governments.



## VI. Activities and Outcome Indicators

Homeless Youth Act grantees are required to collect data and submit reports to the Office of Economic Opportunity to provide information regarding the population being served, services provided and program outcomes. Data collection and reporting requirements are based on funded activities.

With increased Homeless Youth Act funding, department staff developed new reports to address the expanded scope of the Homeless Youth Act grants. New data collection methods, assessments, and reports were also developed.

**Prevention, street outreach, and drop-in** grantees began collecting data on Jan. 1, 2014. Reports are submitted quarterly and include number of youth served, living situation on the previous night, safety of youth's living situation the previous night, supplies provided, referrals made and services provided.

**Emergency shelter** grantees began collecting data on July 1, 2014. Reports are submitted every six months and include number of youth served, program entry and exit dates, and basic demographic information. Emergency shelters serving youth for longer than 30 days also submit an outcomes report, which includes information related to education, employment, health and permanent connections.

**Youth supportive housing** grantees began collecting data on July 1, 2014. Reports are submitted every six months and include number of youth served, program entry and exit dates, and basic demographic information. All youth supportive housing grantees submit an outcomes report, which includes information related to education, employment, health, and permanent connections, and a report tracking income at program entry and exit. Youth supportive housing providers must follow-up with participants two years after they have exited the program to document and report on their housing stability post-program.

More comprehensive reporting will be available following completion of the grant period on June 30, 2015.

### Initial Data Available:

- **Prevention programs** provided services to 5,595 youth from Jan. 1 through Sept. 30, 2014.
- **Emergency shelter programs** provided shelter and services to 173 individuals from July 1 through Nov. 30, 2014.
- **Youth supportive housing programs** provided housing and services to 273 households and 349 individuals from July 1 through Nov. 30, 2014, and included:
  - Youth supportive housing programs included 53 families with a youth head of household. These families included 60 children ages birth-five.

With ongoing data collection, the greater context and meaning of these numbers can be included in future reporting.

## VII. Appendix A: Homeless Youth Act Statute

### 256K.45 HOMELESS YOUTH ACT

#### **Subdivision 1. Grant program established.**

The commissioner of human services shall establish a Homeless Youth Act fund and award grants to providers who are committed to serving homeless youth and youth at risk of homelessness, to provide street and community outreach and drop-in programs, emergency shelter programs, and integrated supportive housing and transitional living programs, consistent with the program descriptions in this section to reduce the incidence of homelessness among youth.

#### **Subd. 1a. 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.

# Homeless Youth Act Biennial Report

### **Subd. 2. Homeless youth report**

The commissioner shall prepare a biennial report, beginning in February 2015, which provides meaningful information to the legislative committees having jurisdiction over the issue of homeless youth, that includes, but is not limited to: (1) a list of the areas of the state with the greatest need for services and housing for homeless youth, and the level and nature of the needs identified; (2) details about grants made; (3) the distribution of funds throughout the state based on population need; (4) follow-up information, if available, on the status of homeless youth and whether they have stable housing two years after services are provided; and (5) any other outcomes for populations served to determine the effectiveness of the programs and use of funding.

### **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, sexual exploitation, 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 and homeless youth 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;

## Homeless Youth Act Biennial Report

- (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, sexual exploitation, 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**

Funds appropriated for this section may be expended on programs described under subdivisions 3 to 5, technical assistance, and capacity building to meet the greatest need on a statewide basis.

### **History**

*2006 c 264 s 13; 2007 c 147 art 2 s 49; 2013 c 108 art 3 s 33*

### VIII. Appendix B: List of Homeless Youth Act Grantees

Agency	Main Office	Counties Served	Activity
Ain Dah Yung	Ramsey	Ramsey	Shelter
Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency, Inc.	St. Louis	St. Louis, Lake, Cook	Drop-in/Outreach, Supportive Housing
Avenues for Homeless Youth	Hennepin	Hennepin	Shelter, Supportive Housing
Beacon Interfaith	Ramsey	Hennepin	Supportive Housing
Bois Forte	St. Louis	Northern St. Louis, Itasca, Koochiching	Supportive Housing
Catholic Charities of St Paul & Mpls (Hope Street)	Hennepin	Hennepin	Shelter, Supportive Housing
Catholic Charities of St. Cloud (SHY Program)	Stearns	Stearns, Benton, Sherburne, Wright, Anoka, Morrison, Todd, Mille Lacs	Shelter, Supportive Housing
Community Action Partnership Scott Carver Dakota	Scott	Scott, Carver, Dakota	Supportive Housing
Evergreen Youth	Beltrami	Beltrami, Cass, Clearwater, Hubbard, Mahnomen	Supportive Housing
Face to Face Health and Counseling Service, Inc.	Ramsey	Ramsey	Drop-in/Outreach, Supportive Housing
Hope for Youth	Anoka	Anoka	Drop-in/Outreach
Inter-County Community Council, Inc.	Red Lake	Pennington, Red Lake, Polk, Clearwater	Supportive Housing
Kulture Klub Collaborative	Hennepin	Hennepin	Drop-in/Outreach
Lakes and Pines	Kanabec	Atkin, Carlton, Pine, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs	Drop-in/Outreach, Shelter, Supportive Housing
Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnerships, Inc.	Clay	Clay, Wilkin	Drop-in/Outreach, Supportive Housing
Leech Lake Reservation	Cass	Leech Lake Reservation, Cass, Beltrami, Itasca, Hubbard	Supportive Housing
Life House	St. Louis	St. Louis	Drop-in/Outreach, Supportive Housing
Lutheran Social Services (Duluth)	St. Louis	St. Louis	Shelter
Lutheran Social Services (Mankato)	Blue Earth	Blue Earth, Nicollet, Le Sueur, Brown, Waseca, Sibley, Watonwan, Faribault, Steele	Shelter
Lutheran Social Services (Rochester)	Olmsted	Olmsted, Rice, Goodhue, Wabasha, Dodge, Mower, Fillmore, Winona, Houston	Drop-in/Outreach
Lutheran Social Services (StreetWorks)	Hennepin	Hennepin, Ramsey, Anoka, Dakota	Drop-in/Outreach
Lutheran Social Services of MN (St. Paul)	Ramsey	Ramsey	Supportive Housing
Mahube-OTWA	Becker	Mahmomen, Hubbard, Becker, Otter Tail, Wadena	Supportive Housing
Oasis for Youth	Hennepin	Hennepin	Drop-in/Outreach
Pillsbury United Communities	Hennepin	Hennepin	Drop-in/Outreach
Teens Alone	Hennepin	Hennepin	Drop-in/Outreach, Supportive Housing
The Link	Hennepin	Hennepin	Supportive Housing
Salvation Army-Booth Brown	Ramsey	Ramsey	Shelter
YMCA Greater Twin Cities-Emma B Howe	Hennepin	Anoka	Supportive Housing
Youthlink	Hennepin	Hennepin	Drop-in/Outreach

# Homeless Youth Act Biennial Report